

U. Warlord 1231

Chapter 1231: Two Forms of Genetic Energy

Zhang Lie clapped. "Very well done. Your application of gold-attuned genetic energy has improved significantly. However, I think there are still a few important areas of improvement."

"Please give me some pointers, Captain," Sun Xiaowu requested politely.

Zhang Lie was Sun Xiaowu's idol, and he was far stronger than Sun Xiaowu himself. From Sun Xiaowu's perspective, Zhang Lie naturally had the qualifications to advise him.

"It's easier for me to simply show you."

Sun Xiaowu was shocked. Zhang Lie was going to demonstrate an application of gold-attuned genetic energy? But wasn't Zhang Lie's framework water-attuned? Could a genetic hunter use two different types of genetic energy?

"[Ninecarp Transformation: Golden Tiger]!"

The image of a golden tiger appeared behind Zhang Lie's back, and its roar echoed through the air. A golden aura suffused Zhang Lie. A mountain of blades rested atop the tiger's back, and Zhang Lie's body itself underwent a transformation. His hair turned silvery-white, until they became akin to silver needles.

His genetic energy likewise became more honed. Silvery-white genetic energy gathered over his body, and tigers' stripes appeared on his arms. His eyes became those of a tiger's, and steely sharpness erupted from every pore.

Everyone was shocked.

Zhang Lie's genetic energy had turned sturdy and steely, the exact qualities of gold-attuned genetic energy.

Although Zhang Lie had used this sort of transmuted genetic energy before within the halls of chaos, the environment had been saturated with chaotic energy, and it wasn't obvious what Zhang Lie had done. Only now did the members of Team Zenith realize that Zhang Lie somehow had command of multiple elements.

A genetic hunter could only possess genetic energy of one element; this was a known fact from decades of research from the Milky Way.

Just like how a person could only have a single soul, a genetic hunter could only command a single type of genetic energy, one engraved into the hunter's very genes.

Somehow, Zhang Lie had broken this principle.

"[Fists of the Silent Sea: Fade]!"

Genetic energy gathered in concentrated bursts into sharp spikes of crystal. Blades shot out and tore apart Sun Xiaowu's golden mechas, leaving the barest streak of blood on Sun Xiaowu's face. Only when warm blood started to drip down did Sun Xiaowu return to his senses.

Zhang Lie shook his head. "Don't get distracted in battle. If I had tried to kill you then..."

Sun Xiaowu asked curiously, "Captain, can you really control two different types of genetic energy?"

This was fundamentally at odds with everything he knew!

"If you want to know, find out in battle,"

Zhang Lie called out, with a mysterious laugh. A crystal wall appeared behind Zhang Lie, reflecting light in five colors, so dazzling it dazed any who looked at it, so beautiful it sparked their desire.

"[Fists of the Silent Sea: Fade]!"

As Zhang Lie manipulated space, that crystalline genetic energy shot out of the wall behind him in the form of sharp daggers, combining water-attuned genetic energy and spatial fluctuations into potent silver beams that could pierce through anything.

Sun Xiaowu's clones were pierced clean through.

"[Goldenscale Palm: Qilin]!"

The golden mechas exploded with golden radiance. Their forms dissipated into motes of golden light, which shot toward Sun Xiaowu's own mecha and augmented it.

It was as large as the falling sun. It bent its arms as golden energy shone from its body and illuminated the heavens. Tens of thousands of clones merged into Sun Xiaowu's main body, and the countless activated copies of the technique merged into one.

Golden scales covered up Sun Xiaowu's arm as it grew thicker and thicker, and the image of a golden qilin appeared behind him.

In his mecha form, augmented by his thousand clones all stacked atop each other, the might of his golden qilin grew by at least fifty times, if not a hundred.

As Sun Xiaowu swung his fists forward, the golden qilin soared into the air.

The qilin's scales were radiant and shining with golden light, each like a miniature sun. It looked like a god descending from the heavens, its long whiskers floating in the void, surrounded by golden clouds, looking like a sculpture of gold.

In Sun Xiaowu's mecha form, the golden qilin he released grew to a staggering fifty thousand meters in height. The golden qilin radiated light, and was so large that it almost filled up the entire pocket dimension.

It withstood the barrage of silver spikes as it rushed forward.

As Zhang Lie activated his blood ant and dragonwolf soulshards, he transformed into a dragonwolf with russet fur and limbs covered with dragons' scales. His aura became magnified as a hurricane of blood spawned around him.

The entire pocket dimension filled with golden light. Zhu immediately reinforced the pocket space so that it didn't explode and affect the newly unified world. The members of Team Zenith invoked their defenses once more.

Black flame wrapped around Sun Mengmeng in a wall of flames. Silvery-white light shrouded Li Feng. An arclight dragon coiled around him and soared into the sky.

Li Feng radiated silver light, and illusory silver dragons coiled around the members of Team Zenith.

Zhang Hanxiang released a chilly frost, adding a layer of ice as a barrier against Fang Yi's attack.

Zhou Ying's long hair fluttered in the wind, the color of crystalline jade. It gave off motes of vitality. She was so beautiful no one could take their eyes away, and golden leaves whirled around her. The tips of her hair produced gray fog.

Concentrated natural energy and vitality flowed through her fingertips.

"[Avatar of the Fae: Dance of the Earth Dragon]!"

Zhou Ying released all her stored vitality at once, causing the ground to quake as thousands of jade-green wood dragons rushed out of the earth, surrounding the gathered hunters.

Because Fang Yi and Yang Ze had yet to recover from their wounds, they were unable to help.

"[Syzygy]!"

Hong Xi's eyes glowed. Her left eye morphed into a black sun, and her right eye into a silver moon. To her back, a pitch-black sun and a silver moon rose into the air. Their light illuminated the sky. The black sun and silver moon were linked by a golden thread, which brought them into proximity with each other.

The black sun and silver moon began to merge. The black sun turned a deep red, and the silver moon a rusty red. The two celestial bodies overlapped, the silver moon taking on a blue sheen. As they overlapped perfectly, the moon absorbed the black sunlight and transformed into a fully realized pale blue moon.

Chapter 1232: Mechas, To Me!

A shining moon materialized behind Hong Xi's back, the moonlight warm and nourishing as it blanketed the members of Team Zenith. The black flames burned ever more brightly, the golden light was more blinding, the illusory dragons solidified, and the wood dragons' vitality magnified.

As the golden light exploded, the pocket dimension almost shattered.

Sun Xiaowu's golden clones packed an incredible punch, and even Team Zenith's defenses began to fall. It was difficult to imagine the strength of the explosions that were bombarding Zhang Lie, caught in their midst.

The members of Team Zenith could spare no attention for Zhang Lie's safety. They hurriedly defended themselves and waited for the golden light to clear. At the heart of the explosions, a human-sized silvery-white octahedral crystal came into view.

Zhang Lie, encased in the crystal, survived the explosion intact.

The members of Team Zenith were very impressed.

"As expected of our captain..."

Cracks appeared on the surface of the crystal, which swiftly propagated.

"[Blinding Flash: Ten Thousandfold Echo]!"

Sun Xiaowu split into ten thousand clones, each of which summoned a golden mecha.

The golden mechas all rushed toward Zhang Lie in a golden flood.

As the crystal shattered into fragments that flew into the sky, the golden flood was blown away.

"[Golden Divide]!" The ten thousand clones all used [Golden Divide] simultaneously, coloring the sky in gold.

Zhang Lie clenched his fists tightly. Silvery-white crystal manifested over his fists as he punched forward. A pillar of silvery-white crystal pierced through the golden storm, and thousands of Sun Xiaowu's clones hurriedly made to block it with their bodies.

As Zhang Lie had stated, the density of the metal he created was ridiculously high, and Sun Xiaowu's golden mechas were as weak as papier mache in comparison.

At the very least, however, the human barrier formed by thousands of his clones gave him enough time to react.

