

U. Warlord 431

Chapter 431: Battling Xuechi

Zhang Lie retorted, "And what of you? Are you an idiot or a reckless fool to find me of your own accord?"

The sura king's eyes were so cold as to be frosty. "Haha, it's been quite a while since I've met a human as bold as you. All those who have dared to talk to me in that manner have had all the blood squeezed dry from their bodies."

Zhang Lie didn't seem particularly impressed.

Xuechi licked his lips and revealed two sharp canines. "I'll drain you of your blood bit by bit. Before you're completely drained, I'll keep you alive so you can feel your body slowly turn cold, as your blood fails and your vision turns spotty... I'm excited just thinking about it!"

Zhang Lie replied, "The sura king I killed told me the same thing before his rectum exploded.

You like bloodletting, don't you? I'll make sure to satisfy your desires."

"Not only will I kill you, I'll even drain the blood from everyone in this city." Xuechi yelled out, "Attack this fool!"

The bloodwinged dragons rushed forward, and the sura riders raised the spears and polearms they held in their hands.

Flames streaked across the air and struck a bloodwinged dragon, engulfing the dragon and its rider together.

The rider howled amidst the flames; a second and third arrow flew up from below, manifesting in the form of twin firebirds and swallowing up two more riders. In the end, dozens of bloodwinged dragon riders fell from the sky.

In a watchtower, a young woman stood with a scarlet greatbow in her hands: Sun Mengmeng. She shouted, "Zhang Lie, we've brought reinforcements!"

Xuechi narrowed his eyes. "It looks like there are quite a few humans courting death."

Boulders flew up from the ground and brushed by Zhang Lie as they struck the bloodwinged dragon riders before him. Behind the walls of the city, the rock giants summoned massive boulders from the ground and hurled them upward at the riders, each with the force of a cannonball.

Xuechi's face turned green. "All your subjects want to die, it seems. Riders—slaughter everyone in the city!"

A golden beam of light flashed by, and a rider was thrown off his dragon. A squirming sura caught between his claws, Yu Huantian called out, "With us crag eagles around, let's see who dares attack Renhuang!"

Yu Huantian dropped the rider, who screamed loudly as he fell from the skies. The bloodwinged dragon tried to dive down to catch him, but several of the crag eagles behind Yu Huantian rushed forward to stall it.

Yu Huantian sneered at the sura. "The crag eagles rule the skies above Renhuang."

He shot forward at another rider.

The citizens of Renhuang were all enraged—they were having a good time before the sudden invasion. Xuechi's arrival and proclamation had successfully provoked everyone within.

"[Fivefold Lunarflame Shot]!"

Sun Mengmeng shot out five arrows at once. Each burst into a fireball upon impact, swallowing up one rider after another. "Don't worry, Zhang Lie! We'll take care of the others—you just focus on their leader!"

Zhang Lie nodded. Everyone in Renhuang possessed some ability to fight, and they wouldn't drag him down.

Xuechi stiffened for a moment before laughing out loud. "Amazing, amazing! You'll be top-tier human captives, I'm sure of it! I can't wait to cut open your chest and see whether the blood that circulates through your bodies is red or black!"

His eyes sharpened. "Do you really think that you'll be able to live just by killing my riders? Don't forget, I'm here too!"

"And you shouldn't forget that I'm your opponent," Zhang Lie cut in.

"You, a human, think you can stall me alone? I don't intend to waste much time with you. After all, I still have a hot human-blood bath to get back to in my palace."

He pointed a lance straight at Zhang Lie as the bloodwinged dragon charged forward. The lance that Xuechi used was a whopping eight meters long, so long that it made the lances of medieval knights back on Earth look like children's toys.

Zhang Lie flapped his wings and deftly avoided the sura king's charge. As his body flashed by the king's side, the sura king leapt up from his mount.

"[Fists of the Silent Sea: Quake]!" Zhang Lie's punch struck the sura king's lance directly, but he was the one sent flying instead.

The sura king landed back on his steed and twisted his waist as he threw his lance at Zhang Lie. The lance gleamed like a blood-colored shooting star, sparks forming a trail of flames behind it. Its glow turned the entire night sky a garish blood-red, as though the apocalypse was nigh.

"[Rune: Resonate]!" The image of a dragonturtle appeared before Zhang Lie, forming a black array that forced the lance back.

The four tablets began to reverberate, sealing the strength and potency of the spear. The night sky reverted to its usual black.

"Interesting, interesting! No human has ever survived that blow before!"

Xuechi, riding his bloodwinged dragon, rushed forward and pulled out another lance. In order to avoid having to reclaim his lance each time, he had equipped his saddle with five additional lances that he could throw out at will.

It was a difficult attack to block head-on, but Zhang Lie certainly didn't have to block all the lances head-on. The reason he had done so before this was because they were above Renhuang, but by now, they were both far away from the city. Zhang Lie could thus easily dodge the attack.

The bloodwinged dragon flapped its wings and brought Xuechi closer and closer to Zhang Lie, circling around the domain created by Zhang Lie's four tablets. However, Xuechi didn't notice the smirk dancing by Zhang Lie's lips.

Chapter 432: Slaughtering the Steed

Zhang Lie flapped his wings and soared into the air. Xuechi didn't let him go. He sent the bloodwinged dragon flying after him.

"[Fists of the Silent Sea: Soar]!" Zhang Lie released an attack that sent waves of energy rippling into the distance, one so intense that it warped the very space itself. He clashed against Xuechi a second time.

As the ripples of energy spread from Zhang Lie, Xuechi and his steed was knocked aside.

He called out, "You're an impressive human, to be able to survive one of my blows! Revel, human—revel that you may die at my hand!"

Zhang Lie smiled. He dematerialized the four runic tablets that had been restraining Xuechi's blood-red lance, which shot out like a bullet the moment it was freed. Its target was its owner, the sura king Xuechi!

When Xuechi felt the imminent danger, he turned around, reacting so quickly that he was able to rotate in mid-air and counter against the attack with his own lance. With the sura king's back turned, Zhang Lie took the opportunity to strike, raising his hand and sealing the sura king's actions for a moment. By the time the sura king realized what was going on, he was too late.

Xuechi's thoughts crawled to a halt, and his body froze up. The lance in his hands was knocked aside, and the gleaming red lance pierced his chest and sent him flying with the remaining momentum.

Xuechi had hardly expected that he would one day be harmed—and possibly even killed—by his own weapon.

How could he bear such shame?! His gleaming red lance had always been a trump card up his sleeve, a supercharged long-ranged attack that could pierce through anyone and anything, and he had used it to great success against any number of strong foes and even the most well-defended cities.

