

U. Warlord 571

Chapter 571: A Manmade Disaster

When the crag eagles consumed golden roc flesh, they obtained the ability to control flocks of weaker bird-type lifeforms, an incredible power with immense utility.

Zhang Lie was very curious as to just what power Zhu would gain. The multicolored mist hanging around Zhu began to spin, and her eyes glowed with light. Her body blossomed, her skin became smoother and shinier, and her face more exquisite, as though she were a doll in miniature.

She looked dreamlike in her evanescent, mystical beauty.

Subsequently, she curled up like a cooked prawn. The evolution continued for the entire night, and Zhang Lie stayed by her side all along. The rainbow mist finally began to dissipate as the transformation finished.

Zhu was still a young girl—her age hadn't changed, but she seemed to grow far more refined, with a mature aura unbefitting children her age. Though a girl in appearance, she had a face and charm that captivated one and all.

Her snowy-white skin was warm and flawless, and her jewel-like eyes shone with rainbow light. Her hair was glossy and seemed to contain all the shades of blue the sea had to offer. As she twirled in the light of dawn, her appearance captivated Zhang Lie's gaze.

She smiled at him. "How do I look?"

Zhang Lie nodded. "Very much like the disaster-grade clam I defeated. To some extent, you're able to hypnotize others and create illusions as well, perhaps at a level sufficient to control superior-grade lifeforms. Once you train your mind further, I believe this ability can be strengthened considerably."

To others, controlling superior-grade lifeforms would be a potent ability, but Zhang Lie thought little of it.

Zhu pursed her lips. She had tested her new ability out on Zhang Lie, but he hadn't seemed to be affected at all! Not only that, he even calmly and coolly analyzed her.

"You're far from being able to hypnotize me with your illusions just yet—but perhaps one day, we'll see." Zhang Lie rubbed her head, causing Zhu to smile. "You really are lucky—it's almost impossibly difficult to hunt down a lifeform whose genes are compatible with yours."

Countless alien races in the sura realm had tried to replicate the same feat to no avail, but Zhu had done it unintentionally.

Zhu rolled her eyes. "This was bound to happen eventually. You feed me different peak-grade lifeforms every day!"

Indeed, in the process of hunting down disaster-grade lifeforms, Zhang Lie and Zhu had come across all sorts of different peak-grade ones, and they ate a different species' meat daily. There was hardly anyone else in the second realm who could boast such treatment.

"Shall we set off now?" Zhang Lie turned to leave.

Zhu followed behind her. "In search of more disaster-grade lifeforms?"

"No. The efficacy is far too low." Zhang Lie had spent half a year to obtain 36 disaster gene fragments. At this rate, he would need another year or two to reach his disaster gene capacity, and that would require that he maintain his current good streak of luck. If he were unlucky, it might well take him half a decade to do so.

Zhang Lie didn't have much time to waste, and there were matters he had to resolve in the third realm. If he were unable to ascend within two years, he would miss quite a number of important opportunities.

He replied calmly, "Fighting against that swan has given me inspiration. My intention is to build an arena—or, more precisely, a farm—to raise my own disaster-grade lifeforms."

Zhu gaped at him. "A farm, to... farm disaster-grade lifeforms? How could that be possible?"

"We won't know until we try, will we?"

Zhu nodded for a moment before vehemently shaking her head. "No, that can't be! Peak-grade lifeforms are frightening enough—how do you expect to rear disaster-grade ones?"

Zhang Lie touched the water by his feet. "Isn't this ocean a convenient place to set up a farm? We won't even have to find any food."

Zhang Lie's words left Zhu agape. He wanted to make the seven forbidden regions of the sea... a farm for himself? Using the lifeforms within as food and opportunity to cultivate a disaster-grade lifeform?

This was an arrogant, insane plan, one that Zhu would have said was impossible for anyone else—and she barely knew anything about genetic lifeforms herself. If Zhang Lie's plan had been revealed to the sura, or even to any race within the Milky Way, those aliens unfortunate enough to overhear it might have fainted on the spot.

Hardly anyone knew of these supposed disaster-grade lifeforms, but ignoring that, just treating the seven forbidden regions of the sea like nothing but a common pond was shocking enough.