Sun Xiaowu dodged to the side and sent a pulse of energy at all his clones.

"[Blinding Flash: Self-Destruct]!"

Sun Xiaowu's clones suddenly radiated with golden light so bright that the entire battlefield was illuminated, as though ten thousand suns had simultaneously appeared in the air. The next moment, they exploded in an explosion hundreds, thousands of times stronger than the [Golden Divides] had accomplished.

A frightening storm rose up, interspersed with golden blades.

The crystal pillar was smashed to pieces, and Zhang Lie seemed right about to be submerged within the explosion's golden light.

"[Fists of the Silent Sea: Hundred Dragons Soaring]!"

Zhang Lie condensed his genetic energy. Sharp white crystals floated around his body.

As he cocked his fist, dozens of lifelike crystalline dragons emerged and began to roar.

The next moment, they shot out along with his fist, twining around each other as they caught the golden light with their bodies, blocked the blades, and caused the golden storm to dissipate.

In response to the crystalline dragons rushing toward him, Sun Xiaowu began to radiate light.

"[Blinding Flash: Ten Thousandfold Echo]!"

Sun Xiaowu split into ten thousand clones, each of which summoned a golden mecha.

"[Goldenscale Palm: Split]!"

Layers of dense golden scales appeared on Sun Xiaowu's arms, and his right arm glowed with resplendent light. Moments later, so too did the right arms of all his clones.

The golden mechas swarmed the crystalline dragons like moths to a flame.

The hundreds of dragons began to duke it out with the tens of thousands of clones. The dragons pierced through the clones' bodies and dispersed the energy that made them up, whereas the clones repeatedly punched the dragons with [Goldenscale Palm]. The arena turned chaotic; in the end, despite the strength of Zhang Lie's hundreds of crystalline dragons, they lost out to the clones' numbers.

However, the clones themselves suffered significant losses, and fewer than a thousand remained in the end.

That was no matter to Sun Xiaowu, who was able to regenerate them indefinitely as long as his genetic energy sufficed.

"[Blinding Flash: Ten Thousandfold Echo]!"

Sun Xiaowu split into ten thousand clones, each of which summoned a golden mecha.

"Do you think this will be meaningful?"

Zhang Lie summoned the sword Guicang. As he slashed, the space before him split, and the golden clones all fell to the ground as though he were reaping wheat.

To Zhang Lie, numerical superiority was nothing but a joke.

Before he could kill all the clones, Sun Xiaowu shouted, "Clones, to me! [Adamantine Aegis: Invincible Martial God]! [Blinding Flash: Echo of Origins]!"

The golden clones all swirled toward Sun Xiaowu in a wave of golden light, as though they had suddenly turned into meteors.

With a low shout, the clones overlapped with Sun Xiaowu. A dense layer of golden runes appeared over his skin with a bright burst of genetic energy. The figure of a mecha behind Sun Xiaowu grew larger and larger. Runes decorated his body, glowing behind his back like a burning sun.

A hundred, two hundred, three hundred... a thousand, two thousand, three thousand meters—Sun Xiaowu's growth showed no sign of stopping. As the mecha grew, so too did Sun Xiaowu's own strength.

Ten thousand, twenty thousand, thirty thousand meters—everyone spectating watched Sun Xiaowu in awe.

Even the pocket dimension wasn't large enough for the mecha, whose head struck its top. The "walls" of the pocket dimension, already cracked, gave way entirely as the mecha grew larger and larger.

It continued to grow without any sign of stopping, quickly breaking through the barriers that Zhu had set up beforehand.

Zhu sighed and clutched her forehead as she hurriedly increased the size of the pocket dimension.

Otherwise, the battle between Zhang Lie and Sun Xiaowu would have dealt a serious blow to the newly unified world.

Zhang Lie wasn't the biggest culprit; he at least knew how to control his strength, and was cognizant of the status of the pocket dimension and of the members of Team Zenith. However, the members of Team Zenith weren't able to do so themselves.

Zhu wanted to toss them all into a high-dimensional space and have them use that as their battlefield, but thinking about how Zhang Lie and Yang Ze had broken even the nineteenth layer of space, Zhu immediately changed her mind...

Chapter 1233: An Innate Change

The members of Team Zenith and Zhang Lie went beyond what the third realm could sustain, regardless of where they were. In fact, at that moment, the will of the world was still repairing the damage that Zhang Lie and Yang Ze had wrought.

In the end, Sun Xiaowu's mecha grew until it was a million meters tall before it stopped, far taller than it had been even when facing Ghroth.

Clearly, maxing out his gene fragments had significantly augmented Sun Xiaowu's strength.

The huge mecha seemed to materialize physically. Its body was the size of a planet, and its face looked a little like Zhang Lie's. Its armor gleaming a resplendent gold. It looked like a sun of titanic proportions.

As Sun Xiaowu made his move, so too did the mecha, blocking the crystalline sword with both its palms.

"Interesting indeed!" Zhang Lie smiled, pitch-black genetic energy roiling around him like the sea.

"[The Boundless Blade: the River Lethe]!"

Zhang Lie raised the blade in his hand high into the air, encircled by black genetic energy. The temperature of the arena dropped to sub-zero values, and a strong wind buffeted all combatants present. Blood-colored frost appeared around them all.

An underworld river materialized in the sky, one so vast the entire world could see it.

As though the doors to hell had just been thrown open, tens of thousands of serpents rushed out in a flood.

Sun Xiaowu punched forward with fists glimmering with radiance, each a sunburst that exploded in the pitch-black ocean of genetic energy.

"[Golden Divide: Desolation]!"

Sun Xiaowu's arms glowed with golden radiance, so brightly that everyone was forced to squint. As he summoned and shot forth a blade, that golden light morphed into a flood, clashing with Zhang Lie's netherworld river. Pitch-black genetic energy sprayed from the point of impact like ink.

Zhang Lie surfed over serpents down the netherworld river, his sword slashing apart the very sky. The gigantic mecha behind Sun Xiaowu crossed his arms in defense, blocking the attack.

Zhang Lie asked, "Did you intuit something?"

Sun Xiaowu nodded. "Captain, you're trying to tell me that, as long as you control two different types of genetic energy, you can do whatever you want."

How was he meant to win against someone who had both water- and gold-attuned genetic energy?

Zhang Lie rolled his eyes. "Have you forgotten the laws of this world that our forefathers have discovered?"

Sun Mengmeng commented, "It truly is remarkable for you to have access to two elements, Captain."

Li Feng grinned. "Only someone like our captain deserves it, after all!"

Hong Xi nodded. "If an ordinary person had such access, I would think it exaggerated... but somehow I find it perfectly normal that our captain would be an exception among exceptions."

Zhang Lie sighed. "Have you forgotten even these basics?"

Zhu spoke up. "Zhang Lie does not have access to two different elements."

As the ruler of the unified world, she could clearly sense the fluctuations in Zhang Lie's genetic energy.

Ordinary hunters had to use their sight, but Zhu could use the senses granted her by the very world itself.

Zhang Lie clutched his head. "I don't know what to tell all of you. No one can command multiple elements; it's a fundamental tenet known to the hunters of the Milky Way. Just what made you think I could control two?"

Sun Xiaowu was shocked, as were the members of Team Zenith. Did Zhang Lie really only have access to one element?

Sun Xiaowu cried out, "How could this be?"

Sun Mengmeng added, "I saw the genetic energy with my very eyes, Captain! It was clearly gold-attuned."

Sun Xiaowu nodded. "It has the strength and sturdiness of gold-attuned genetic energy, and it's even sharper and denser than my own! It was able to penetrate through my golden clones directly."

Zhang Lie rolled his eyes. "Your clones were simply too weak. If you weren't even able to see through my energy transmutation, it's clear you need more training."

Pitch-black energy exploded from Zhang Lie, as though a demon were descending on the world.

"[The Boundless Blade: the River Lethe]!"