The blood waves that poured out upon impact with the lance could kill the lifeforms within an entire city, but Xuechi had never truly experienced the strength of his own weapon for himself.

The lance that pierced through his chest crushed flesh and bone. Its surprising momentum sent his body flying, and it discharged waves of blood that ravaged his body.

Xuechi spat out a mouthful of blood.

Zhang Lie followed quickly behind the sura king, sending a punch toward him with his left arm. "[Fists of the Silent Sea: Fade]!"

The punch took the form of a dark serpent that circled the sura king and shot toward him from the front in a pincer attack that would trap him between the serpent and the lance. If Zhang Lie's attack succeeded, Xuechi would be annihilated by the combination of the two attacks, but it did not succeed.

Zhang Lie had neglected the last variable in this battle: the bloodwinged dragon on which Xuechi rode. Protecting its master, it smashed into Zhang Lie's serpent with its body.

The bloodwinged dragon was a peak-grade lifeform, and it barely lost out against the dark serpent. It opened its maw wide and bit down on the serpent's body even as the serpent's dark-attuned genetic energy corroded its body.

The sura king Xuechi was knocked off his steed by his lance. He smashed into the ground like a meteor, cratering it in his wake.

"[The Boundless Blade: Expulsion]!" A gigantic blade tore apart the serpent's body before striking the bloodwinged dragon. Blood fountained out of the dragon's forehead. Golden light emanated from the wound and scorched the dragon, causing it to howl in agony.

A gleaming golden sword had appeared in Zhang Lie's arm, a manifestation of his post-peak-grade golden-roc soulshard. After combining with a regular peak-grade golden roc soulshard, it had evolved beyond the limits of a regular peak-grade weapon.

He was about to behead the dragon when he suddenly felt killing intent coming from behind. Flapping his wings, he soared up into the air to find a red lance heading his way.

The red lance tore through the air, gleaming with a blood-red light. Its source was none other than the wounded sura king lying on the ground.

His body had been mutilated; his face was gray with dust. Blood had solidified by the corners of his mouth, and half his bones were broken. A lance pierced through his left chest; if it had struck a few centimeters to the right, he would have perished.

The sura king was somewhat lucky that his heart had narrowly avoided the lance's trajectory. As he forced himself to climb out of the crater he had landed in and saw the ongoing battle in mid-air, he threw one of his last remaining lances in rage.

The lance dyed the entire night sky a lurid red.

The bloodwinged dragon reacted instantly, trying to dodge the lance as it flew away, but someone else reacted even more quickly.

"[Rune: Control]!" Zhang Lie raised his arms to the sky, and the image of a dragonturtle appeared before him. The two gravity-controlling tablets appeared by either side of the bloodwinged dragon, twisting the local effect of gravity.

The bloodwinged dragon, caught in its effect, found itself incapable of any movement. The lance pierced through its belly, and it fell from the sky with a pained howl.

Xuechi's face was stoic as he pulled out the lance from his chest, ignoring the blood that spurted out of the wound. A gaping hole was left behind on his chest.

Zhang Lie slowly landed from the sky. He glanced at the corpse of the bloodwinged dragon and sighed, "What a nice mount! Isn't it a shame?"

Xuechi flicked away the blood on the tip of his lance, his eyes filled with killing intent.

The blood that flowed out of the gaping hole in his chest dyed his entire body red. His blood was rather unusual; it coagulated rapidly and seemed as viscous as glue.

"To think a human was able to cause me such damage—it looks like my godfather's intelligence wasn't up to date. I'll believe that you managed to kill Xueju with brute strength, but you're still far too weak to best the likes of me!"

Chapter 433: Fish Out of Water

Xuechi's eyes filled with killing intent. "I'll admit that I didn't pay enough heed to you as an opponent, but I won't make the same mistake again."

Zhang Lie shook his head. "What a cruel, heartless man! Your mount died for you, but you aren't even going to mention him at all."

Xuechi barely avoided spitting out a mouthful of blood. If not for you, would my beloved mount have perished?!

Unable to restrict his rage, genetic energy exploded from the sura king. His eyes turned blood-red, and the blood running throughout his body began to froth and boil. He knew that it was illogical to face an opponent like Zhang Lie while enraged, but he couldn't repress his anger any further.

Zhang Lie noted, to his surprise, that flames had crept up over the sura king's body, and that his strength had increased by another few times.

Xuechi called out, "I'll kill you and suck your body dry of blood!"

Xuechi's technique burned his body's blood to raise his combat abilities. The more injured he was, and the more blood flowed from his body, the more impressive the augmentation to his abilities.

It was for this reason that Xuechi took daily baths in blood, using a secret technique to increase how concentrated his blood was. However, the boost provided by the technique was limited. Given how Xuechi had been injured to almost the point of death, his strength was increased by an order of magnitude, and the duration of the technique was shortened commensurately.

The blood-colored flames spread to the lance in his hands as Xuechi transformed into a roaring flame and rushed over. With his burning blood, the force of his charge was stronger than even him and his steed combined.

"Ha! As if no one has an augmentation technique!"

A red moon appeared beneath Zhang Lie's feet, and his scarlet domain extended into the distance. A black sun manifested by his back, and the strength of his aura increased by an order of magnitude.

"[The Boundless Blade: Expulsion]!" Golden waves and a torrent of sword energy were encapsulated within the peak-grade golden roc's radiant light and sent out clashing against the sura king's bloody flames.

The golden waves evaporated on contact with the flames, and Zhang Lie was sent stumbling back. Xuechi chased after him.

"[Rune: Control]!" Zhang Lie raised both his arms into the sky, and the image of a dragon turtle appeared behind him. The two gravity-controlling tablets smashed into the ground.

Xuechi's momentum meant that he could hardly avoid entering the space of warped gravity formed by the two tablets. The two tablets began to revolve and resonate, sending out ripple after ripple of energy, with Xuechi caught at its very center.

As he entered the localized gravity field, he felt as though gasoline had been splashed on the flames burning all over his body. His blood began to froth, and he felt as though his body was about to explode. The flames suddenly grew tall one moment and short the next, and he spat out a mouthful of fresh blood.

If a regular hunter were to walk through such a formation, he too would have been disoriented—but not only that, Xuechi was in an enraged state, and the energy in his body was unstable to begin with.

Gritting his teeth and bearing the unbelievable discomfort, he tossed out the lance in his hand.

The lance shot toward Zhang Lie like a blood-colored fireball, and he could sense the threat to his life.

"[First Form: Parting the River]!" Zhang Lie raised his golden blade high into the sky. As he charged up his attack, the blade began to gleam brighter and brighter, as though a ray of light were impinging upon it from the heavens. With one casual slice, Zhang Lie drew a line in the air.

