

## U. Warlord 1311

Chapter 1311: Trial-Taker's Chamber

Zhang Lie: an emperor-grade lifeform

Techniques: Rippling Walk (pinnacle), Three-Wave Crescendo (pinnacle), Calm Waters (pinnacle), Fists of the Silent Sea (pinnacle), The Boundless Blade (pinnacle), Eclipse (pinnacle), Syzygy (pinnacle), Ninesoul Dragonblade (pinnacle), Blade of the Heavens (pinnacle)

Genes: Basic, 160; Mutated, 150; Superior, 150; Peak, 150; Disaster, 10; Monarch, 0; Emperor, 0

Soulshards: White Grub (superior), Blood Ant (superior), Potbellied Toad (mutated), Eternalspring Cocoon (superior), Dragonwolf (superior), Moonlight Wurm (peak), Golden Roc (peak), Dragonwhale (disaster), Mismeld Clam (disaster)

Zhang Lie had obtained ten more disaster gene fragments. He walked up to the gates of hell, but they didn't open.

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

A pitch-black ocean appeared in its place. 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 serpents smashed apart the gates of hell as Zhang Lie walked inside. The scenery changed. It was a white domain, with a giant glowing orb at its center.

The orb hummed. "Congratulations on finishing the first trial."

Zhang Lie frowned as the orb continued to speak. "Welcome, elite warrior, to the trial-taker's chamber. Six trials will be set for you within. Every three trials you finish, a reward will be provided. When the first five trials are complete, you will be able to access the sixth and final trial. Before you finish the trials, you will not be able to leave. Would you like to proceed with the trial or rest?"

Zhang Lie raised his head and asked, "Where did this trial-taker's chamber come from?"

"It is related to the reason that the dimensional world exists: in order to develop stronger elite warriors. Would you like to proceed with the trial or rest?"

"The reason that the dimensional world exists?"

The orb repeated what it had said before. "Would you like to proceed with the trial or rest?"

It didn't possess sufficient intelligence to answer questions beyond the realm of its programming—or perhaps, Zhang Lie didn't have the authority to command it to.

"Is there a place to rest around here?" Zhang Lie asked.

A door opened to his front, and Zhang Lie walked in. The interior of the room was clean and sparse. Zhang Lie checked to see if there was any danger within, only to find an unexpected possession in a corner of the room—the pendant of a necklace, which struck Zhang Lie as very familiar for some reason.

This was clearly an object produced within the Milky Way. He pressed the latch, and a miniaturized hologram appeared in view: a photograph of his family, his father, mother, Zhang Hanxiang, and himself. Zhang Lie's eyes widened. "What's this doing here?"

The orb replied, "This is a possession left behind by a previous trial-taker. This space is independent from the dimensional world at large, and is unaffected by its rules and laws."

Zhang Lie cried out, "What's this doing here? This belonged to my parents!"

Zhang Lie only knew that his parents were genetic hunters themselves, but not how strong they were.

All he remembered was that they had vanished one day, leaving him and Zhang Hanxiang behind.

The orb continued, "This was a possession left behind by one of the previous trial-takers. Perhaps your parents were among them."

Zhang Lie asked, "Where are they now?"

"Perhaps they perished during a trial, or perhaps they reached its end."

"Can I meet them?"

Zhang Lie couldn't repress his feelings after suddenly finding a trace of his parents where he least expected to.

The orb replied, "Neither of your parents exist within this space."

"Where are they?"

"It is recommended that you finish all the trials and head deep within. The answer you seek shall be revealed to you there."

"The answer?"

The orb replied robotically, "You possess insufficient qualifications to learn more."

Zhang Lie was about to rest for a little, but upon realizing that his parents had once visited this chamber, he couldn't help himself. If finishing these trials could lead him to his parents...

"I'd like to start the trials immediately."

The orb replied, "The system has identified an appropriate trial for you."

A pillar of light shone down on him, and Zhang Lie was transported to another small world.

He sensed a disaster-grade aura before him. Zhang Lie's current opponent was a humanoid black turtle.

It had four thick, stubby limbs, but was bipedal with a turtle's shell on his back. The pressure that it gave off didn't pale in comparison with the black nine-headed lion that Zhang Lie had defeated.

Upon seeing Zhang Lie's arrival, the turtle slammed a limb toward him.

Zhang Lie defended with crossed arms. The ground quaked and his feet sank into the mud as the turtle struck him, but Zhang Lie defended himself firmly.

"What incredible strength!"

The image of a golden tiger appeared behind Zhang Lie's back, and its roar echoed through the air.

"[Ninecarp Transformation: Golden Tiger]!"

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.

Zhang Lie transformed into a ray of golden light. Sharp crystals of genetic energy pierced through everything in their path.

Despite having the appearance of a turtle, it was exceptionally nimble. It jumped into the air, dozens of meters high, and avoided the frightening attack.

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

Condensed genetic energy solidified into sharp silver crystals, which sliced through the air like blades.

The turtle agilely executed a backflip, retreating hundreds of meters in an instant. It landed on the ground with a huge crash, smashing a crater in the ground where it stood. Its body glowed with radiant light. Suddenly, a wave of black fog rose up from the ground and surrounded it like a hurricane.

Chapter 1312: The Second Trial

The turtle sucked in a breath and seemed to expand multiple times in size. Its muscles bunched up around its body as it charged forward. Where it stepped, the ground cracked. Huge boulders were sent flying into the air, threatening to drown Zhang Lie in the resulting bombardment.

The turtle pounced toward Zhang Lie.

"Open!" Zhang Lie shouted. He stomped on the ground with both feet and rose into the air, looking for a moment like a martial god.

Silvery-white genetic energy spun around Zhang Lie's fists. His genetic energy split the turtle's aura in two as Zhang Lie punched forward. He glowed with radiant light, and runes appeared before him. This wasn't mere physical strength. As Zhang Lie activated his genetic energy, the black turtle

spurred forth the energy of evolution that had suffused it. The combination was explosive and destructive.