The huge sea of genetic energy covered up the skies of the world of black rain, the dark clouds, the rain itself.

The skies themselves were replaced by a pitch-black ocean, one so massive that even the enlarged space could barely contain it. Waves surged forward, sounding like peals of thunder, like stampeding hooves.

The surface of the sea frothed with angry waves, like dragons emerging with the tide. The entire sea roiled, and lightning crackled amidst the void.

Countless serpents swam across the raging sea as lightning flashed ominously overhead, a scene right out of an apocalypse.

As Zhang Lie struck, an underworld river hurtled into existence, roaring into the sea. The sword energy roiled like black waves. The sea had morphed into a boundless battlefield. The sea breeze was as a horn to action, and the serpents, thousands of courageous soldiers heeding its call.

"[Goldenscale Palm: Shattersoul]!"

The mecha's golden fists glimmered with radiance, and golden runes circled them. The light burned like flames. As it punched forward, the netherworld sea roiled, and dark serpents exploded in showers of ink.

The pitch-black genetic energy stuck to the golden mecha's fists and began to corrode at his genetic energy. As though alive, the netherworld sea began to restore itself even as it stuck to the golden mecha.

As Sun Xiaowu attacked, so too did the golden mecha. Explosions wreaked the sea, causing waves to form and serpents to explode.

"[The Boundless Blade: Dragon's Wrath]!"

Zhang Lie thrust forward with Guicang, summoning a blood dragon.

A dragon's roar shook the sky as the pitch-black genetic energy turned blood-red. The underworld sea roiled, forming a gigantic blood dragon, its jaws wide open and its claws poised to swipe. The golden mecha's figure began to crack, moments away from destruction.

Zhang Lie bared his blade horizontally before him. "Do you see it now?"

"I hadn't considered this possibility. Thank you for guiding me, Captain. You don't control two elements—rather, you've managed to imbue the properties of gold into your water-attuned genetic energy, haven't you?"

Sun Xiaowu was quite intelligent, and this was the conclusion he had come to with Zhang Lie's hints and from sensing his genetic energy.

Chapter 1234: Have You Intuited Something?

However, Sun Xiaowu hardly wanted to admit that Zhang Lie's command of gold-morphed water surpassed his own command of gold—that wasn't even his element!

Zhang Lie nodded. "Very good. Your intellect is salvageable, at least, but did you intuit something from that demonstration?"

"I did, Captain! Look at my transmuted genetic energy!"

Golden light exploded from Sun Xiaowu's eyes as resplendent golden runes of light soared into the air.

"[Blinding Flash: Hundredfold Echo]!"

Sun Xiaowu generated a hundred clones, each in the form of a golden mecha.

Maxing out his monarch gene fragments had increased Sun Xiaowu's strength to a tremendous extent, and he was now able to summon clones in his gigantic mecha form.

Sun Xiaowu's genetic energy was just about wiped out, and even his face turned pale.

Clearly, a hundred clones in this state was his limit.

The hundred mechas began to burn with genetic energy, shocking the members of Team Zenith and causing them to set up their defenses once again.

The clones exploded in titanic blasts, resulting in far stronger explosions than the tens of thousands of self-destructing clones previously.

Sun Mengmeng conjured a wall of flames. Silvery-white light shrouded Li Feng. An arclight dragon coiled around him and soared into the sky.

Zhang Hanxiang released a chilly frost, adding a layer of ice as a barrier against Fang Yi's attack.

Zhou Ying's long hair fluttered in the wind, the color of crystalline jade. It gave off motes of vitality. She was so beautiful no one could take their eyes away, and golden leaves whirled around her. The tips of her hair produced gray fog.

Concentrated natural energy and vitality flowed through her fingertips.

"[Avatar of the Fae: Dance of the Earth Dragon]!"

Zhou Ying released all her stored vitality at once, causing the ground to quake as thousands of jade-green wood dragons rushed out of the earth, surrounding the gathered hunters.

Jun Jiuxiao conjured a field of wind and storm, while Ye Xianchen released an aura of ghosts and shadows.

Fang Yi and Yang Ze had still not recovered fully.

Zhou Ying had long since finished treating their wounds, but they were mentally exhausted and had expended all their genetic energy, so they were still recovering from the strain.

A shining moon materialized behind Hong Xi's back, the moonlight warm and nourishing as it blanketed the members of Team Zenith. The black flames burned ever more brightly, the golden light was more blinding, the illusory dragons solidified, and the wood dragons' vitality magnified. Wind and storm grew more intense, as did the howling of spirits and shadows.

"[Goldenscale Palm: Meteors of Gold]!"

However, the explosions that Sun Xiaowu had been expecting never occurred. The clones began to burn like miniature suns, and the flames illuminated the entirety of the pocket dimension.

The gold-attuned genetic energy was lit aflame. All the clones punched forward, their fists wreathed in flame like meteors.

Zhang Lie darted between the meteors, slashing repeatedly with Guicang and bisecting the meteors.

The meteors smashed into the ground and caused the earth to crack. They erupted in a torrent of golden flames.

The innermost barrier that Zhu had laid down exploded.

"[First Form: Parting the River]!"

Incredible energy gathered on Zhang Lie's sword.

"[Slashing Void and Stars]!"

Sword energy glinted with piercing light as devastating strength rippled from Zhang Lie's blade, the upgraded form of [Striking Sun and Moon].

As Zhang Lie swung his blade around, sword energy cut through the starry skies above and penetrated through the golden mecha behind Sun Xiaowu.

It crumbled to pieces, but the other clones didn't dissipate.

Burning with golden flame, the mechas charged toward Zhang Lie. The flames surged as though the mechas would explode at any moment.

"[Shadow and Light]!"

Time suddenly sped up in the vicinity of Zhang Lie. Wide arcs of sword energy flew through the air, cutting apart all the golden mechas.

Zhang Lie sheathed his sword and shook his head. "I don't think you're quite there yet."

Sun Xiaowu chuckled wryly as he scratched his head. "It looks like I'll need quite a bit more practice."

"Did you intuit something?"

Sun Xiaowu hesitated. "Wasn't that the answer just now?"

"It looks like you haven't."

Sun Xiaowu's lips spasmed. "Captain, wasn't that the answer?"

"It looks like you'll need to experience some more of my attacks, then..." Zhang Lie walked over with his sword in hand.

Frissons of fear ran down Sun Xiaowu's back as he prepared for the battle to continue.

"[Adamantine Aegis: Martial God]!"

Golden runes emerged from Sun Xiaowu's body and revolved around him as his aura grew stronger and stronger. As the golden runes merged with his genetic energy, Sun Xiaowu transformed into a mecha over a hundred meters tall. The golden runes surrounded Sun Xiaowu, turning him into a burning sun.

Zhang Lie stepped forward and appeared before Sun Xiaowu within moments. As he slashed forward, the mecha behind him cracked into pieces, and Sun Xiaowu himself was sent flying. He crashed into the splintered dimensional barrier, which shattered.

"You're in poor condition, and your genetic energy hasn't recovered. Take some time to recover and think about just what it is that I want you to intuit."

Before Sun Xiaowu recovered, further combat would be meaningless.

Sun Xiaowu asked, "Captain, aren't you going to tell me that enemies won't give me any time to rest?"

Zhang Lie unsheathed Guicang. "Very good. It looks like you've had enough time to rest, so let's continue..."

Sun Xiaowu visibly trembled as he shook his head. "No, no, it's far from enough! Please give me some time to rest, Captain."

The members of Team Zenith took down their defenses. Sun Xiaowu's attacks were particularly large in scope and extent, but they didn't break down the barriers that the members of Team Zenith had erected. Upon witnessing that neither Zhang Lie nor Sun Xiaowu were making a move, Sun Mengmeng asked, "Is it over?"

"We're preparing for a second round," Zhang Lie called back.

While the two of them were taking a break, Zhu reinforced the shielding around the pocket dimension. As she did so, Sun Xiaowu's genetic energy recovered to roughly four-fifths of its peak value.