Before Zhang Lie entered the second realm, the hunters of the Milky Way had found it almost impossibly difficult just to survive on land, let alone the sea.

Just as they were finally experiencing a period of stable, uninterrupted growth, Zhang Lie was already setting his sights on something greater...

As he waded into the sea with Zhu, Zhang Lie activated his disaster-grade mistmeld clam soulshard at full power, causing rainbow-colored mist to pour out of his body.

That mist quickly dissolved through the sea, trapping all the peak-grade lifeforms it encountered in an illusion which compelled them to gather at a specific location, a basin of water formed by two crescent-shaped islands. This would be the site of Zhang Lie's first test.

Under the effect of Zhang Lie's disaster-grade soulshard, peak-grade lifeforms continuously swam into the basin, where they began to battle against each other. Blood dyed the basin red.

Countless peak-grade lifeforms flooded into the basin and fought against each other, battling with their lives on the line. As Zhang Lie hoped, the victorious lifeform ultimately evolved into a disaster-grade existence.

Lightning fell from the high heavens, striking a lifeform and sending ripples of energy from the point of impact. Huge waves disintegrated the two islands as the lifeform struck by lightning grew larger and larger, morphing finally into a gigantic bear.

But just as it finished its evolution and roared into the skies as if to announce its birth, Zhang Lie crushed it with a lone punch that fell from the skies like a meteor.

The lifeform that had just evolved to disaster-grade perished before its new genes had even settled in. A frightening burst of energy split the sea, vaporizing the water and forming a gigantic cavity.

Water rushed into that cavity like a whirlpool, dissolving everything within save for a crystalline orb as hard as diamond, the core of the newly minted disaster-grade lifeform. As Zhang Lie fished it up and stared at it, he began to laugh. This was the first manmade disaster-grade core—his experiment had been a complete success!

Chapter 572: Establishing a Farm

Zhang Lie held the core high up in the air, his heart thumping. He had successfully produced a disaster-grade lifeform, but he still had to ensure that the disaster-grade core generated in this fashion would be as readily absorbed as natural ones.

Zhang Lie began absorbing the core immediately. He 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.

Then, Zhang Lie closed his eyes and began pouring concentrated, black genetic energy from his body into the core.

After he swallowed the core, Zhang Lie's skin turned red. Steam hissed from his body as primordial energy flooded it. He let out a hissing breath. His body had already begun to crystallize, and the absorption process went much more smoothly this time around.

[For swallowing a disaster-grade core, you received 10 disaster gene fragments.]

Zhang Lie raised his head to the skies and began to laugh. "Haha, I've succeeded, I've really succeeded!"

If he were able to farm disaster-grade lifeforms en masse, he wouldn't have to worry about not having access to enough disaster gene fragments—and not just him, the rest of Team Zenith could use a similar strategy to max out their disaster gene fragments.

Zhang Lie got to work. He traveled through the sea, a human-shaped disaster of his own making. With the power of the disaster-grade mistmeld soulshard, he compelled the peak-grade lifeforms within the region to slaughter each other.

However, Zhang Lie quickly reached a bottleneck once the number of peak-grade lifeforms in the nearby regions diminished greatly.

Just as he was wondering what to do, Zhu suggested, "Mister, do you know the sea of rampaging sharks?"

"One of the seven forbidden regions?"

Zhu nodded. "The sea of rampaging sharks, much like the sea of corroding bone, has a great deal of strong lifeforms within."

Zhang Lie's eyes opened wide. "Peak-grade lifeforms, too?"

Zhu shook her head. "The sharks in the sea of rampaging sharks have the special ability of growing stronger by eating other foes, without any limit to their growth whatsoever."

In some sense, they were similar to humans, but their growth rate was even higher.

Humans were limited by the maximum gene fragment capacity they could sustain, but these sharks had no such limit. The more they ate, the stronger they grew. They might not have limits of their own, but they were constrained by the limits of the realm—that was, to disaster-grade at most.

"Why do these sharks still exist, then?"

From Zhang Lie's perspective, these lifeforms with unfettered growth potential should have either taken over the entire ocean or been hunted to extinction.

Zhu shrugged. "It's likely because the sea of sharks neighbors the sea of whales, another of the seven forbidden regions—well, six, now."