When the two combatants collapsed, the turtle's hand, which seemed about to enclose Zhang Lie, suddenly spasmed. The turtle roared in pain.

A fist had punched through its arm, spraying crystalline shards everywhere. It shook in fright.

As the turtle howled again, the dark clouds of energy surrounding it grew even more solid than before. Its arms retreated into its shell as it vibrated, knocking Zhang Lie back.

Zhang Lie's fists pummeled the turtle's shell, causing a huge commotion.

The turtle roared and pounded its chest as the shell flew out of its body, surrounded by black light, and shot toward Zhang Lie with a tremendous aura.

"What?!" Zhang Lie cried out in shock. The turtle's shell was large and moved surprisingly quickly. It was difficult to avoid, and quickly enveloped Zhang Lie.

The turtle began to pound on its shell, causing it to toll loudly with every strike. The sound echoed and reverberated within the shell, so loud as to be ear-splitting; the turtle was trying to quake Zhang Lie to death, to turn him into a pile of mush.

However, the turtle's attempts were ineffective. Zhang Lie's feet sunk down into the ground, as though rooted, and he resisted the effects of the shell.

An unusual sound came from within. It began to hum in a curious manner, and umbral light began to flood into its center.

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

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.

As Zhang Lie manipulated space, that crystalline genetic energy shot out of the wall behind him in the form of sharp daggers, in a rain of crystals that were able to penetrate anything thanks to Zhang Lie's mastery of space.

The crystals struck the turtle's shell with repeated plinks. The turtle smirked. Its shell was far too hard to be broken by such weak techniques.

More and more crystals struck the shell. Under the concentrated and incessant attacks, a small crack finally appeared on its surface.

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. He struck directly at the crack that the white crystals had created.

Bloody light flared and pierced through the turtle shell as a huge wave of energy erupted from the point of impact. The turtle was sent flying.

It took a long time before the turtle was able to get back to its feet, at which point it roared in outrage and charged forward once more. Its limbs were glowing with light, and scales accumulated over its arms in layers. It looked particularly wild and violent.

The turtle, in a feat of extreme strength, lifted up an entire mountain and threw it toward Zhang Lie. More shockingly, Zhang Lie didn't retreat. He withstood the attack with shocking might and majesty.

The world quaked. The fight between man and beast shook heaven and earth, and the earth itself seemed about to crumble. After exchanging blow after blow, Zhang Lie found an opening. His fingers wrapped tightly around one of the turtle's fingers, then flung it up into the air and smashed it into a mountain of rock, still holding onto the finger.

The turtle roared; his finger had been broken.

Zhang Lie grabbed ahold of another finger and raised its body once more, smashing it down on another nearby mountain. Dust and smoke rose into the air as huge boulders rained down from the top of the mountain, almost burying the turtle alive.

The turtle roared again. After having suffered repeated attacks, its body shrank down to a few dozen meters in size.

Zhang Lie's eyes lit up. He rushed forward and began pummeling at the turtle's prone body.

This time, he grabbed the turtle by its wrist and smashed it against the ground, causing cracks that grew dozens, hundreds of meters long. Subsequently, he picked it up by its head and hurled it all the way toward the horizon. Where it landed, a huge thud echoed all through the air, and the horizon itself seemed to shake.

Just how much strength was hidden in Zhang Lie's body?

"[Fists of the Silent Sea: Hundred Dragons Soaring]!" As Zhang Lie cocked his fist, dozens of crystalline dragons formed behind his back, roaring in unison and causing the sky to tremble.

The next moment, they shot out through his fists. The crystalline dragons harbored magnificent strength and beauty. The turtle gaped in shock, summoning its shell and hiding behind it as the crystalline dragons swooped down in an aerial bombardment. Black energy rippled across the air.

Zhang Lie had cracked the turtle's shell. Now, that crack continued to propagate. In the end, the shell was unable to withstand Zhang Lie's might and shattered into thousands of fragments.

Silver light sparkled. Silver shards pierced through the fragments and the turtle's chest, striking its core.

The will of the fourth realm announced in Zhang Lie's head, [You successfully killed a disaster-grade heroic black turtle. By consuming the core of the disaster-grade heroic black turtle, you may receive one to ten disaster gene fragments.]

The black core was surprisingly dense, far more so than those of other disaster-grade lifeforms he had encountered.

Zhang Lie cut his palm with his sword, then dripped blood onto the core. The moment it touched the core, the blood was quickly absorbed into its interior. It sucked up more and more of Zhang Lie's blood until it turned blood-red.

Zhang Lie opened his wounds again and again until the core became perfectly transparent. Then, he closed his eyes and began pouring concentrated, black genetic energy from his body into the core.

As Zhang Lie clutched the crystalline orb, he felt some unusual sense of kinship with it...

### Chapter 1313: The Third Trial

Zhang Lie swallowed the core whole without even daring to chew it. As the core slid down his throat, Zhang Lie felt a fiery, numbing sensation spread throughout his body.

Subsequently, all that energy contained within the core burst apart. Almost immediately, Zhang Lie took on the color of a boiled prawn. As the energy in the disaster-grade core gushed through his body, he circulated genetic energy through his framework, faster and faster.

As he assimilated the disaster gene fragments into his body, Zhang Lie gave off stronger and stronger beams of light. He circulated genetic energy through his body at an incredible pace, his framework fully activated to capture and transform his newfound strength.

His evolution was spurred further and further onward by the energy of the disaster-grade core, which caused his body to toll as it ran amok.

Any other hunter's body would have collapsed under the strain, but Zhang Lie was an emperor-grade lifeform, and more than resilient enough to handle the stress of the disaster-grade evolution.

Zhang Lie: an emperor-grade lifeform

Techniques: Rippling Walk (pinnacle), Three-Wave Crescendo (pinnacle), Calm Waters (pinnacle), Fists of the Silent Sea (pinnacle), The Boundless Blade (pinnacle), Eclipse (pinnacle), Syzygy (pinnacle), Ninesoul Dragonblade (pinnacle), Blade of the Heavens (pinnacle)

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Within moments, he had obtained ten disaster gene fragments.