Zhang Lie said, "You've recovered most of your genetic energy by this point, so I'll ask again: did you intuit something?"

Sun Xiaowu asked, "Can you give me a hint, Captain?"

"It looks like you haven't, then. I've given you a hint from the very beginning, but you didn't discover it in time. We'll start the second round now."

Sun Xiaowu sighed in exasperation. "Can't you tell me the answer, Captain?"

"Without experiencing it for yourself, will you really be able to understand what I want you to see? I'm sure you'll improve significantly after this battle." Zhang Lie vanished from the spot and darted toward Sun Xiaowu, appearing before him in the blink of an eye. He thrust his sword forward.

Sun Xiaowu shot backwards like a bullet and smashed into the pocket dimension's barriers once more...

Chapter 1235: Indefinite Cloning

Golden runes revolved around Sun Xiaowu's skin and blocked Zhang Lie's sword slash, reducing the force of the impact with which he smashed into the barriers of the pocket dimension.

"[Adamantine Aegis]!"

Sun Xiaowu's aura grew stronger and stronger. As the golden runes merged with his genetic energy, Sun Xiaowu transformed into a mecha over a hundred meters tall. The golden runes surrounded Sun Xiaowu, turning him into a burning sun.

"Haven't you given up yet?" Zhang Lie continued waving the sword in his hands like a whip, lashing at Sun Xiaowu's body.

Sun Xiaowu's golden runes continued shining; even as his mecha form dissipated, Sun Xiaowu summoned it again.

Zhang Lie's each and every blow smashed apart a golden rune, but without harming Sun Xiaowu's body itself.

Yang Ze couldn't help but shake his head. "How cruel..."

Fang Yi muttered, "He's just drawing it out."

Zhang Hanxiang seemed rather confused. "What are all of you talking about?"

Yang Ze replied, "Our captain's likely afraid of harming Sun Xiaowu, so he's going easy on him. However, this sort of relentless attack is particularly draining. Personally, I'd rather take a serious blow that I need a week or two to recuperate from than this."

Fang Yi sighed. "This is torture."

Sun Mengmeng shook her head. "No, you're both mistaken. This is hardly cruel."

Li Feng explained, "Our captain's using his attacks like a form of training. He's forcing Sun Xiaowu to practice concentrating his genetic energy around an area rapidly."

Fang Yi scrutinized the match carefully. "You're right."

Sun Mengmeng continued, "Our captain has always been training us through battle."

Sun Xiaowu roared out. The golden mecha shone with light, turning brighter than even a blazing sun, illuminating the entire pocket dimension. All that light began to concentrate, so much so that it formed an outline that almost overlapped with Sun Xiaowu's body.

"[Blinding Flash: Hundred Thousandfold Echo]!"

Sun Xiaowu split into a hundred thousand clones, each of which summoned a golden mecha. The clones were so great in number that they took up half the pocket dimension by themselves, an entire army of himself.

Thanks to the combination of his newly acquired monarch gene fragments and Zhang Lie's targeted training, Sun Xiaowu was finally able to control a hundred thousand clones.

Zhang Lie swung Guicang in a horizontal slash, then drew Hanguang and swung that as well. The two strikes seemed to merge into one.

"[Golden Divide: the Radiant Sun]!"

Hundreds of thousands of clones raised their palms simultaneously as light flooded the sky. Golden radiance, bright and dense as an ocean, fell toward Zhang Lie as the palms descended. A golden flood clashed against Zhang Lie's twin blades.

Zhang Lie slashed forward with his swords again and again, countering the momentum of the light.

He alone blocked a hundred thousand blades.

"Numbers aren't indicative of strength, you know."

A pitch-black sun appeared behind Zhang Lie, and a blood moon by his feet. His aura was magnified tenfold, and a halo of black sun appeared above his forehead. Natural law seemed to warp around him.

Runes likewise appeared on the bloody moon by his feet, forming an intricate array.

"[Syzygy]!"

Struck by the bloody moonlight, the golden clones' radiance grew dim. Under the black sun, the fluctuations in Zhang Lie's genetic energy were enhanced.

Zhang Lie crossed his twin blades. The blood moon resonated with the blade in his left hand, and the black sun with the blade in his right. He simultaneously slashed forward with both blades, forming a huge celestial web.

Zhang Lie slashed forward with his twin blades, carving away at the ranks filled with a hundred thousand golden clones.

"[Adamantine Aegis: Invincible Martial God]! [Blinding Flash: Echo of Origins]!"

The remaining golden clones all swirled toward Sun Xiaowu in a wave of golden light, as though they had suddenly turned into meteors.

With a low shout, the clones overlapped with Sun Xiaowu. A dense layer of golden runes appeared over his skin with a bright burst of genetic energy. The figure of a mecha behind Sun Xiaowu grew larger and larger. Runes decorated his body, glowing behind his back like a burning sun.

A hundred, two hundred, three hundred... a thousand, two thousand, three thousand meters—Sun Xiaowu's growth showed no sign of stopping. As the mecha grew, so too did Sun Xiaowu's own strength.

Ten thousand, twenty thousand, thirty thousand meters—everyone spectating watched Sun Xiaowu in awe.

This time, Sun Xiaowu gathered even more golden light, and the combined mecha grew far larger than before. Its head struck the ceiling of even the expanded pocket dimension.

Exasperated, Zhu could only expand the pocket dimension once again.

The huge mecha seemed to materialize physically. Its body was the size of a planet, and its face looked a little like Zhang Lie's. Its armor gleaming a resplendent gold. It looked like a sun of titanic proportions.

"[Blade of the Heavens: the Sea Swells]!"

Energy poured out of Zhang Lie in waves, honing the edge of his blade. The pulses of energy struck the sea like a tsunami, devouring everything within.

Sun Xiaowu punched forward in a burst of golden light.

Despite blocking Zhang Lie's blades, he was still forced back quite some distance by sheer momentum.

"[Blinding Flash: Hundredfold Echo]!" Sun Xiaowu generated a hundred clones, each in the form of a golden mecha.

Zhang Lie frowned. "Haven't you already tried this last time?"

"I wouldn't use the same technique again on you, Captain. This is a stronger version—I'm not even sure if I can control it myself."

Sun Xiaowu howled and emitted golden light all around him.

The hundred golden giants glowed brightly like burning suns.

Yang Ze cried out in shock, "What's Sun Xiaowu intending to do?"

Li Feng glanced at Fang Yi, who was beside him.

"He's not intending to play with explosions like someone over here, is he?"

Fang Yi retorted, "What I do can't be considered explosions!"

Zhou Ying frowned. "He's Mengmeng's brother, if nothing else. I think we have to be careful."

Hong Xi had already invoked her blue moon domain. "Do we need to layer our defenses?"

"[Adamantine Aegis: Ultimate Martial God]! [Blinding Flash: Echo of Origins]!"

Sun Xiaowu transformed into a thick pillar of light that rose into the air. The pocket dimension's barrier, unable to withstand the pressure of the attack, began to crack. Hundreds of golden mechas morphed into golden suns that spun around Sun Xiaowu as they closed in on him.

The clones merged into the pillar of light that formed Sun Xiaowu. A dense layer of golden runes appeared over the pillar with a bright burst of genetic energy. The figure of a mecha behind Sun Xiaowu grew larger and larger. Runes glowed around the pillar like a burning sun.

The mecha broke through the top of the pocket dimension as it continued to grow larger...

Chapter 1236: Matryoshka

With a huge crash, Sun Xiaowu's mecha broke through the top of the pocket dimension as it continued to grow larger.

Yang Ze murmured, "This is a familiar scene indeed. Could it be..."

Even the second barrier that Zhu had laid down was unable to bear the strain any longer, and it too cracked as the mecha continued to grow relentlessly.

Fang Yi cried out, "Does [Adamantine Aegis: Invincible Martial God] have a second-stage transformation?"