A strike that could part sky and mountain clashed against Xuechi's blood flames. Zhang Lie was forced back; his feet made furrows in the ground. The black sun behind him shone with light through its corona, augmenting Zhang Lie's strength further.

The golden blade gleamed even more brightly, and a faint trace of the roc could be glimpsed from its surface.

Zhang Lie let out a howl as he intensified his attack.

The blood-red flames continued clashing against Zhang Lie's sword strike. The ground tore and cracked where the two attacks met, and the will of the world descended on the match. It set up a barricade of light around the fight, cordoning it off from the rest of the world.

Xuechi's blood-red lance began to crack and break. He dropped his lance and pulled out the sword by his waist. The flames burned even more brightly.

The barricade set up by the will of the world was penetrated by blood-colored light, which struck Xuechi and turned him into a deity of blood.

The flames of blood grew brighter and denser, and the sura king Xuechi's appearance was hidden from sight. He realized that he would lose this conflict if it dragged out any longer, so he would end it with one blow at full strength.

The sura king leapt high into the air, transforming into a fiery meteor of blood, one which shone down on the entirety of the sura realm as though it were the natural color of the night sky.

"[Rune: Resonate]!" The image of a dragon turtle appeared before Zhang Lie as four runic tablets crashed down around the sura king, forming a black formation around him. They began to resonate as one, sending ripples that melded with the sky and forming an absolute domain over all things within.

Zhang Lie patted away the dust on his clothes and raised his head with some shock.

This was the first time he had seen his four-tablet formation be unable to lock down an enemy completely. Surprisingly, the dark red flames were still fighting against the sealing power from Zhang Lie's tablets.

Xuechi had halted for barely a moment under the four tablets' onslaught, but that one moment was enough. Zhang Lie's wings sprouted from behind as he soared into the air.

Blood-red flames followed Zhang Lie up into the sky, and the barrier that the will of the world had set up cracked and splintered in an instant. The remaining bloodwinged dragon riders, still fending off the attacks from the citizens of Renhuang, were swept away by the force of the blow.

A dark red mushroom cloud dyed the sky a garish red. Before the explosion reached him, Zhang Lie had activated both his blood ant and forest wolfman soulshards, Except for some singed fur, the explosion had hardly affected him.

A large crater remained on the ground, and blood-red flames continued to burn within. The sura king Xuechi flopped around the center of the crater like a fish out of water, his mouth opening and closing without any words coming out.

Chapter 434: Preparing for a Raid

No matter what the defeated Xuechi was trying to say, Zhang Lie didn't care—Xuechi had expended all his body's blood in that one blow, and he was no longer a threat.

When the bloodwinged dragon riders in the sky saw how their king lay defeated on the ground, they could hardly believe their eyes. How could their undefeated king have lost to a mere human? How could this be?

Even though they had witnessed the battle for themselves, they weren't willing to believe the outcome.

"Could it be true that this man caught the sura king Xueju alive?"

"How could a human be able to fight on the level of a sura king?"

"When did humans become so strong?"

During the battle, the bloodwinged riders realized that the humans within Renhuang were all surprisingly strong in their own right. The bloodwinged dragon riders were elites among the sura, and they were shocked that they were on the losing end of the confrontation against the humans.

Perhaps the humans had all experienced a massive surge in power that they hadn't realized...

Seeing their king lose was the last straw. The morale of the bloodwinged riders fell dramatically, whereas those of the citizens of Renhuang rose sharply.

"Kill them! Kill the rest of the sura!" the citizens shouted.

Sensing that the tides were turning against them, the riders yelled out, "Retreat!"

Those of Renhuang weren't about to let the bloodwinged riders go so easily. It was because of their sudden invasion that their celebratory party had turned into a battlefield, and they were very angry at the invaders.

As a result, a scene that no one would ever have expected played out in the second realm: the sura riders ran away, while the citizens of Renhuang gave chase.

Before the riders arrived at Renhuang, they had never expected to be chased by others; they were always the pursuers. However, not only were they unable to take down Renhuang, they were even being chased back to the kingdom of Xuechi.

The crag eagles were extremely speedy flyers, especially after absorbing the gene fragments of the golden rocs. The bloodwinged riders weren't able to shake them off their trail.

"No, we can't keep running! We won't be able to escape from them!" By the time the riders realized the problem, it was already too late. There were only a scant few riders left. If not for Sun Mengmeng calling out for the pursuers to leave one or two alive for questioning, all the riders would have perished.

Zhang Lie walked toward the center of the crater and stared at the sura king who lay within, his body desiccated and drained of blood.

"What an unfortunate death! But don't worry—you're not the first, and you won't be the last."

Xuechi muttered weakly, "You can't kill me. My godfather is the monarch of a sura empire."

"Oh? Is that something I should be wary of?"

Xuechi scoffed at the ignorance Zhang Lie displayed. "I suppose no human would know of this. There are tens of thousands of sura kingdoms, and the ones that are visible to the public eye are only the most commonplace of all. There are only about ten sura empires in all, three of which gathered together to attack my godfather's territory. Now, they've all been destroyed. Of the remaining, my godfather's is the largest and most powerful."

Zhang Lie shook his head. "It looks like you still don't understand my words. My question was rhetorical: so what if they're strong? If they dare invade Renhuang, I'll destroy them all."

Xuechi's face morphed with shock. Zhang Lie was a crazy fool!

"A sura empire has a hundred times the forces of a standard sura kingdom!" he warned. "My godfather's empire is the strongest of all, and it has at least a thousand times the forces! Furthermore, he's the strongest sura below asura-level, and if you kill me, my godfather will surely seek revenge on my behalf. By that point, you and the city behind you will both be annihilated!"

"Let him come, then. I'm very curious as to whether a sura empire is as strong as you claim."

Without any hesitation, Zhang Lie lifted the blade in his hand.

Xuechi suddenly changed his tone completely and began to beg. "Please wait, I'm wrong, I made a terrible mistake! The only reason I came over here was on my godfather's orders, and I bear you and your city no enmity. Please let me go—I'll give you anything I can."

"In that case, I'll have your brain!" Zhang Lie beheaded the sura king on the spot.

Gripping the sura king's head in his hand, Zhang Lie heaved a sigh of relief.

The aerial battle between the bloodwinged riders and the citizens of Renhuang had also ended. None of the sura escaped; most were killed, and a few were captured by Sun Mengmeng.

Zhang Lie walked over to them and asked, "Where did you come from?"

The prideful and arrogant sura refused to speak a word to the human who had defeated their king, and Zhang Lie quickly lost his patience. "If you're unwilling to speak, then I'll just extract the information from your heads."

He summoned Whitey to devour their souls.

The chief of the Yeluo asked, "What did you learn, Governor?"