Zhang Lie returned to the large, pure white trial-taker's chamber. The orb spoke. "Congratulations on accomplishing the second trial. Would you like to proceed with the trials or rest?"

"Initiate the third trial immediately."

Zhang Lie couldn't wait to search for clues about his parents' whereabouts, or even to find them outright.

"Third trial ground assigned. Teleporting now!"

As a pillar of light shone down on him, Zhang Lie was transported to another small world.

The moment he stepped forward, a ray of white light shot toward him.

The disaster-grade lifeform in the third trial flashed with white light. Gusts of wind surrounded it as it sent hundreds, thousands of tons of rock into the air. It clashed against Zhang Lie once and again, claws against fist, as those rocks were sent flying all around the two combatants.

The third disaster-grade lifeform was a white tiger that seemed to be made of gold.

The tiger roared, spraying out a burst of silver light. Killing intent filled the air. Zhang Lie blocked the attack with a burst of energy. Behind him, a mountain collapsed and exploded, the rock turning into smithereens.

A huge white claw slammed down on his body, but Zhang Lie dodged it. A huge trench formed where the claw landed, the bottom of which couldn't be seen from up above.

The white tiger attacked furiously. Every part of its body could be used as a weapon—even with its back to Zhang Lie, it could strike at him with a flick of its tail.

Its ferocity was shocking.

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.

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

"[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 land.

The tiger sprayed out a burst of white light, shining with metallic luster, as it defended itself against the titanic waves. An overwhelming explosion rang out.

A huge rumble shook the heavens, and the entire 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. Pale blue tides raged through the air like a storm. The ground cracked and huge clods of earth were pulverized.

The white tiger roared, its eyes cold, as it leapt toward Zhang Lie.

As a genetic lifeform, battle was imprinted in the core of its being. It leaned into its intuition, its attacks turning fiercer, more domineering; no genetic hunter could match its instincts.

Zhang Lie smashed forward with a punch, causing both combatants to quake. A meteor's worth of energy exploded in mid-air, and the ground quaked as though a volcano were about to explode.

The tiger roared again as sharp blades grew out of its back at even intervals along its spine, each with a silvery-white sheen. Killing intent filled the air.

The blades stood like pillars separating heaven from earth, thick and ice-cold, giving the onlookers a chilling sensation.

The blades were ridiculously massive, and unusual phenomena were occurring around them. Blood was starting to appear on each blade. It was a frightening sight.

The tiger leapt forward, causing all the blades to suddenly turn toward their target. They gathered in a square around the tiger and shot toward Zhang Lie simultaneously.

The bloodstained blades, suffused with an aura of calamity, approached Zhang Lie at breakneck speed.

Zhang Lie swung his own blades with the resplendence of dawn, defending against the sudden assault.

Chapter 1314: Absorption and Evolution

Light covered the land like an intense meteor shower. Formless ripples shattered rock and cleaved mountains, shocking all onlookers once more.

"[The Boundless Blade: Yawning Wave]!"

Water-attuned genetic energy encircled Zhang Lie's finger as he unleashed devastating sword energy.

With every slash of Guicang, torrential waves of water were generated, clashing against the tiger's blades, but the sharp blades that the tiger had somehow produced seemed impervious to damage. Killing intent formed a thick aura around them, so concentrated that it could affect material form. However, Zhang Lie remained unaffected despite his proximity. He was resisting the blades' damage with his blades and with formless will.

Zhang Lie extended his pointer finger like a sword, and water-attuned genetic energy gathered around it—like a gentle stream, to deflect the momentum of the blades; and simultaneously like river rapids, shooting forward with such force and density that the water was more dangerous than a naked blade.

The essence of water was completely reflected in Zhang Lie's attacks. He displayed tremendous swordsmanship and strength as he repeatedly nullified the tiger's blades.

The tiger roared, its eyes cold. It spat out a mouthful of white light, causing the blades to gleam even more brightly. They pierced through the pitch-black genetic energy shielding Zhang Lie and headed straight for his body.

The fight had reached its climax. Zhang Lie pursed his lips—the blades were too strong, and there were over two dozen of them! It would be difficult to handle them all simultaneously.

The blades flew toward him and pinned him down with overwhelming strength, causing the land to crumble where they landed.

Each blade was like a thick pillar; if any were to strike Zhang Lie, he wouldn't be pierced through, but rather ground into meat paste.

As all the blades landed simultaneously, Zhang Lie barely dodged them one by one. Space around him warped and distended; a number of black holes formed, one around each blade, trapping him in an unavoidable attack.

Even so, the fighting spirit in Zhang Lie's eyes only grew more intense.

"[Ninecarp Transformation]!"

A black serpent materialized behind Zhang Lie, by now so large and so developed that it resembled the world-swallowing serpent Jormungandr. It let out a threatening hiss as its scales clicked together.

Pitch-black energy surrounded Zhang Lie.

Resplendent silver light, like armor, shielded the tiger from the corrosion of Zhang Lie's black energy.

"[Fists of the Silent Sea: Fade]!" Zhang Lie punched forward, and the black serpent behind him shot forth. The serpent revealed its fangs as it tore through the tiger's armor, revealing crystalline flesh underneath.

The tiger roared in anger, and its aura strengthened even further. The two dozen blades gleamed with killing intent and shot toward Zhang Lie once more, swamping the battlefield in white light.

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.

Bloody claws filled the sky, deflecting the tiger's blades.

The tiger roared in outrage, spitting out a ball of hazy light, charged with skeins of radiant energy so bright they were evaporating in the air.

A thousand rays of rosy light, in an endless stream, enveloped all that lay below.

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

As Zhang Lie punched forward, a blood dragon roared in outrage and shot forward.

As the blades tore apart the blood dragon, the frightening energy that lay dormant within the blood dragon's body surged out.

A wave of annihilation exploded around the dragon. Pitch-black energy swallowed up everything in the vicinity like a storm at sea. The rocks, boulders, and bones strewn across the ground were all consumed by the black-hole like energy of annihilation.