Li Feng shook his head. "This is already the third stage."

With an ear-splitting crack, the mecha broke through layer after layer of dimensional barrier. Zhu was continuing to expand the space, but she couldn't keep up with Sun Xiaowu's mecha's growth.

As though breaking through an eggshell, the warlord's head poked out through the final barrier of the pocket dimension.

The enormous mecha bore characteristics of both Sun Xiaowu and Zhang Lie, as though they had combined into one entity. Sun Mengmeng couldn't help but feel rather disturbed.

Golden radiance caught the eye as the mecha's armor gleamed a resplendent gold. Its body shone brighter than the sun itself.

Indeed, the size of its body was well comparable to the sun. As it stood beyond the pocket dimension and light seeped out of its body, the entire unified world witnessed an intense golden glow.

Only the unified world was large enough to contain the figure of such a large mecha.

Yang Ze's lips twitched. "Sun Xiaowu's new technique reminds me of a series of infinite nesting dolls..."

First [Adamantine Aegis], then summoning more clones, then combining them; then transforming into a mecha, summoning more clones, then combining them; using this sort of strategy, Sun Xiaowu seemed able to augment his combat ability indefinitely. Who would be able to beat him then?

However, things weren't as straightforward as Yang Ze expected. [Adamantine Aegis: Ultimate Martial God] was Sun Xiaowu's current limit, and he was barely able to control such tremendous strength. The golden mecha seemed liable to collapse at any moment.

Sun Xiaowu was very satisfied with what he had accomplished. "What do you think, Captain?"

However, Zhang Lie was clearly dissatisfied with Sun Xiaowu's transformation.

"Is this your response to my question?"

Sun Xiaowu puffed out his chest proudly. "I don't think it's an exaggeration to say that I'm currently the strongest member of Team Zenith."

The members of Team Zenith glanced askance at him. Against Sun Xiaowu's mecha, as large as a sun, they really weren't sure whether they could contend against him.

Zhang Lie's face turned dark. "It looks like you haven't understood what I told you."

Sun Xiaowu raised his hands, and the mecha mirrored his actions. "Am I not strong enough yet?"

Sun Xiaowu felt that, in this state, he might even be able to spar on even terms with Zhang Lie.

"If you think you are, let me test you."

Guicang and Hanguang shone in unison.

"[Blades, Reverberate]!"

A blood dragon materialized around Zhang Lie. Energy poured out of him in waves, honing the edge of his blade. The pulses of energy struck the realm like a tsunami, devouring everything within.

The twin blades Guicang and Hanguang emitted a fearsome aura, shining as brightly as the sun and moon. Sword energy materialized from Guicang into a blood dragon that revolved around his body.

The blade Hanguang morphed into a black dragon, and the blade Guicang into a blood dragon. The two dragons, coiling together as one, shot out toward Duan Zisuan like a hurricane, bearing down on him with the might of Zhang Lie's spiritual sea between them.

Infused with the blood moon and the black sun, the twin dragons formed a black whirlpool. Tremendous suction, like that from a black hole, sucked up everything around the two combatants—layers of earth sank into the whirlpool, obliterated in an instant.

As the pitch-black storm grew fiercer, the air around the arena turned dark, covering up the golden radiance that Sun Xiaowu gave off.

Sun Xiaowu's pupils contracted as he sensed the power of Zhang Lie's blades.

"[Goldenscale Palm: Ten Suns' Annihilation]!"

Light flared up from around Sun Xiaowu's body as ten huge suns appeared by the manifestation of the golden mecha.

The suns were dazzlingly bright, and the golden radiance they gave off much like shining swords. They pierced through the cloud cover and the sky.

Yang Ze seemed particularly surprised. "This technique... really does seem interesting."

Li Feng asked, "Is this an evolution of [Blinding Flash]?"

The ten blazing suns were all his clones.

Sun Mengmeng chuckled as she shook her head. "So far, Xiaowu's still unable to produce full clones of his golden mecha in this ascended state, but I hadn't expected him to be able to use his incomplete clones like this."

Sun Xiaowu himself understood that he wasn't able to control his clones perfectly, but that didn't mean that they weren't useful.

His clones simply had to be functional; that was enough.

"[Echo of Origins]!"

The ten gigantic suns transformed into a wave of energy that Sun Xiaowu sucked into his body and transformed into explosive strength.

Golden energy erupted from him like a volcano, covering everything before him in piercing light. The entire world was dyed golden; a wave of gold clashed against Zhang Lie's twin black and blood dragons.

Despite Sun Xiaowu's strength, Zhang Lie was stronger.

Even if Sun Xiaowu's [Ultimate Martial God] was able to augment his strength by ten thousand times, his imperfect control of this strength made him weaker than Zhang Lie.

The golden light was forced back, and Sun Xiaowu stumbled. The golden mecha behind him seemed on the verge of crumbling.

Zhang Lie pointed at Sun Xiaowu with his pointer finger.

"It looks like you aren't as strong as you thought you would be."

Sun Xiaowu's manifestation of his golden mecha flickered. The attack just now had drained him of all his reserves.

"In the end, I can't best you, Captain."

Sun Xiaowu clutched his chest in lethargy, then raised both hands. The golden mecha vanished completely. "I don't have the strength to keep fighting."

Zhang Lie asked, "Did you intuit something?"

Sun Xiaowu frowned and replied, "That I need to focus on combining and upgrading my skills?"

Zhang Lie seemed to become angry. "It looks like you haven't intuited a thing!"

Sun Xiaowu smiled wryly. "To be frank, Captain, I have a hard time simultaneously pondering your questions while engaging in a difficult battle against you."

"In that case, we can't stop here."

Zhang Lie activated his dragon's pupil soulshard and stared straight at Sun Xiaowu's soul, one resplendent in gold.

Sun Xiaowu visibly shook as he activated his last dregs of genetic energy.

"[Second Form: Piercing the Soul]!" Zhang Lie's disaster-grade mistmeld clam soulshard activated as he infused its energy into his swords, causing them to shine radiantly with multicolored light...

Chapter 1237: Must We Continue?

Sun Xiaowu waved his hands weakly. "No, Captain, I don't have the strength to keep fighting!"

However, Zhang Lie seemed to have no intention to back down. A rainbow arc accompanied Zhang Lie's slash, as though an aurora borealis were visible in the sky. It shone in all the colors of the rainbow, momentarily hypnotizing anyone who looked at it.

All those who witnessed the hypnotic light stood still in a daze; Sun Xiaowu himself was frozen stiff as Zhang Lie's slash arced toward him.

With Guicang in hand, Zhang Lie flew through the heavens. His sword shone as brightly as the northern lights overhead, bringing him momentarily out of the physical into the intangible.

The sword stopped in front of Sun Xiaowu as Zhang Lie sheathed it and punched his face instead, sending him flying into the distance.

Only then did Sun Xiaowu suddenly wake up as though from a dream. His back was drenched with sweat; he had stood still and allowed Zhang Lie's attack to draw close, without being able to stop it at all! If they were in actual combat, he would have perished dozens of times over—but fortunately, his opponent was Zhang Lie.

Zhang Lie asked, "Do you understand your weakness now?"

Sun Xiaowu replied, "I knew I was never your opponent from the start, Captain."

"Do you know why you're so weak?"

"A difference in strength and power."

Zhang Lie shook his head. "No—it's because of density and concentration."

Sun Xiaowu recalled what Zhang Lie had said. "What you mentioned at the beginning, Captain?"

Zhang Lie explained, "Techniques aren't strong just because they're large and flashy. You've been trapped by this misconception and ignored the crux of the problem: density and concentration. Your clones and mechas have been prioritizing number and size, and while you may have seemed to grow stronger, the density of your summons has seen a notable decline. You'll need to work hard to grow stronger."