Zhang Lie's face was dark. "These sura came from a sura kingdom known as Xuechi, one located not too far from Xueju. After the death of the sura king Xueju, Xuechi has slowly expanded its borders into Xueju's former territory! Now that they've claimed the borders of Xueju, they'll come to Renhuang sooner or later."

In that case, why not take the initiative and attack the kingdom of Xuechi?

Zhang Lie leapt up toward the city walls and infused genetic energy into his voice, which boomed all across the city. "Comrades of Renhuang, our celebration today was interrupted by a sudden invasion from the sura. Are you angry?"

"Yes, we are!" everyone shouted.

"I don't intend on taking this insult lying down. If the sura are going to attack my city, I'll attack theirs in return. We'll let them know with our actions that we won't be passive!"

"Yes, Governor!" everyone shouted again.

"In that case, gather up, warriors of Renhuang! Tomorrow morning, we'll raid the sura kingdom of Xuechi and claim their land for our own! Before then, however, let's feast on the remains of our enemies!"

The bloodwinged dragons that the sura rode were all superior-grade lifeforms, and the sura king's bloodwinged dragon was even a peak-grade lifeform. This was high-quality meat that they would surely take advantage of.

Everyone had worked up a sweat from the battle, and they were all hungry again. The bloodwinged dragons were quickly cut apart and added as a specialty ingredient to the celebration. Zhang Lie noticed, to his excitement, that he was already at forty peak gene fragments.

Although the sura invaders had crashed the party, they were happy for the additional food that they had brought along with them.

Chapter 435: Leave the Humans

The rock spirits were also very happy—despite everyone else's feast, they were still gnawing on rocks and boulders, their usual fare. Unlike the other races, they were unable to consume the flesh of genetic lifeforms.

However, the sura riders had dropped a pile of excellent weaponry. The metal used for the weaponry had all been refined, and the elite troops of Xuechi wouldn't resort to inferior weapons. The minerals and ore used for their armor were necessarily the best of the best.

Furthermore, neither the humans nor the crag eagles, who were the main forces participating in the battle, wanted the armor. The humans had genetic armor, and the crag eagles prized their speed and flexibility.

The only ones who could take advantage would be the Yeluo, with whom the rock spirits would split the gathered armor. By promising the Yeluo a certain number of genetic lifeforms, they acquired the majority of the armor.

As the rock spirits consumed the armor, their rock armor began to glow and shine, a testament to the quality of the sura riders' armor and the boost they had gained from consuming it.

The sura king Xuechi's armor was even higher in quality, but it was in tatters.

Zhang Lie had his own armor, and he wasn't particularly interested in the set that Xuechi wore. It might be able to block two or three blows from a peak-grade lifeform, but it was more or less meaningless against a fighter as strong as Zhang Lie or a sura king.

In the end, Zhang Lie handed this set of armor to the leader of the rock spirits, who trembled as he beheld it. "Are you really giving this to me, lord?"

Zhang Lie shrugged. "Take it. I won't need it."

"I understand, lord! Tomorrow, in the fight against the sura, I'll take the role of the vanguard!"

Zhang Lie: ???

Before Zhang Lie could understand what the rock spirit meant, it had already consumed the armor. Subsequently, it burst into flames.

Zhang Lie: !!!

The rock spirit's lustrous gold body turned a vibrant red. A flame was emblazoned on its chest, much like the one that had been engraved on the armor.

The rock spirits murmured, "Ah, I'm so jealous of our chieftain! I want such armor for myself too!"

Zhang Lie asked, "What's going on?"

The rock spirits glanced at each other. "Don't you know what's happening, governor?"

"You handed the armor to our leader without knowing what would happen?" The rock spirits fervently murmured among themselves.

Zhang Lie asked once again, "Just what's going on?"

One rock spirit explained, "Because of the rarity and quality of the metal in that armor, our chieftain evolved upon absorbing it into his body."

By the time the rock spirits had explained everything to him, the rock spirit's transformation was over.

He turned to Zhang Lie and bowed. "Thank you, lord! Once again, I pledge my life to you. Following you was undoubtedly the best decision I could have made."

The rock spirits all nodded. Ever since coming to Renhuang, their lives had been greatly improved. They didn't have to hibernate to preserve their energy, and they had rocks aplenty for all of them. Everyone in the city was nice to get along with.

Zhang Lie folded his arms. "As though you weren't already loyal to me!"

The rock giant smiled in embarrassment, and the others also began to laugh. The atmosphere in the city returned to what it was like before the sudden sura invasion.

Zhang Lie released Whitey and allowed it to consume its fill of the souls of the riders remaining on the battlefield.

After a wonderful feast, the next morning, the citizens of Renhuang prepared to invade Xuechi. In the raiding party were rock giants, fighters of the Yeluo, and crag eagles. The wood spirits weren't suited to fights in unforested areas, so they were unable to participate.

This was Renhuang's first expedition. No one present could have predicted that it would be the start of a new legend.

The fighters of Xuechi were slowly consuming the territory that used to belong to Xueju.

Suddenly, a sura scout reported, "Something's wrong! There's a huge number of troops making their way over!"

The general of the Xiuchi forces asked, "What troops? What do they look like?"

"I'm not too sure myself. From afar, they looked like a group of rock giants."

"Could it be a mass migration?" the Xuechi general pondered. "Surely we're not so unlucky."

After mulling it over for a moment, he commanded, "What're you waiting for? Continue scouting and report back as soon as you have more information!"

"Yessir!" The Xuechi scout rushed off and returned not a few moments later. "Not only are there rock giants, there are troops representing three different races—it might be a combined assault!"

The general cursed. "Don't they know that we're sura? Are they blind? They must have a death wish!"

He strode into the barracks and shouted, "Soldiers, assemble! There's an army coming our way!"

The sura soldiers' eyes all gleamed with delight. They rubbed their palms. "Haha, something exciting at long last!"

All we've been doing is killing genetic lifeforms, securing this territory, and clearing away rubble. Finally, a salve for our boredom!"

"Let's see just how strong these alien races are to disregard the authority of the sura."

When the general and his forces massed at the border to find Zhang Lie and his men, they couldn't help but laugh.

Zhang Lie's troops were composed of four different races: rock giants, some sort of half-bird, half-human hybrids, a humanoid clan with bronzed skin, and...

...wait a minute. The general murmured, "Aren't those humans?"

"What are those humans there for? Emergency rations?"

"Actually, it isn't a bad idea, is it? They can be infantry on the battlefield, or emergency rations if necessary."

"What a wonderful idea! Well, let's kill these troops—then we can enjoy fresh human meat and blood for dinner!" The sura's eyes brightened as they licked their lips.