The fight was over.

Zhang Lie turned to leave, only to hear a tiger's roar echo through the sky. Zhang Lie was shocked to no end. He turned back to see that the tiger had somehow survived his energy of annihilation.

He could recall no enemy who had managed to escape from being struck dead center by that attack. The last few foes against which he had to resort to this ultimate technique were all of tremendous strength, lying at the peak of each world. This tiger, solely disaster-grade, could not have managed such a feat.

Even if it were stronger than an ordinary disaster-grade lifeform, there was no way a disaster-grade lifeform could survive his energy of annihilation.

His energy of annihilation was ridiculously destructive; as its wielder, Zhang Lie knew that for a fact.

Even so, not only had the white tiger managed to escape from his attack, it had even managed to undergo some sort of transformation.

A frightening aura spread out from the tiger as it opened its maw wide open and swallowed all that lay around him, all manner of boulders flying through the air and into his mouth.

Zhang Li gasped in shock—the tiger had managed to transform in the midst of Zhang Lie's attack, absorbing the power of annihilation for itself!

Despite the disparity between gold and annihilation, the white tiger had somehow managed to transform that power into something it could use. Zhang Lie had no idea how it had done that.

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

Black genetic energy burst forth from Zhang Lie, as though there were hundreds, thousands of dragons surging throughout his body.

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.

The tiger widened its jaws and bit apart dragon after dragon, devouring their energy of annihilation and transforming it into something entirely his own.

Zhang Lie wondered, "Absorbing strength to evolve... is that the nature of this third trial?"

A trial, even a combat-oriented one, had to have a reason and purpose. Zhang Lie suspected that the white tiger was meant to encapsulate the concept of adaptability, to be able to evolve to overcome obstacles.

Glowing radiance emanated from the tiger and covered heaven and earth.

Zhang Lie shouted, lifting Guicang high up in the air. He flicked his arm and sent a burst of sword energy through the air, blocking the tiger's breath attack and leaving a scar on its forehead.

The tiger's evolution would hardly be enough to defeat him!

The tiger growled. Two dozen silver blades trembled as one, shooting straight at Zhang Lie in an attempt to pierce through him.

Zhang Lie's pupils glimmered with cold. As he whirled Guicang around him, a frightening burst of sword energy spread out like a tsunami, cutting all the blades apart.

The tiger howled in fury, but Zhang Lie was in the acme of his strength. He charged forward with Guicang.

Chapter 1315: The White Tiger

The white tiger stared at Zhang Lie with baleful eyes. Radiant light shot out from its mouth straight at Zhang Lie, who shattered the light with Guicang.

"[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 all combatants present. Blood-colored frost appeared around them all.

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.

The tiger widened its jaws and began swallowing the serpents up, but hidden among the flood of dragons was a sword slash. Zhang Lie shot forward with Guicang in hand.

The tiger roared as blood sprayed from its body. Before it could react, one of its back legs had been cut off.

The netherworld river had only been a bluff; the true attack was from the blade in Zhang Lie's hand.

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

Pitch-black genetic energy filled the air. 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.

Zhang Lie's sword had been hidden in the midst of the attack. The white tiger's absorption ability was limited, and by the time it realized what was happening, it had already been cut apart at the waist. Crystal shards shot into the air.

The tiger struggled once more, releasing all the energy of annihilation it had absorbed.

The pitch-black energy transformed into a ray of annihilation that seemed poised to destroy the world.

A blood dragon's phantasmal figure soared into the air. Zhang Lie thrust forward with Guicang, and the blood dragon swooped down and merged with the sword.

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

Guicang unleashed a barrage of sword energy in the form of a blood dragon.

A dragon's roar shook the void as the pitch-black genetic energy turned blood-red. The underworld river roiled, forming a gigantic blood-colored hurricane which struck the ray of annihilation in an explosion of terrifying force.

Zhang Lie thrust his sword straight through the white tiger's head, sending shards flying.

Half the tiger's head was cut open, revealing its silvery-white core. It tried to struggle once again, swiping its claws with radiant light.

"[First Form: Parting the River]!"

Bright sword energy radiated from Zhang Lie like brilliant rays of sunlight.

A frightening force spread out from Zhang Lie, energy rumbling and rippling around him. As Zhang Lie swung the blade in his hand, the tiger's body, along with the ground, split open. He seized the tiger's disaster-grade core.

[You successfully killed a disaster-grade blessed white tiger. By consuming the core of the disaster-grade blessed white tiger, you may receive one to ten disaster gene fragments.]

The silvery-white core gave off a metallic luster. It gave off a prickling, painful sensation, as though you were touching the naked edge of a sword.

Zhang Lie cut his palm with his sword, then dripped blood onto the core. The moment it touched the core, the blood was quickly absorbed into its interior. It sucked up more and more of Zhang Lie's blood until it turned blood-red.

Zhang Lie opened his wounds again and again until the core became perfectly transparent. Then, he closed his eyes and began pouring concentrated, black genetic energy from his body into the core.

As Zhang Lie clutched the crystalline orb, he felt some unusual sense of kinship with it, as though it was already part of his body. Zhang Lie swallowed it whole without even daring to chew it.

The core was cold and prickly as it slid into his stomach. Subsequently, all that energy contained within the core burst apart.

Almost immediately, Zhang Lie took on the color of a boiled prawn.

As the energy in the disaster-grade core gushed through his body, he circulated genetic energy through his framework, faster and faster.

While he assimilated the disaster gene fragments into his body, Zhang Lie gave off stronger and stronger beams of light.

His body seemed to grow firmer, and his organs and bones all glimmered with a metallic luster.

He circulated genetic energy through his body at an incredible pace, his framework fully activated to capture and transform his newfound strength.

His [Ninecarp Transformation] activated involuntarily, and the image of a golden tiger materialized behind him. It roared; the disaster-grade energy was particularly compatible with this form of his framework. Two dozen blades shot out from Zhang Lie's back in a fan. It cut apart distant mountains and tore apart the earth. A cocoon of golden light surrounded him.