Sun Xiaowu recalled that he had indeed been focusing on [Echo of Origins] as the core of his set of techniques. It did allow him to unleash tremendous power within short periods of time, but his control and penetration ability had fallen as a result.

Sun Xiaowu bowed. "Thank you for your advice, Captain. Gold has to be resilient, sturdy, and strong. This is a point I've neglected, and I've been subconsciously developing it like water-attuned genetic energy. If you hadn't corrected me now, Captain, I would have gone down the wrong path entirely."

Zhang Lie nodded. "Your clones and mechas are very interesting and versatile, but you have to work on your genetic energy first and foremost. Temper it rather than focusing on unnecessary size and number."

"Thank you, Captain."

Sun Xiaowu wasn't badly hurt, but he had expended a great deal of genetic energy and would have to rest.

Zhang Lie called out, "Li Feng, it's your turn."

Zhu suddenly raised her voice. "Hold it!"

"What's the matter?" Zhang Lie asked.

Zhu said, "Please wait, Zhang Lie. I'm worried that your battles will do too much damage to the unified world, so I want to construct a separate pocket world first."

Zhang Lie nodded. "We'll wait for you, then."

Zhu immediately made her move, invoking her authority as ruler of the world to isolate the space in the vicinity and to construct an independent world within it. Subsequently, she layered it with spatial locks, barriers, and protections, just as she had when Sun Xiaowu fought with Zhang Lie.

Zhang Lie dispelled his dragonwolf transformation, sheathed Guicang, and reined in his aura.

Sun Xiaowu had grown much stronger than in the second realm, and Zhang Lie had used up a fair amount of his genetic energy reserves.

Li Feng was very invested in his upcoming battle against Zhang Lie. While Zhu constructed the pocket space, he was diligently warming up so that he could face his captain at peak strength.

Zhu finished just as Li Feng did.

"Here I come, Captain!"

Zhang Lie opened his eyes anew, having finished calibrating his own body as well.

"Let's see how you've improved over these last few months, then."

Li Feng took one step forward, and a huge arclight dragon manifested out of nothing.

However, in the blink of an eye, Zhang Lie dissipated it. Li Feng reeled back in the resulting explosion, not having caught Zhang Lie's actions.

"Not bad—you're as fast as expected for a light-attuned hunter.

"As fast as expected? Captain, I didn't even see your attack!"

"[Light Dragon's Remnants]!"

Li Feng marshaled his genetic energy into the form of a few white dragons, which he shot toward Zhang Lie.

"Very good!" Zhang Lie scattered the dragons with a wave of his left arm as Li Feng morphed into a beam of light and shot toward him.

"[Dance of the Incandescent Wyrms]!"

Li Feng summoned dozens of incandescent wyrms in the flash of an eye. However, the same thing happened again. The dozens of serpents were torn to shreds before they could touch Zhang Lie.

How could it be? He had attacked at close range! Li Feng had no clue what was going on. "Captain, how are you doing this?"

"Would your enemies tell you how to counter them?" Zhang Lie rolled his eyes.

"[Arclight Dragon's Imprint]!"

Li Feng waved his left arm, around which a torrent of light-attuned genetic energy was gathering. It took the form of a gigantic dragon's claw, bearing down on Zhang Lie like a beam of light.

"Then I'll have to find out through battle. Be careful, Captain."

A pillar of light rose into the air. Struck by the dazzling light, the onlookers had to shield their eyes.

"Come!"

Zhang Lie's black serpent rushed forward and devoured the pillar of light, sending Li Feng flying into the distance. Li Feng clutched his palm in pain, sucking in air as he dealt with the backlash from the blow.

"Sorry, I got too excited!"

"I can continue, Captain!" Li Feng's eyes grew resolute.

Zhang Lie nodded approvingly. "Let's do so, then."

"[Light's Bulwark: Draconic Fist]!"

Li Feng clenched his fist. His right arm, clad with light, was covered with scales. The scales began to move as an arclight dragon materialized, howled, and rushed toward the solar king...

Ripples appeared over Zhang Lie's fists. As he punched forward, waves of pale blue genetic energy obliterated the illusory arclight dragon.

Li Feng had hidden his body within the dragon, and shining light had been concentrated over and over again around his palm.

"[Light's Bulwark: Dragon's Teeth]!"

Li Feng charged up for a stronger attack. Concentrated light-attuned genetic energy surrounded him as he shot out a piercing burst of light that surpassed even Sun Xiaowu's penetrating power.

However, Zhang Lie reached out and crushed those fangs of light with nothing but his palms.

Recognizing that his attack had failed, Li Feng quickly retreated, but he never stopped attacking.

"[Light's Bulwark: Meteoric Fist]!"

The arclight imprint rapidly gathered, and a white dragon appeared behind him. As Li Feng punched forward, the dragon shot toward the hydra like a bullet from a sniper rifle. It left behind a starry trail, breathtakingly beautiful.

Zhang Lie didn't seem to invoke a technique. He merely stood still and casually waved a hand, but the galactic mirage shattered around him.

Chapter 1238: Emulated a Few Techniques

"[Light's Bulwark: Earthbreak]!"

Li Feng's fists, glowing with light, were packed with huge quantities of light-attuned genetic energy. They smashed into the ground in a massive explosion. All that energy headed in a certain direction.

As the ground cracked, white light zigzagged toward Zhang Lie. Zhang Lie's feet stomped on the ground, reinforcing it against Li Feng's technique. The white light exploded as though a volcano had erupted, spraying out light in the vicinity of Zhang Lie. Even so, Zhang Lie was wholly unhurt.

Li Feng seemed to have predicted this outcome. He passed through the white light and made use of its optical properties to shroud himself as he attacked.

However, without seeing just how Zhang Lie had struck, he was sent flying through the air. He barely stabilized himself in time.

Li Feng turned to Zhang Lie. "I've emulated one of your techniques with my own, Captain, and I'd like to get your opinion of it."

"Very well," Zhang Lie replied.

"[Light's Bulwark: Heavenfall]!" A silvery-white glow, blinding in its intensity, exploded from Li Feng's body. The shockwaves that emanated from his body were so intense as to distort space. They roared through the air like thundering dragons, turning the sky white.

Zhang Lie approved of Li Feng's efforts. The technique was based on one of his, but Li Feng had converted it into something completely his own.

"You've been paying careful attention to my advice from the second realm, haven't you?"

"Of course, Captain. I'd like for you to witness the results of my labor today."

As Li Feng punched forward, light-attuned genetic energy transformed into a raging flood. Thick, concentrated energy, like roaring dragons and galloping steeds, like sharp blades piercing heaven and earth, fell from the sky.

"Let's see it, then!"

Pale blue genetic energy rippled about Zhang Lie's arms. He flicked his wrists, causing a frightening aura to descend on the world. The sky began to darken, and a fish the size of a whale materialized in the air.

"[Fists of the Silent Sea: Soar]!"

A howling gale swept over the two combatants. As more and more genetic energy gathered around Zhang Lie's arms, it looked as though he were at the heart of a whirlpool.

Zhang Lie had used the technique on which Li Feng's [Light's Bulwark: Heavenfall] was based— [Fists of the Silent Sea: Soar].

A huge wave soared into the air. As Zhang Lie punched forward, the fish slammed its huge tail on the ground and sent a torrent of water surging.

Ripples of energy spread out from Zhang Lie, warping the space around him. The towering waves looked like enraged black dragons, flooding the hall.

The white light and pale blue waves smashed into each other, causing the barriers Zhu had erected to crack.

A huge rumble shook the heavens, and the world quaked.

As the waves burst apart, the air filled with echoes of Zhang Lie's signature genetic energy, shattering space and swallowing up all life in its vicinity. The white light ran rampant; the world was already on the verge of breaking apart after just a few minutes of fighting.

Pale blue waves, propelled by the might of a boundless ocean; bright white light, sharp as swords—the two different types of energy wrecked each other and the environment around them.

Zhu clutched her head. "As expected..."