The general strode forward and announced, "This is sura territory! If you don't want to perish, leave the humans behind and retreat!"

However, Zhang Lie and his troops ignored the general's words. The sura troops were all rubbing their palms in anticipation, but the general didn't want to risk their lives unnecessarily. Against an army of unknown capability, he thought it best to be more conservative.

Chapter 436: Capturing the Sura Barracks

The sura general shouted again, "We're members of the sura! Listen up—if you head any closer, we'll attack you!"

The sura troops behind him all cackled. "General, it doesn't look like they're going to listen to us! We should strike first, I say!"

The sura fighters couldn't wait to strike. "Let them have a taste of our strength!"

"They're nothing more than a motley group of fools, arrogant enough to think that they can defeat the sura! We'd better teach them a lesson or two."

"We'll be able to deal with them in no time at all. General, there's no need to worry so much—we aren't so weak that we won't be able to teach them a lesson."

Opposite them, Zhang Lie commanded, "Charge forward and slaughter them all!"

His forces roared out as they charged forward, led by a vanguard of rock giants. The Yeluo and humans rushed out behind them, and the crag eagles attacked from above.

The enraged sura general mimicked his actions. "Troops, charge!"

However, his indecision had cost him the battle. The rock giants shot forward with a speed that belayed their bulk, knocking aside and steamrolling whatever sura troops were in their way.

The sura found their weapons completely ineffective against the rock giants.

Watching this display, Zhang Lie finally understood why it was that the nomadic rock giants were able to terrorize the entirety of the second realm, why they didn't fear even the sura. The rock giants were killing machines on the battlefield. Their armor was impenetrable, their bulk and strength was massive, and even if their limbs were sliced off, they could be regenerated from the earth itself.

"They're just like mechas!" Li Feng praised.

Indeed, their bodies seemed almost to be gold-plated, they had tremendous strength, they weren't worried of any injuries, and they had a core nestled deep inside them. Except for their inability to fly and their lack of weapons, they could pass for a mecha—no, they were stronger than any mecha, because mechas couldn't self-regenerate, but the rock spirits could.

The mechas—no, the rock spirits—surged forward, battering down any sura that got in their way.

The chief of the Yeluo shouted, "We can't lose to those rock-brained fellows!"

The Yeluo all began throwing vials at the sura, which exploded within their midst and diminished their physical abilities.

The sura fighters reacted with consternation. Their bodies were resistant to all sorts of toxins and poison, but the ones that the strange bronzed fighters had tossed at them did seem to have a significant deleterious effect.

"Charge forward with me!" Su Hong yelled out, leading a squadron of human fighters deep into the sura lines. The crag eagles coordinated with them and dove down into the midst of the sura, causing confusion and no small amount of disturbance in their ranks.

The sura general had hardly expected these alien races to be so coordinated and impactful. "These troops came from that direction..."

The only forces in the sura kingdom that could stand up against them were, the general thought, the bloodwinged dragon riders of Xuechi. He could hardly have known that it was these exact forces that had completely eradicated those riders.

The sura fighters had no choice but to fall back after being so soundly defeated.

The sura general roared as he unsheathed his blade, gleaming with blood-red energy, and sliced at the nearest rock giant, whose armor gleamed faintly with a red sheen.

The sword strike left nothing but a faint white mark on the rock giant's armor, which vanished almost instantly. The chief of the rock spirits announced, "I, vanguard of Renhuang, shall be your opponent!"

Zhang Lie considered his pronouncement speechlessly. He had never given him that title or that role!

The rock giant slammed a fist down on the sura general and crushed him into a pancake.

The result of the battle was obvious; the rock giants and the Yeluo's potions made quick work of the sura.

None of the sura survived the battle. Those who had made the greatest contribution were undoubtedly the rock giants. As a result, they claimed all the weapons that the sura forces possessed. After the battle, they sat down in the field and began consuming them ravenously.

Zhang Lie glanced at the map that he had found within the general's tent. "We've successfully exterminated one of the sura's barracks. Let's keep going."

They headed toward the next closest marked point on the map.

The rock spirits were all very happy—they simply had to destroy a swathe of powerless sura, and then they could snack on their weapons!

For the rock spirits, regular rocks were like plain rice, whereas high-quality and precious ores and minerals were like meat and vegetables. Gems were candy. The sura fighters' weapons were forged from high-quality ore and were essentially delicacies. No rock giant would tire of consuming them.

After consuming all the weapons in their vicinity, the rock spirits' armor had all become gold- and steel-plated, and they seemed far stronger than before.

Zhang Lie beckoned his forces forward, deeper into enemy territory. Their target was the capital of Xuechi. There was a giant fortress along the way from the barracks at which Zhang Lie was located to the capital itself, and it blocked the most direct path forward.

The sura in the fortress quickly noticed the troops from Renhuang—Zhang Lie had no intention of hiding or taking a detour, and they were marching in plain sight.

"It looks like... there's an army coming our way?"

"What sort of army?"

"It looks like a number of alien races cooperating to invade. Quick, inform the commander!"

The commander dispatched a number of fighters up to the watchtower to identify the targets. He didn't make a move himself; a group of alien fighters wasn't enough to necessitate or be worth his involvement. Instead, he sent his deputy, Shi Yuan.

Shi Yuan glanced at the approaching forces from afar and counted, "A few hundred steel giants, a few hundred birdmen, a few hundred bronzed fighters, along with three thousand or so humans. Five thousand in all."

Beside him, a sura fighter asked, "Are they here to invade?"

"Yes, I expect so."

"How can you be so certain, Deputy Commander Shi?"

Chapter 437: A Path to the Capital

Shi Yuan rolled his eyes. "Why else would they come in such large numbers?"

"Do they really think they can take down this fortress?"

"What are those three thousand humans there to accomplish? Are they supposed to be emergency rations or something?"

"Aren't there some sura barracks by the border? How did this invasion force get past them?"

"I'm very curious as to where they came from myself," Shi Yuan murmured. "Before that, though, let's send them a warning."

To the invaders, Shi Yuan shouted, "Listen up! If you proceed further, you'll be considered invaders into sura territory!"

Zhang Lie ignored the warning. Pointing an arm straight at the heart of the fortress, he yelled out, "Attack!"

The rock giants ran toward the fortress, ignoring any and all weapons thrown their way by the defenders. They smashed against the walls with the bulk of their bodies, causing the entire fortress to quake and rumble. At the same time, the crag eagles flew up into the sky and dove down toward the walls, attacking whatever visible defenders they saw.

"An enemy invasion!" the sura shouted. They reacted immediately.

The entire fortress shook as giant after giant struck. Cracks appeared and propagated on its walls, something none of the sura was well-equipped to do anything about.