The energy of the disaster-grade core and of his evolving framework ran rampant within his body, as though there were swords clashing against his innards, but as an emperor-grade lifeform, Zhang Lie could withstand the discomfort.

He roared loudly. The sound waves split apart the cocoon and caused the ground to quake. Countless rays of light transformed into sharp blades that pierced heaven and earth, once again heavily damaging the already battered ground. The small world finally gave out, cracking amidst the golden light. Void was visible where the damage was most apparent.

The light dimmed as Zhang Lie absorbed all the excess energy he had vented. The disaster-grade core had made him even stronger.

After finishing the absorption process, Zhang Lie headed right back to the trial-taker's chamber.

Chapter 1316: Six-Headed Dragon

Zhang Lie: an emperor-grade lifeform

Techniques: Rippling Walk (pinnacle), Three-Wave Crescendo (pinnacle), Calm Waters (pinnacle), Fists of the Silent Sea (pinnacle), The Boundless Blade (pinnacle), Eclipse (pinnacle), Syzygy (pinnacle), Ninesoul Dragonblade (pinnacle), Blade of the Heavens (pinnacle)

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Within moments, Zhang Lie had obtained ten disaster gene fragments.

The orb spoke once more. "Congratulations on accomplishing the third trial. You may receive a reward. What sort of reward would you like?"

"I can choose?"

"Of course."

"Anything I want?"

"The trial-taker's chamber will attempt to fulfill it to the best of its ability."

Zhang Lie thought for a moment. "One of my friends was originally a lifeform from the third realm. Using a soulshard, I was able to bring her into the fourth realm, but owing to the natural law of the fourth realm, she can't leave the soulshard. I'd like to know what methods there are to bring her out in such a manner that she won't be instantly obliterated."

The orb replied, "She simply needs to transition into a lifeform from the fourth realm."

"How?"

"Do you wish to choose a metamorphosis potion as your reward?"

"A metamorphosis potion?"

"A potion allowing lifeforms from lower realms to metamorphosize into those from higher realms. You can understand it as a transition from a third-realm lifeform to a fourth-realm lifeform. After consuming the potion, not only will the lifeform be freed from the natural laws of the fourth realm, its potential, strength, and talent will all be greatly augmented. Such a potion is only effective on lifeforms from the dimensional world."

Zhang Lie's eyes widened. "That's an amazing potion! Is there a corresponding recipe?"

"Distribution of the recipe by the system is forbidden."

"What a pity."

"The reward will be provided when you leave the trial-taker's chamber."

In other words, before finishing all the trials, no prizes would be granted.

To think that the treasure the map had been pointing toward was the trial-taker's chamber itself... Zhang Lie was even more curious about the purpose and existence of the chamber now.

"Start the fourth trial."

"The system is identifying an appropriate trial for you. Match successful!"

As another pillar of light shone down on him, Zhang Lie was transported to another small world.

Unlike the three thousand worlds of the third realm, the independent worlds of the trial-taker's chamber were somehow more solid, more resistant to damage.

This time, Zhang Lie's opponent was a six-headed giant dragon.

Each of the six heads had differently colored eyes. They sprayed out flames of different elements, respectively fire, lightning, wind, ice, light, and darkness. Each head seemed to be an independent disaster-grade lifeform; in other words, it was as though Zhang Lie had to face six disaster-grade lifeforms at once.

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

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.

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

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 world. It resisted even the sixfold breath attacks.

A huge rumble shook the heavens, and the entire 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. Pale blue tides raged through the air like a storm, clashing against fire, lightning, wind, ice, light, and darkness.

"[The Boundless Blade: Yawning Wave]!"

Water-attuned genetic energy encircled Zhang Lie's finger as he unleashed devastating sword energy.

Waterfalls of energy fell from the skies as the six-headed dragon was handily suppressed. With thirty disaster gene fragments, Zhang Lie was at the point where he couldn't be threatened by disaster-grade lifeforms.

A raging blue shark surfed over the waves and bit down on one of the dragon's necks.

"[Ninecarp Transformation]!"

A black serpent materialized behind Zhang Lie, by now so large and so developed that it resembled the world-swallowing serpent Jormungandr. It let out a threatening hiss as its scales clicked together.

As pitch-black energy spread all around them, the six-headed dragon struggled and spasmed. The corrosive energy slowly broke down the dragon's scales. Amidst the clouds of genetic energy, Zhang Lie struck, causing one of the dragon's heads to explode with a kick.

The dragon's head broke open in a flurry of crystal shards. Zhang Lie saw a bright red core at the center of the explosion.

[You successfully killed a disaster-grade inferno dragon. By consuming the core of the disaster-grade inferno dragon, you may receive one to ten disaster gene fragments.]

Was it really that simple? Even Zhang Lie was shocked.

The remaining five heads, enraged, counterattacked simultaneously. Even after losing one of its disaster-grade cores, the dragon didn't die. In fact, it seemed to grow berserk.

Arctic ice, crackling lightning, a hurricane's wind, and divine light and darkness—five different elemental energies merged together in a combined attack from the five heads.

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

As Zhang Lie punched forward, the black serpent behind him shot forth and burst through the attack.

Even though the five heads were working together, Zhang Lie was agile and easily able to dodge their attacks by causing them to block or hinder each other.

The five heads merged their elemental breaths into an incredible hurricane of energy that scoured heaven and earth.

Seeing the combined elemental attack, Zhang Lie couldn't help but think of Fang Yi, though the five-headed dragon's elemental energies were far weaker in terms of technique, strength, and quality. The final attack, then, would be equally inferior.

Fang Yi's skill could penetrate through even the core of a planet.

Chapter 1317: Absorbing the Six

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 next moment, he transformed into a ray of bloody light. He tore a path out of the five elemental breaths and flashed to the back of the giant dragon in the blink of an eye. He raked his bloody claws, slicing off another dragon's head.