The members of Team Zenith all erected their barriers.

In the clash between the two energies, Li Feng lost out. He was forced to stumble back.

Li Feng chuckled wryly. "I'm still far weaker than you are, Captain."

Zhang Lie praised him. "You've improved tremendously."

Li Feng gave him another wry smile. "Don't make fun of me, Captain."

"I'm being serious."

"But you haven't been fighting us seriously, have you?"

"I don't want to heavily injure you," Zhang Lie replied.

"This might be the truth, but it's still painful to hear. I think I might even rather be heavily injured by your full might."

"You've emulated a few other techniques of mine, haven't you?"

Li Feng nodded. "Yes, Captain."

"Demonstrate them all. I'll consider them seriously."

"Then, be careful, Captain!"

Li Feng's aura grew to its peak. Wrapped up in shining light, an arclight dragon emerged from his body and circled upwards.

"[Light's Bulwark: Thousand Dragons Soaring]!"

Li Feng shouted. As he punched upward into the sky, all his genetic energy condensed in his fists, launching dozens of dragons into the sky.

As Li Feng yelled out, dragons of light materialized and circled his arms. As he punched upward into the sky, all his genetic energy condensed in his fists, launching dozens of dragons into the sky.

The dragons' cries sounded like peals of thunder as they swooped through the air, each dragon so large it could swallow a blazing sun whole.

Thousands of arclight dragons criss-crossed in mid-air before swooping down like meteors.

"[Fists of the Silent Sea: Fade]!"

The thousands of arclight dragons were no match in size to the huge black dragon Zhang Lie had summoned. Compared to it, the arclight dragons were nothing more than bugs. The black dragon opened its maw wide and bit down on the arclight horde. Space cracked where its teeth intersected, leaving void behind.

The black dragon launched itself toward Li Feng, who defended himself with a huge greatsword, illuminating the sky with white light.

As he swung the sword, a heavy slash bisected the black dragon.

A wave of annihilation exploded around the dragon. Pitch-black energy swallowed up everything in the vicinity like a storm at sea. However, Li Feng was prepared. He knew of this technique, and he had no intention of clashing head-on with it. He transformed into an illusory arclight dragon and disappeared from the spot.

Zhang Lie, who had been standing far away just moments ago, suddenly appeared behind him and patted his shoulder.

"How do you feel?"

Li Feng was so shaken by the sudden contact that he almost leapt up. He wiped at the sweat on his forehead and gave Zhang Lie a thumbs up. "You truly are incredible, Captain."

He had thought himself fast, but Zhang Lie was even faster. If Zhang Lie had been an enemy and had kicked him into the storm of annihilation...

Zhang Lie asked, "Did you intuit something?"

Li Feng chuckled. "I suppose we shall have to continue."

"Naturally," Zhang Lie replied. "If you haven't learned anything, of course we have to continue."

"In that case, Captain, take this!"

Knowing that struggle would be futile, Li Feng struck once again.

"[Birth of the Holy Dragon]!"

Li Feng leapt high into the air and landed on the dragon's head, his sword gleaming brightly as though it had been dipped in liquid light. As he raised the sword to the skies, it glowed and expanded, morphing into a huge blade of light.

The blade parted the clouds and lit up the entire patch of void. At that very moment, Li Feng looked like a god descending from the heavens.

Chapter 1239: A Passable Imitation

"Your rendition of [Light's Bulwark: Thousand Dragons Soaring] is very strong, but I think it's still lacking in terms of brute force. Consider this."

Pitch-black genetic energy gushed out from around Zhang Lie, covering up the white light that Li Feng gave off within moments. The pocket dimension turned dark almost immediately.

"[Fists of the Silent Sea: Hundred Dragons Soaring]!"

A horde of dragons launched out of Zhang Lie's left arm as he expended half his genetic energy in one supercharged attack.

Howling with the force of thunder, the hundred dragons soared through the air. They were fierce and domineering, and all hundred of them boasted the power of annihilation.

They tore apart the arclight dragons within moments. Zhang Lie slashed downward with his sword, causing everything before him to tremble. Pitch-black genetic energy exploded forth, destroying everything in sight.

Li Feng hurriedly flew backwards in an attempt to escape from the wave of annihilation, but a tremendous suction tore apart the pocket dimension. Li Feng stuck his sword in the ground to anchor himself.

His face was pale. Zhang Lie's strength had been far too overwhelming; there was little that [Light's Bulwark: Thousand Dragons Soaring] could compete with against [Fists of the Silent Sea: Thousand Dragons Soaring].

One invoked light-attuned genetic energy; the other, energy of annihilation.

For [Light's Bulwark] to surpass [Fists of the Silent Sea], Li Feng would have to find a source of energy of equal strength as Zhang Lie's energy of annihilation.

"Don't get distracted in front of your enemy," Zhang Lie warned, punching forward and sending pitch-black genetic energy extending toward Li Feng like a serpent.

"[Birth of the Holy Dragon: Starcrest Dragonblade]!" Li Feng yelled out. He pulled out a blade from which light began to gather. As he struck, dozens of dragons fell from the skies like meteors.

When the pitch-black genetic energy struck the meteors, it absorbed them and disintegrated the dragons.

The stellar river that resulted from Li Feng's technique wrapped around Zhang Lie like a ribbon.

With a wave of his hand, Zhang Lie destroyed the ribbon with the sound of shattering glass.

Starlight fell.

"[Birth of the Holy Dragon: Arclight Slash]!"

Li Feng lifted his sword high above his head. A silvery-white dragon emerged from behind him, merged with the sword, and sent a beam of light piercing the skies. Li Feng struck, and the sword slash morphed into a dragon.

Zhang Lie raised an arm and suppressed the arclight dragon.

Li Feng waved his sword of light, each arc releasing a new dragon.

Zhang Lie punched forward with his fists, causing the space to quake. Spatial ripples spurred the tides onward as the dragons disintegrated.

"[Birth of the Holy Dragon: Milky Way Slash]!" Dozens of sword slashes emanated from Li Feng, each with a starry splendor reminiscent of the Milky Way. The stars in the night sky shone brightly as a galaxy seemed to unfold around Li Feng.

The starlight was so splendid that it would make any onlookers dizzy.

Genetic energy gathered on Zhang Lie's fist, like the roaring of the sea. A shark manifested behind him and swam forward.

Zhang Lie faced the river of stellar light with just his pointer finger. Sword energy gushed out of his fingers like a waterfall, clashing against Li Feng's technique in a dazzling explosion of stellar mist.

The resulting explosion was inordinately beautiful, but the waves of genetic energy that resulted in the aftermath were no less potent for their beauty. The members of Team Zenith hurriedly erected defenses against the attack.

"[Birth of the Holy Dragon]!"

Li Feng cut forward. The overflowing sword energy materialized in the form of a light dragon that seemed like it could part the very sea.

Zhang Lie blocked the attack once more with his pointer finger, sending splashes of water all throughout the arena.

"This technique looks like it's based on one of mine. Is that right?" Zhang Lie asked curiously.

Li Feng grinned with his teeth. "If even you can't identify the technique from which this originated, Captain, it must mean that it's wholly my own now."

Li Feng's arclight energy suppressed Zhang Lie's water-attuned genetic energy as the shark behind Zhang Lie rushed forward and knocked Li Feng back.

"[The Boundless Blade: Cloudstep]!"

Li Feng soared into the air, propelling himself upward with every cloud he stepped on. He sent his light-imbued sword arcing through the air.

Zhang Lie slashed his pointed finger through the void, sending water-attuned genetic energy hurtling forth as though in a river, bisecting the silver energy.

Li Feng flew through the air, morphing into beams of light that sprayed out sword energy at Zhang Lie.

Zhang Lie gathered water-attuned genetic energy between his fingers and manifested a river of startling proportions. The river shot forth like a dragon and smashed against Li Feng's blades.