Following the coordinated attack by the rock spirits and crag eagles, the fortress' walls began to fall, exposing its interior to the citizens of Renhuang. They rushed in and attacked everything in sight.

A blood-colored beam rose into the air as a hulking sura stepped forward, a giant axe in his hands. Its edge gleamed with blood-red light.

"He's here, he's here! The commander of the fortress is here!"

"He's almost as strong as a sura king—I'm sure he'll be able to take down the invaders easily!"

"Our fortress has stood for centuries without being taken down—we can't let it fall to a group of humans!"

The leader of the rock spirits rushed forward and blocked the commander's incredible blow with nothing but his body. Blood-red light erupted from behind his body, streaking forward in a line and splitting the fortress walls in two. The rock giant's body sank into the earth as the commander laughed. "Is this all you've got?"

The edge of the axe had thrust deeply into the rock giant's body, all the way through its chest. However, the rock giant seemed wholly unperturbed. The commander tried to pull out his axe, but it was stuck in the rock giant's body.

The rock giant hurtled forward with a punch, causing the commander to discard his axe and leap backwards. However, that had lost him his weapon for good.

The rock giant pulled out the axe that had been stuck to its body, then bit down on the head. Right before its owner, the axehead was consumed by the rock giant, whose wounds recovered immediately.

The rock giant peered at the commander in disdain. "The quality of your axe isn't up to par. It's far worse than your king's armor."

The commander of the fortress snorted. "As though you've had a taste of that!"

"Oh, I have. Do you see this patch of metal by my chest? It came from your king's armor."

The commander initially reacted with disbelief, but when he saw the crest of fire that featured on the rock giant's chest, his face turned dark. "What did you do to my king?!"

The rock giant shrugged. "I didn't do anything to him. My lord killed him, though."

The commander of the fortress began to yell like a ferocious dog. "No, that's impossible, absolutely impossible! The sura king Xuechi has never lost—he's undefeated!"

"I regret it too. Who told him to attack our city? My lord couldn't let him go after that, and he killed him accidentally."

"I'll kill you!" the commander of the fortress roared. His fists shone with eerie red light, filled with concentrated power. He seemed as though he wanted to smash the rock giant to powder, and in doing so, smash the doubts that he harbored about his king.

Just as he was about to strike, golden light flashed from behind the commander, clawing at his back. The commander didn't stop; he continued rushing forward with glowing fists.

The rock giant was prepared to meet his blow head-on when another figure dashed forward, punching at the commander's temple and sending him flying out into the distance. He smashed against a wall so hard that cracks formed at the site of impact.

The rock giant groused, "What are the two of you doing? I could have taken him on myself."

Those who had stepped forward were none other than Yu Huantian and the chieftain of the Yeluo.

Yu Huantian folded his wings. "We were just trying to help. After all, the governor commanded us not to try to face difficult foes by ourselves. We should take advantage of our greater numbers."

The rock giant scratched its head. "If that's what the governor instructed, I suppose there's no choice..."

The commander of the fortress climbed out of the caved-in wall and howled, "I'll kill you all!"

Given that the rock giant had fought the commander to a standstill, the addition of Yu Huantian and the chieftain of the Yeluo turned the even fight into a one-sided battle.

The commander quickly fell, ending the battle over the sura fortress. The sura within were no match for the Renhuang forces, and they were quickly killed.

The rock spirits happily had another snack. They were amassing so many weapons that they couldn't eat them all immediately. Fortunately, most of the forces had their own bag of holding, in which they could store all their spoils.

Once the battle was over and everyone had had a chance to rest, Zhang Lie commanded again, "We'll now set off for the capital of Xuechi!"

As Zhang Lie and his forces defeated troop after troop, the Xuechi elder remaining in the palace was starting to panic. He paced about the palace. "Where's the sura king? Didn't he claim that he would return immediately?"

He had boasted that he would return before the blood in his blood pool cooled; well, that blood had cooled so much that it was turning gelatinous.

Not only that, Xuechi was falling.

A group of allied invaders from who-knew-where had defeated every enemy and obstacle in their way, and even the main Xuechi forces were unable to hold them back.

"If this continues, by the time the king returns, all he'll see is a pile of ruins... Just what has the king been doing?! It's been more than a day! If he doesn't come back immediately, Xuechi will be

destroyed! He... he hasn't gotten so excited about killing people that he's bathing in their blood now, is he?!"

Given his personality, this ridiculous scene seemed more than likely.

What the Xuechi elder could hardly have suspected, however, was that the sura king he was anticipating was now nothing more than fertilizer for the wood spirits.

Chapter 438: The Invaders Approach

No, there had to be a problem! Even if the sura king were otherwise occupied with his blood fetish, what about the bloodwinged riders? Surely they would have returned bearing news!

The bloodwinged riders were the elite forces of Xuechi, and the elder could hardly envision them losing against any enemy.

However, the riders had all likewise turned into fertilizer for the wood spirits, and even their mounts had all been cooked and eaten.

A sura scout rushed into the palace. "Elder, I have urgent news! The enemy forces have slaughtered our army and are heading straight for the palace. They'll arrive within two hours!"

The elder hurriedly asked, "Are there any news about the sura king?"

The scout shook his head. "None of the sura who headed toward Xueju have returned."

The elder's face fell as he grumbled, "Where have you gone, your highness? If you don't return quickly, your kingdom will be no more!"

Taking a deep breath, he announced, "We can't wait for our king's return any longer. We have to save ourselves."

"But elder, if Xuechi's army isn't enough to stop their invasion, won't the guards of the capital fare worse?"

"Indeed, we can't rely on the sura troops alone." The elder knew that their opponent possessed a frightening potion with a particularly debilitating effect against the sura. "We'll release all the creatures in the capital's arena."

"All of them—including that monster?!"

The elder snorted. "Our opponent has a strange potion that can suppress the strength of the sura just by getting a drop on your skin. If not for the potion, would our forces have been defeated?"

"But that beast's far too frightening! Even his highness wasn't confident that he would be able to control it, and since he's no longer around..."

The elder laughed, showing his teeth. "Good—even better! Let those invaders get a taste of it."

"But if if we lose control of it, the millions of sura in the capital will all perish!"

The elder shook his head. "With our strength alone, we can't defend the capital. We'll need the creatures from the arena. We must delay the invaders until our king returns!"

Another sura scout rushed into the room. "The invasion force is here!"

"They've arrived sooner than expected. I order you to release all the creatures in the arena. Find a way to direct them toward the invasion forces. I'll try to delay them from the top of the city walls." The elder strode off intently.

Zhang Lie sat on the leader of the rock giants' shoulder as his forces progressed toward the capital of Xuechi. A gigantic city came within sight, not too different from Renhuang—or, rather, from the capital of Xueju that had now become Renhuang.