[You successfully killed a disaster-grade frostfang dragon. By consuming the core of the disaster-grade frostfang dragon, you may receive one to ten disaster gene fragments.]

"A six-headed dragon, with each head an independent disaster-grade lifeform... just how was it made, I wonder?"

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

As Zhang Lie punched forward, a blood dragon roared in outrage and shot forward.

The four remaining heads sprayed out flames of four different elements.

A wave of annihilation exploded around the dragon. Pitch-black energy swallowed up everything in the vicinity like a storm at sea. The surroundings were consumed by the black-hole like energy of annihilation.

Zhang Lie swiftly fell back. The energy of annihilation was so intense and spread so quickly that even he might well be caught in its midst.

[You successfully killed a disaster-grade lightning dragon. By consuming the core of the disaster-grade lightning dragon, you may receive one to ten disaster gene fragments.]

After that explosion, there were only three dragon heads left, and the ones that still remained were battered and half-dead. The galewind dragon's spine had broken, and its head hung limply on its neck. Half of the darkbane dragon's head had been destroyed, leaving only the lightcrest dragon's head relatively intact. However, all three heads would quickly be destroyed—Zhang Lie had no intention of stopping here.

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

Black genetic energy burst forth from Zhang Lie, as though there were hundreds, thousands of dragons surging throughout his body.

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.

The three remaining dragon heads each sprayed out dragon's breath in an attempt to defend against the assault of hundreds of dragons. Zhang Lie hid among the black dragons, Guicang flashing in his hand. By the time the three dragon heads reacted, only two remained.

[You successfully killed a disaster-grade lightcrest dragon. By consuming the core of the disaster-grade lightcrest dragon, you may receive one to ten disaster gene fragments.]

"[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 world. Blood-colored frost appeared out of nowhere.

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.

The two remaining dragon heads continued to release their breath attack, killing the serpents close to them.

Zhang Lie suppressed them handily.

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

Pitch-black genetic energy filled the air.

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 dragon heads succumbed to the pressure of the endless ocean.

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

Guicang unleashed a barrage of sword energy in the form of a blood dragon.

A dragon's roar shook the void as the pitch-black genetic energy turned blood-red. The underworld river roiled, forming a gigantic blood-colored hurricane which disintegrated the dragon's two heads in an explosion of terrifying force.

Crystalline shards flashed through the air as the will of the realm's voice rang out in Zhang Lie's head.

[You successfully killed a disaster-grade galewind dragon. By consuming the core of the disaster-grade galewind dragon, you may receive one to ten disaster gene fragments.]

[You successfully killed a disaster-grade darkbane dragon. By consuming the core of the disaster-grade darkbane dragon, you may receive one to ten disaster gene fragments.]

Zhang Lie had killed both remaining heads in one blow!

He collected the remaining disaster-grade cores on the ground. The six dragon heads' cores were each distinct.

Each was like a world representing the heads' provenance: a world of volcanoes, with cracked ground and flowing lava; a world filled with lightning strikes and storm winds; a world of ice and cold; a world of burning sun, glowing with blinding light; a world of pitch black, that seemed to absorb all incident light.

Zhang Lie cut his palm with his sword, then dripped blood onto the cores. The moment it touched the cores, the blood was quickly absorbed into their interior. They sucked up more and more of Zhang Lie's blood until it turned blood-red.

This time, Zhang Lie had to deal with six disaster-grade cores, not just one.

Clutching the crystalline, multicolored orbs in his hands, Zhang Lie felt a sense of unusual familiarity with the cores, as though they were extensions of his body.

Zhang Lie absorbed all six cores simultaneously.

Almost immediately, Zhang Lie took on the color of a boiled prawn. The energies in the disaster-grade cores gushed through his body, six different elements at once: flame, lightning, wind, frost, light, and darkness.

While he assimilated the disaster gene fragments into his body, Zhang Lie gave off stronger and stronger beams of light.

Chapter 1318: The Fifth Trial

Zhang Lie: an emperor-grade lifeform

Techniques: Rippling Walk (pinnacle), Three-Wave Crescendo (pinnacle), Calm Waters (pinnacle), Fists of the Silent Sea (pinnacle), The Boundless Blade (pinnacle), Eclipse (pinnacle), Syzygy (pinnacle), Ninesoul Dragonblade (pinnacle), Blade of the Heavens (pinnacle)

Genes: Basic, 160; Mutated, 150; Superior, 150; Peak, 150; Disaster, 90; Monarch, 0; Emperor, 0

Soulshards: White Grub (superior), Blood Ant (superior), Potbellied Toad (mutated), Eternalspring Cocoon (superior), Dragonwolf (superior), Moonlight Wyrms (peak), Golden Roc (peak), Dragonwhale (disaster), Mismeld Clam (disaster)

He returned to the trial-taker's chamber and was quickly assigned a fifth trial.

A golden roc swooped down toward him, its wings flapping furiously and creating a howling gale.

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

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.

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

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.

Man and roc struck each other in a huge explosion of light that swamped heaven and earth.

The world reverberated with force. 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. Light and shadow danced in the air.

Long moments later, as the light dissipated, the roc's golden feathers withered. There was a huge, gaping wound on its chest from which fresh blood flowed.

The initial confrontation between Zhang Lie and the golden roc of the fifth trial had left it with a severe injury.

The golden roc spread its wings wide, blazing with dawn light as it transformed into a divine sunbird. It fanned the ground with its wings furiously, spawning divine flame and lightning.

Zhang Lie's hair stood on end. His eyes sparked with lightning, and blood trickled from his lips. He raised his pointer finger into the air. A thick pillar of light shone down from the heavens, striking the divine sunbird.

The will of the boundless blade had descended.

Flames, sword energy, golden light, and pale blue genetic energy combined destructively, leaving another wound on the giant bird's body.

The golden roc's eyes transformed into two golden whirlpools that could devour souls, intending to launch a spiritual attack at Zhang Lie.

Zhang Lie roared, a spiritual glow emanating from his eyes and clashing against the roc's.

The golden roc's eyes began to burn. It swooped down toward him, sharper than a divine blade. Golden runes filled the sky, a frightening sight.