In the end, Li Feng's slashes were incapable of slashing apart the incoming streams. Instead, the current swept his arclight dragons away into the air.

Fighting spirit welled up in Li Feng's eyes. Ever since the second realm, he had been emulating Zhang Lie. Now that he was facing off against the real thing and demonstrating the results of his training, he had to make a good showing.

"[Birth of the Holy Dragon: Realm of Heaven]!"

Li Feng raised his sword high into the air. Light-attuned genetic energy gathered around it, invoking the stars. Holy hymns echoed around him, and the concentrated energy manifested as outspread wings to his back.

He seemed to be right by the lake of gray sludge, but simultaneously a world apart—in a dimension beyond, where the gray sludge couldn't attack back.

Spatial manipulation!

A hundred dragons wrapped around Li Feng's sword, and his light-attuned genetic energy was forming complicated patterns around him. Light swirled around him, as though manifesting in the form of illusions, as he swung his blade down.

Upon seeing this blow from Li Feng, even Zhang Lie had to pay attention.

"[Manifold Gates of Heaven]!"

Radiant white light exploded from the point of impact, the holy light of heaven. Li Feng's sword slashed apart the gates, unleashing concentrated light.

Upon witnessing the scale of the attack, the members of Team Zenith hurriedly layered their defenses. Hong Xi's pale blue moonlight shone down on them all. Sun Mengmeng manifested another black firewall. By then, Fang Yi and Yang Ze had both recovered, and they too were contributing to the defense.

They had been protected by the others in a state of weakness; it was time for them to give back.

Refracted light shone around Yang Ze, who isolated them in space.

Fang Yi thrust his spear quickly, combining the energy of chaos with wind and storm. A wind dragon and storm tiger manifested and formed a wall in front of them all.

Zhang Hanxiang released a chilly frost, adding a layer of ice as a barrier against Fang Yi's attack.

"[Avatar of the Fae: Earthbound Prison]!" Zhou Ying released all her stored vitality at once, causing the ground to quake as thousands of jade-green wood dragons rushed out of the earth.

The members of Team Zenith were wrapped up by layer after layer of dragons.

Jun Jiuxiao conjured a field of wind and storm, while Ye Xianchen released an aura of ghosts and shadows. Sun Xiaowu rested in their midst, still recovering from his exertion.

Chapter 1240: Ultimate Techniques

The pocket dimension crumbled in earnest. The spatial locks that Zhu had set up cracked with the intensity of the white light that Li Feng had manifested.

From the depths of the holy radiance, a blood-red explosion suddenly tore apart the light. It radiated outward, dyeing everything red in the process.

Strong though the light might be, it wasn't stronger than Fang Yi's sixfold strike, and only three of Team Zenith's layered defenses had fallen.

Zhang Lie transformed into a dragonwolf with russet fur and limbs covered with a dragon's scales, and a dragon's horns grew out of his forehead.

Li Feng crowed, "I forced you to use your dragonwolf soulshard, Captain! It looks like I really have improved a great deal."

Zhang Lie nodded. "All of you have been improving since the beginning."

"In that case, Captain, are you pleased with my progress?"

"That depends on what you've learned in battle."

Li Feng sighed. "I haven't intuited what you're trying to teach me, Captain."

"Then let's keep fighting!"

"Be careful, Captain. The rest of my techniques that I'll show you are all ultimate techniques, far stronger than anything I've displayed to date!"

"Excellent. Let's see how much you've grown, then."

Zhang Lie unsheathed Guicang, preparing to get serious himself.

"[The Boundless Blade: Heaven's Gate]!"

Li Feng struck with his sword. A river of holy light seemed to trail behind him, and arclight dragons could be seen amidst the light. The source of the river was a pair of ornate doors. As those doors opened up, countless arclight dragons poured out from behind the doors, forming a concentrated river of light.

Suddenly, with a flash, that white light was bisected.

Zhang Lie's attack was merely a thin line, but it felt as though countless whirlwinds of sword energy were manifesting before him. The holy dragons that had been summoned in a dense horde were obliterated in bursts of white light.

The white light shot out all around like sharp blades. Millions of holy dragons transformed into millions of blades, more concentrated than even raindrops in a storm.

Zhang Lie revolved in mid-air, defending himself with a sword.

"[The Boundless Blade: Heaven's Gate]!"

Silvery-white genetic energy burst forth as Li Feng raised the sword in his hand high into the air, as though a god were descending on the world.

The entire sky was overshadowed by a silvery-white glow that faced off against the golden light.

Holy hymns began to ring through the air.

The hymns seemed to pierce straight through the soul, until the onlookers felt suddenly at ease, as though there was no strife with which to concern themselves.

Zhang Lie's soul was exceptionally strong, his will resolute, and he was wholly unaffected.

Like waves, the silver glow pulsed forward, lapping the shore, sounding like peals of thunder, like stampeding hooves. Each silver wave morphed into an arclight dragon, soaring through the air.

The surface of the sea frothed with angry waves, like dragons emerging with the tide.

Countless arclight dragons soared through the sky, which thundered amidst forks of white lightning. It looked as though a holy world were forming in the sky.

Li Feng struck. A holy storm raged around him. Sword energy manifested as trailing dragons. A god descended as the heavens raged, as lightning forked through the air.

Li Feng's blade arced through the air and landed like a heavenly tribulation. Thousands of holy dragons smote the solar king's forces,

The crackling of thunder covered up the sound of hymns, as though it was a requiem for the world...

"[The Boundless Blade: the River Lethe]!"

Zhang Lie raised the blade in his hand high into the air, encircled by black genetic energy. The temperature of the air dropped to sub-zero values, and a strong wind buffeted the two combatants present. Blood-colored frost appeared around them.

An underworld river materialized in the air. As though the doors to hell had just been thrown open, tens of thousands of serpents rushed out in a flood like thousands of courageous soldiers attacking in force.

Holy light flashed like lightning. The holy dragons danced madly through the air. White sword energy formed a holy storm as Zhang Lie found himself being suppressed for the first time. His black serpents could be endlessly regenerated, but Li Feng's slash somehow seemed to be of a higher tier than Zhang Lie's. Zhang Lie couldn't help but be startled.

The current formed by millions of black serpents was chopped up into small fragments; [The Boundless Blade: Heaven's Gate] was dozens, even hundreds of times stronger, than the last technique Li Feng had executed.

Pitch-black energy exploded from Zhang Lie as though a demon were descending on the world. Zhang Lie struck once more.

"[The Boundless Blade: the River Lethe]!"

Waves surged forward, sounding like peals of thunder, like stampeding hooves.

The surface of the sea frothed with angry waves, like dragons emerging with the tide. The entire sea roiled, and lightning crackled amidst the void.

Countless serpents swam across the raging sea as lightning flashed ominously overhead, a scene right out of an apocalypse.

As Zhang Lie struck, an underworld river hurtled into existence, roaring into the sea. The sword energy roiled like black waves.

The sea had morphed into a boundless battlefield. The sea breeze was as a horn to action, and the serpents, thousands of courageous soldiers heeding its call.

The entire world was covered in flashes of light and darkness, which clashed in the center of the pocket dimension.

The two techniques formed a surprising pair: it was evident that Li Feng's [The Boundless Blade: Heaven's Gate] was meant to be a counterpart of Zhang Lie's [The Boundless Blade: the River Lethe], but Li Feng had refined his version of the technique until it was all his own.

The netherworld river and holy storm clashed with each other, as did their draconic counterparts. Holy lightning struck black waves; the clash between heaven and hell caused the pocket dimension to tremble, as though it were undergoing a severe tribulation.

The clash between Zhang Lie's black serpents and Li Feng's holy lightning caused the serpents to continuously explode and regenerate.

In a clash of techniques with the same origin, however, Zhang Lie could hardly lose.

Eventually, the netherworld river overwhelmed the horde of holy dragons, the lightning, and the holy storm. Zhang Lie's netherworld river triumphed over all.