Zhang Lie yawned. He hadn't needed to participate in any of the fights at all; all he did was direct the troops. With the Yeluo's potions, the sura were no match for Renhuang's troops, and the battle quickly terminated.

The sura forces left behind a large quantity of weapons and material supplies after each and every defeat, and the rock giants had grown into something truly incredible upon consuming all that quality metal. By now, except for the leader of the rock giants, all the other rock giants had sharp, thorny protrusions growing from their bodies like porcupines.

Zhang Lie asked the leader of the rock giants, "Why is it that your entire tribe seems to have evolved but you?"

The rock giant grumbled, "What do you mean, I haven't evolved? Don't you see the metallic sheen on my body?"

"Honestly, I can't really tell."

The rock giant sighed. "My first evolution took quite a lot of energy and resources, so I'll need even more to achieve a second evolution. We rock giants aren't like bugs who can metamorphosize at will."

"Can your tribe return to their original appearance?"

"They'll gradually return to that form if they don't consume anything for a prolonged period of time," Yu Huantian replied, landing on the rock giant's head.

Within the rock forest, the rock spirits had been forced to hibernate for prolonged periods of time, and their bodies had all returned to their basal rock form.

"Get off my head, little bird!" The rock giant tried to capture Yu Huantian, who darted agilely away.

Zhang Lie huffed. "So your transformation is just becoming fat?"

The rock giant shook its head. "We grow stronger with every transformation as well, but other species don't get stronger when they become fat."

As they chatted, they approached the sura capital. Zhang Lie encouraged everyone, "Once we destroy this capital, this raid will be over!"

"Yes, Governor!" the troops chorused.

Zhang Lie noticed an old sura making his way to the top of the city walls.

"Invaders, why do you attack the kingdom of Xuechi? What have the sura done to you?" the Xuechi elder called out.

"We come from Renhuang!" the rock giant boomed back.

Yu Huantian shouted angrily, "You're asking us how we've offended you? It's because of you that our celebration in Renhuang was interrupted halfway through!"

The elder of Xuechi clearly didn't know what city Renhuang was, nor how it connected to the sura king's raid against the humans who had killed Xueju.

To his knowledge, the humans surely couldn't be leading such a huge and varied group of forces; the humans in their ranks were surely nothing but cannon fodder or emergency food.

The elder of Xuechi infused genetic energy into his voice and shouted, "I don't know what exactly happened, but I'll apologize on behalf of Xuechi."

Yu Huantian snorted and likewise infused genetic energy into his voice. He called back, "If apologies were meaningful, what's the point of having fists?"

Upon seeing that the invaders were unwilling to back down, the elder changed his tact. "I don't know where you came from, but don't forget that this is a sura kingdom, the territory of a sura king! Once our king returns, you'll all be dead!"

Yu Huantian called back, "Do you really not know? Your king was the one who attacked Renhuang!"

Li Feng laughed coldly. "And if you're still unaware, let me inform you that your so-called king has already been killed by the governor of Renhuang."

Upon hearing that pronouncement, the sura fighters in the city began to chatter to each other.

"His highness is dead?"

"No wonder we haven't seen him even though the kingdom's in peril!"

"In that case, who's going to stop these invaders?!"

Chapter 439: A Delaying Tactic

Sensing the morale of the fighters falling, the elder of Xuechi yelled out, his face dark, "No, that's impossible! None of you could have killed the sura king Xuechi—not your governor, nor all of you working in concert! You must have delayed or trapped the king somewhere so that he can't return quickly. Before he does, I urge you to flee—otherwise, he'll slaughter you all!"

The troops' morale couldn't be shaken at such a critical juncture. Otherwise, they surely wouldn't be able to delay until their king's return.

The fighters calmed down, realizing the truth of the elder's words.

"Indeed, his highness is undefeated in the second realm! How could some random governor defeat him so easily?"

"We're the sura, the hegemony of the second realm!"

"The invaders are clearly lying in order to disrupt our morale—don't fall for it!"

Zhang Lie shook his head. "You can never awaken people who are pretending to be asleep. There's no reason to argue with these fighters any longer—crush them all!"

"Rock spirits, charge forward behind me!" the leader of the rock giants yelled out, rushing at the very front. Its brethren followed suit.

The sura elder's face crumpled; his plan to delay the invasion forces clearly hadn't worked.

The rock giants, coated in a layer of steel, were like gigantic mallets. They leapt over the moat and crashed against the city walls one after the other, causing them to shake and tremble violently as sura fell from the walls.

The sura elder's heart thrummed with anxiety. "Why haven't they come yet?!"

Unable to take the battering, the walls of the city crumpled, allowing the forces of Renhuang to invade. The elder of Xuechi sighed. "Will this kingdom fall because of me?"

Suddenly, the ground started to shake. This time, however, the shaking came not from beyond the walls, but rather from within. The elder raised his head in thankfulness. "They're here!"

A group of violent creatures barrelled through the streets. A number of sura were at the front of the stampede, luring the creatures along.

The sura had decided to make this something of a relay race, with sura after sura taking the role of a lure to guide the pack of creatures forward. By doing so, they could ensure that they weren't running out of stamina and getting eaten by the pack of creatures.

They had successfully lured the creatures to the hole in the wall that the rock giants had made. The moment the rock giants made a large opening in the wall, the pack of creatures came flying out.

Zhang Lie calmly commanded, "Sun Mengmeng, kill the sura leading the creatures along."

Sun Mengmeng prepared to loose a shot.

"[Threefold Lunarflame Shot]!" Three arrows burst into flame as they left Sun Mengmeng's bow, transforming into firebirds in mid-air and rushing toward the sura at the very front of the pack.

Despite being struck by the flaming arrows, despite their bodies being on fire, the sura continued to run: on their backs rested the survival of a kingdom.

Sun Mengmeng loosed another shot at the three sura's heads, finally ending their suffering.

The pack of creatures continued rushing forward in a straight line following where the sura had fallen.

"Long-ranged attackers, don't hold back! Kill those creatures!"

The hunters pulled out their soulshards equipped with long-range capabilities. A large fraction, like Sun Mengmeng, had bow and arrows. Among them, Sun Mengmeng was naturally the strongest. Each of her shots would cause an eruption within the stampede of creatures.

However, of the three thousand hunters, only a third possessed long-range abilities. None of the others were able to do anything to prevent the creatures' advance.

"How troublesome." It was hardly difficult for the forces of Renhuang to face these creatures head-on, but there would surely be casualties as a result. Zhang Lie wanted to prevent this as much as he could.