"Open!" Zhang Lie shouted. He kicked forward with his right leg, unleashing a divine attack, summoning golden runes of his very own.

The two combatants were both sent flying. Zhang Lie's eyes glinted. The divine sunbird felt immense pain from its wing. It swooped down from the heavens toward Zhang Lie, initiating another bout of intense attacks. The golden roc clawed at Zhang Lie, intending to tear him apart.

"[The Boundless Blade: Yawning Wave]!"

Water-attuned genetic energy encircled Zhang Lie's finger as he unleashed devastating sword energy.

With a huge thud, a golden wing fell to the ground, smashing a rock mountain as it fell. It was harder than common steel and boasted the essence of divinity.

The golden roc shrieked as it fell to the ground, golden ichor splashing. Its body formed a huge crater, causing cracks to propagate through the ground for hundreds of meters.

The roc's body gleamed with golden light, and its feathers shone splendidly in the sun. Its skull was cracked open.

With a huge slash, the golden roc's skull was sent flying into the distance.

[You successfully killed a disaster-grade gildwing roc. By consuming the core of the disaster-grade gildwing roc, you may receive one to ten disaster gene fragments.]

Suddenly, the void trembled. A figure dashed forward at lightning speed, heading straight for Zhang Lie with unabashed killing intent.

Zhang Lie knew that the fifth trial couldn't have been as easy as it appeared at first glance. The fourth trial had involved six disaster-grade lifeforms attacking him together, so how could the fifth trial be any easier?

The unknown assailant's attack landed with a huge explosion, splitting the ground, shaking the heavens, and causing the world to break apart. It was a frightening blow that struck with the force of an earthquake.

The assailant was a red, hornless dragon, whose body was surrounded by flaming clouds. It struck at Zhang Lie once again.

"[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. An aura of the divine exuded from him.

The two combatants shattered mountains and destroyed spires with every blow. They clashed against each other and were both sent flying. Light covered heaven and earth, frightening in its intensity.

The dragon roared. It was strong and brimming with vitality, its scales shining resplendent, its body glowing with divine radiance. As it charged forward, it leveled a ten-ton rock.

It struck Zhang Lie, claws against fist, then swept its tail toward his waist.

Zhang Lie evaded the attack as the tail crushed countless rocks into powder in mid-air.

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

Zhang Lie raised a hand. Concentrated genetic energy solidified into sharp silver crystals.

The crystals danced in the air, then honed in on the scarlet dragon. The dragon evaded the attack, but the rock mountain behind where it stood was drilled straight through. It collapsed instantly.

#### Chapter 1319: Scarlet Hornless Dragon

The scarlet hornless dragon stared at Zhang Lie with cold eyes. Its crystalline, resplendent body hurtled back. The entire world seemed to shift with its movements.

Its body glowed with one resplendent rune after another, a true dragon's mark, imbued with the essence of the arcane, of mysteries beyond measure.

However, Zhang Lie didn't know whether this was innate to the dragon, or if the master of these trials had created this genetic lifeform artificially.

For a moment, a divine chanting could be heard from the skies, shaking the heavens as all things hummed in resonance. The sound doubled, then trebled in volume. Ripples and echoes surged toward Zhang Lie.

Boulder after boulder exploded, even those tens of thousands of tons heavy. The ripples that emanated from the dragon's keening easily sparked a resonant decomposition.

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

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.

As Zhang Lie manipulated space, that crystalline genetic energy shot out of the wall behind him in the form of sharp daggers, in a rain of crystals that were able to penetrate anything thanks to Zhang Lie's mastery of space.

They tore apart space and sky, shooting into the air like raindrops in a thunderstorm, deflecting the ripples that emanated from the scarlet hornless dragon.

Zhang Lie sparred against the scarlet dragon, clashing once and again, before both combatants were sent flying back. With a huge rumble and crash, a scarlet claw struck the ground with the force of a mountain range. Light flooded heaven and earth.

Zhang Lie roared, his eyes glowing with light.

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 two combatants fought like ancient beasts, tearing apart mountain and landscape, heaven and earth. The world itself quivered as it observed their battle.

Man and beast alike were radiant in their might, surrounded with glowing runes that burned incandescent, so brightly that no one would be able to observe the scene directly.

The scarlet hornless dragon sent its tail sweeping forward like a steel whip, causing the void itself to creak. The runes surged forward like waves, astoundingly strong.

Zhang Lie leapt up and dodged the blow. At the same time, he kicked at the dragon from above, his right leg sweeping past the dragon's skull and overwhelming the dragon with burning golden light.

The dragon blocked the leg with one claw, then struck at Zhang Lie's heel with the other, intending to root him and smite him on the spot. Its eyes glimmered with intelligence and sharpness.

Zhang Lie snorted. His right leg landed on the dragon's arm as his other leg struck its skull, bearing down on the dragon with his entire body.

The scarlet dragon caught Zhang Lie's leg and was just about to knock him to the ground when Zhang Lie rooted himself in the void, rendering himself immobile. At the same time, his palms, radiating with golden light, pressed toward the dragon's skull.

The dragon roared. A wave of energy swept past the dragon, who was forced to loosen its hold.

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

As Zhang Lie cocked his fist, dozens of crystalline dragons formed behind his back, roaring in unison and causing the sky to tremble.

The next moment, they shot out through his fists, causing hundreds of crystalline dragons to weave through the skies in a stunning, dazzling display.

The scarlet dragon knocked each one down with a frenzied swipe of its claws, then its tail, leaving countless crystalline shards falling to the ground.

Zhang Lie snuck through the group of crystalline dragons and struck the scarlet hornless dragon in a massive rumble of force.

The scarlet dragon hadn't expected Zhang Lie's sneak attack and was suppressed as Zhang Lie took the initiative. Zhang Lie soared toward the dragon from above, smashing into its body and causing the ground to crack where he stood.

A huge hole was blasted into the ground. With his opponent incapacitated, Zhang Lie pummeled it with his bare hands. The scarlet dragon was struck with devastating blows. Its claws bled with blood, its chest torn open.