"[Fists of the Silent Sea: Quake]!" Zhang Lie leapt forward and punched the ground, causing the earth to quake.

The quaking intensified and spread to the pack of creatures. The lifeforms at the very front suddenly found the ground beneath them giving out. They fell down, but the horde of creatures behind them continued barreling forward, paving in the craters with their comrades' bodies.

Zhang Lie sighed. It would have been far more convenient if the creatures had just stopped where they were.

He shouted, "Rock spirits, come to me! Form a wall in front of us!"

"Yes, lord!" They emerged amidst a pile of rubble.

"[Rune: Resonate]!" The image of a dragon turtle appeared over him as the four tablets revolved in mid-air before the creature stampede. Black ripples emanated from the gravity-altering tablet, forming a localized region of warped gravity.

Meanwhile, the tablets of sealing and stasis formed two walls in front of the creatures, blocking their path forward and disrupting their cohesion.

Zhang Lie threw out a punch. "[Fists of the Silent Sea: Soar]!"

Waves of energy, so intense they warped space, spread out with Zhang Lie's fist at the very center. The twisted space minced the creatures to pieces, causing fresh blood to stain the ground.

The rock spirits took care of the rest. They had been strengthened massively after consuming a large quantity of rock, ore, and metals, and were hardly affected despite the remaining creatures crashing into their midst. As long as their cores were intact, the rock spirits could regenerate indefinitely.

They held their palms against the ground as large boulders of rock formed a huge wall around them, blocking off the beasts from approaching any closer.

The forces of Renhuang smiled in relief.

Just as the creatures were preparing to turn back, a roar came from the midst of the horde. A gigantic lifeform rushed forward, shattering part of the rock wall and sending a rock giant flying.

Chapter 440: Another Capital

"What's this?"

The gigantic creature was seven or eight stories tall and covered from head to toe with scratched, battered armor. From its appearance, it looked like an elephant, with huge ivory tusks.

Zhang Lie frowned. A genetic lifeform that could defeat the rock giants in a contest of brute strength surely had to have peak- or higher-grade strength.

"Haha! What do you think of the creatures that we've been rearing in our arena?" the elder cried out, triumphant. He wanted to watch Zhang Lie's forces be trampled to death from the beast stampede himself. He introduced, "This is the strongest genetic lifeform in our arena, and he's won ninety-nine matches in a row. Except for our king, no one has been able to suppress him."

"All of you, handle the other beasts. I'll deal with this one!" Zhang Lie commanded, flying toward the elephant-like lifeform.

"[Fists of the Silent Sea: Fade]!" A demonic serpent flew out of Zhang Lie's fist and smashed against the elephant's forehead, causing it to cry out.

Zhang Lie flapped his wings and agilely avoided its attack.

"[Rune: Gravity]!" Zhang Lie raised his hand high up into the air as the image of a dragon turtle appeared before him. The gravity-controlling tablet crashed onto the elephant, and its body sank.

"[The Boundless Blade: Expulsion]!" Zhang Lie's sword arced down and slashed the side of the elephant, leaving a wound deep enough that bone was visible.

The elephant roared in anger as it trampled the ground with its forelegs. Its trunk whipped by Zhang Lie, sending all nearby lifeforms flying.

"Almost there." Zhang Lie flapped his wings again. The elephant, furious, chased after him. Following Zhang Lie's carefully planned route, it trampled over quite a number of its own kind before Zhang Lie lured it toward the capital of Xuechi.

Who didn't know how to lure an enraged creature from place to place?

The elder turned shocked, then anxious, when he realized Zhang Lie's plan. He instantly yelled out, "Quick, stop that fellow! No matter what, you have to prevent him from approaching the capital! Archers, loose your arrows!"

When the sura fighters saw Zhang Lie luring the enraged elephant over, they began to panic. None of them would be able to stop it if Zhang Lie's ploy were to succeed.

The sura fighters quickly loosed their arrows at Zhang Lie.

"[Rune: Gravity]!" A dragon turtle appeared before him once again, and the tablet that crashed down by Zhang Lie's side formed a dome ahead of him that caught all the arrows and sent them raining down on the elephant as it approached instead.

The elder himself took to the battlefield, sending a fog of blood rising into the air.

"[First Form: Parting the River]!" Gleaming light honed the edge of Zhang Lie's sword, and a beam of sword energy rose into the air.

As Zhang Lie sliced downwards, sword energy shattered the earth, blowing the fog away and bisecting both the Xuechi elder and the wall behind him. The line of sword energy cut through the elder, through the wall, and then the buildings behind the wall, stopping only three hundred meters in.

This was the effect of just one blow from Zhang Lie.

The elephant trumpeted as it rushed toward Zhang Lie, but Zhang Lie simply sent a punch backwards without looking back. The force of the punch was such that even the elephant was grounded to a halt.

Zhang Lie flapped his wings and flew into the capital of Xuechi. No one could, nor dared, to stop him.

The elephant followed him in, but found that Zhang Lie's figure had vanished without a trace.

The elephant roared again. Unable to find an outlet for its anger, it trampled all over the city, causing the death and injury of countless sura. After the elephant lost its target, its new objective was to destroy the arena in which it had been held captive for far too long.

It turned out that the sura elder had held off the attack long enough to be able to not die instantly. With his dying breath, he surveyed what had happened to his beloved city as fresh blood poured out of his mouth. "Was I wrong?"

If he hadn't tried to use such a tactic, it wouldn't have backfired on him and the citizens of Xuechi.

The forces of Renhuang all copied their leader's antics and lured the genetic lifeforms into the capital, turning it into a true hell.

They stood outside the city as they watched it self-destruct from the inside out.

Once Zhang Lie judged that the beasts had wreaked enough destruction, he made his move and cleaned them up.

"[Fists of the Silent Sea: Fade]!" He punched the elephant's head, which caved in. The elephant began to bleed from all its orifices.

"[Fists of the Silent Sea: Fade]! A demonic serpent emerged from Zhang Lie's fist as a finishing blow. It bit down on the elephant's neck and coiled its body tight around it, sending a stream of corrosive darkness-attuned energy into its body. A notification soon rang out.

[You successfully killed a peak-grade steel elephant. By consuming the flesh of the peak-grade steel elephant, you may receive one to ten peak gene fragments.]

As expected, it was a peak-grade lifeform.

The next step was to clean up the remaining lifeforms in the capital and rescue the humans trapped within. As they walked out of the underground dungeons in which they had been kept, as they saw sunlight for the first time in years, they couldn't help but cry.

Xuechi was destroyed. Zhang Lie and his forces entered the sura king's palace and saw the gigantic pool of blood, almost the size of a swimming pool, filled with black, sticky blood.

Not long afterwards, they found a group of captive humans deep within the palace...