Zhang Lie flipped it over, then kicked it with a foot and sent its body flying into the distance. Its body was chipped and cracked, with crystalline shards scattered all over the air. The scarlet dragon had never before suffered such serious injuries.

It agonizingly crawled up and charged forward. Zhang Lie met it head-on with vicious attacks. The scarlet dragon howled, its radiant body tangling around Zhang Lie like a serpent winding its body around a mountain peak.

It opened its bloody maw wide, its teeth sharp and white, as it bit down on Zhang Lie with the intent of swallowing him whole.

In this time of crisis, Zhang Lie summoned Guicang before him and impelled it to penetrate the scarlet dragon's eye.

The scarlet dragon screeched in pain, its body suddenly loosening, allowing Zhang Lie to escape. The stars shook as incredible genetic fluctuations emanated from Zhang Lie. He transformed into a being as radiant as the sun itself, shooting out rays of blinding light that were as sharp as edged blades. The scarlet dragon screamed again as its scales and crystalline shards were pried apart and flung into the air.

Zhang Lie emerged radiant and resplendent like a god, his entire body gleaming. With a clap of his palms, the stars exploded. Enraged, the dragon roared again and swiped at Zhang Lie. Such was the bloody fight between the two combatants.

Zhang Lie reached out for Guicang, still embedded in the dragon's eye.

The moment his hands touched its hilt, his aura changed, as did the world's.

"[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.

The scarlet dragon shrieked and struggled as its body corroded under the assault of tens of thousands of black serpents.

Just then, Zhang Lie struck again.

"[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.

#### Chapter 1320: The Sixth Trial

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 dragon heads succumbed to the pressure of the endless ocean.

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

Guicang unleashed a barrage of sword energy in the form of a blood dragon.

A dragon's roar shook the void as the pitch-black genetic energy turned blood-red. The underworld river roiled, forming a gigantic blood-colored hurricane which disintegrated the dragon in an explosion of terrifying force.

Crystalline shards flashed through the air as the will of the realm's voice rang out in Zhang Lie's head.

[You successfully killed a disaster-grade scarlet dragon whelp. By consuming the core of the disaster-grade scarlet dragon whelp, you may receive one to ten disaster gene fragments.]

He picked up the disaster-grade core on the ground, a crimson one.

The fifth trial involved only two disaster-grade lifeforms, but they were among the peak of disaster-grade. It wouldn't be a far cry to call them halfway to monarch-grade, but they were still quite a bit weaker than Zhang Lie himself.

Zhang Lie also retrieved the core of the other disaster-grade lifeform, the golden roc.

The golden roc's core was, as expected, golden in color, with what seemed to be a golden sky within.

The world of the trial had been battered almost to the point of collapse by the fight between Zhang Lie and the disaster-grade dragon.

There were cracks in the ground so deep that they could see beyond the pocket world.

No third disaster-grade lifeform had shown up; the trial had likely concluded with just two.

Zhang Lie immediately began to absorb the two cores, starting with the golden roc's.

Zhang Lie cut his palm with his sword, then dripped blood onto the core. The moment it touched the core, the blood was quickly absorbed into its interior. It sucked up more and more of Zhang Lie's blood until it turned blood-red.

Zhang Lie opened his wounds again and again until the core became perfectly transparent. Then, he closed his eyes and began pouring concentrated, black genetic energy from his body into the core.

As Zhang Lie clutched the crystalline orb, he felt some unusual sense of kinship with it, as though it was already part of his body.

Zhang Lie swallowed it whole without even daring to chew it. The core was cold and prickly as it slid into his stomach. Subsequently, all that energy contained within the core burst apart.

Almost immediately, Zhang Lie took on the color of a boiled prawn.

As the energy in the disaster-grade core gushed through his body, golden light erupted from him. A pair of wings manifested from his back in a burst of light, and Zhang Lie began to float in the air.

The energy from absorbing the core propelled his floating body upward. While he assimilated the disaster gene fragments into his body, Zhang Lie gave off stronger and stronger beams of light.

He circulated genetic energy through his body at an incredible pace, his framework fully activated to capture and transform his newfound strength. but as an emperor-grade lifeform, Zhang Lie could withstand the discomfort.

Then, Zhang Lie pulled out the second core.

To him, absorbing these disaster-grade cores was an ordinary affair, nothing more.

Zhang Lie cut his palm with his sword, then dripped blood onto the core. The moment it touched the core, the blood was quickly absorbed into its interior...

Following the usual routine, while floating in the air, Zhang Lie absorbed the second core.

Blood-colored radiance surrounded him, as though a dragon were coiled around his body.

[Ninecarp Transformation] activated; genetic energy circulated around the technique faster and faster, clashing against each other even as they merged together into a strength that was wholly Zhang Lie's.

In the fourth realm, Zhang Lie had evolved once more.

Zhang Lie: an emperor-grade lifeform

Techniques: Rippling Walk (pinnacle), Three-Wave Crescendo (pinnacle), Calm Waters (pinnacle), Fists of the Silent Sea (pinnacle), The Boundless Blade (pinnacle), Eclipse (pinnacle), Syzygy (pinnacle), Ninesoul Dragonblade (pinnacle), Blade of the Heavens (pinnacle)

Genes: Basic, 160; Mutated, 150; Superior, 150; Peak, 150; Disaster, 110; Monarch, 0; Emperor, 0

Soulshards: White Grub (superior), Blood Ant (superior), Potbellied Toad (mutated), Eternalspring Cocoon (superior), Dragonwolf (superior), Moonlight Wyrms (peak), Golden Roc (peak), Dragonwhale (disaster), Mismeld Clam (disaster)

After the transformation, Zhang Lie returned to the trial-taker's chamber for the sixth trial. Passing the sixth trial would allow him access deeper into the chamber, allowing him access to its secrets, to its purpose and the reason for its existence, to follow in his parents' footsteps.

Zhang Lie couldn't help but grow excited.