Zhang Lie had killed the whirlpool tyrant and dispelled the mists above the sea of mists. The whirlpool strait still existed in principle thanks to the weaker lifeforms that produced whirlpools during the day, but the sea of mists had been conquered for good.

Zhu said, "My father once told me that the sharks in the sea of rampaging sharks originally weren't very strong. It was only when they fought off another clan that they developed into their true potential."

It seemed as though these sharks had experienced the same evolution as Zhu had just a few days ago: they had consumed the flesh of a compatible species and gained an incredible ability.

Once these sharks evolved, they initiated a war in the sea before being roundly trounced by the giant whales that lived nearby.

Once the sharks retreated from the whales' territory, the whales didn't give chase. Perhaps the leaders of the two races had an agreement; subsequently, the sharks began to expand into territory that didn't belong to the whales. Because they were landlocked on one front, they ultimately chose to stop expanding beyond a certain point.

Zhu added, "The sea of corroding bone contains an unusual lifeform known as the bone-corroding shrimp. These shrimp are tiny, but they breed surprisingly quickly. Ten pairs of bone-corroding shrimp can produce ten thousand shrimp within two or three days. Their blood is corrosive, and they consume almost anything in sight. An ordinary lifeform would be consumed completely within moments, down to the bone."

"These giant whales must be a blessing to the ocean, then. If they were to perish, their death would unleash two disasters on the ocean."

Zhang Lie suddenly had a thought. He dove deep into the ocean and began releasing colored mist, which diffused into the water and spread throughout the forbidden regions of the sea.

A layer of multicolored mist appeared above the five unexplored regions, gathering especially thickly above the sea of rampaging sharks, sea of corroding bone, and sea of giant whales. No oceanic lifeform knew the origin of this mist, nor what lay hidden beneath.

As the lifeforms sucked in the mist, their irises glowed with a rainbow gleam. They immediately swam toward the forbidden regions and remained there, never to appear again.

Some of the lifeforms suspected that this was an unusual phenomenon caused by the sea of mists, and indirectly, they were right.

Three species of the forbidden regions, the giant whales, the rampaging sharks, and the bone-corroding shrimp, which had persisted as neighbors in relative peace and prosperity, suddenly devolved into war.

The giant whales were behemoths; even the smallest among them was larger than the whirlpool tyrant in size. Despite their massive girth, they were surprisingly agile in the water, and they would even hunt in packs.

Many alien races who learned of these three forbidden regions thought that the giant whales were acting as protectors of the ocean, and even Zhang Lie fell into this trap.

However, they were all mistaken.

Without the giant whales around, the bone-corroding shrimp could ultimately spread across the entire ocean and even begin destroying the nearby landmasses; similarly, without the bone-corroding shrimp around, the giant whales could dominate over the entire ocean. They remained where they were because the bone-corroding shrimp were an inexhaustible, immediately available source of food.

These two species restricted and balanced each other in a relatively stable equilibrium, but a calamity could rapidly and irrevocably destroy this delicate balance.

The rampaging sharks were blood-red sharks with a multitude of sharp teeth, so sharp and hard that they seemed to be able to grind steel to pieces. These sharks were somewhat afraid of the giant whales, who were known to be sly and despicable, and who hunted in groups. Under ordinary circumstances, these sharks would stay well away.

The appearance of the rainbow-colored mist had curtailed this instinct, and these sharks were the first to break the balance between the whales and the shrimp.

Once the sharks began attacking the whales, the shrimp likewise swarmed into whale territory.

Under the effect of the rainbow mist, the three forbidden regions declared war on each other, entangling the fate of three races...

Chapter 573: The Sura's War

Under the rainbow mist, the forbidden regions of the sea were littered with corpses, and the clear blue water had been dyed a garish red. As the fighting grew more and more intense, even the clan leaders were dragged into the melee—too much of their kind had already perished.

The leader of the rampaging sharks roared. Blood circulated rapidly within its body, and blood trailed behind him as he swam forward.

"You giant whales were the ones who caused my clan to lose their rationality. Don't deny it—you whales have been eyeing our territory for a while now. Hand over the culprit who killed nine of my sons!"

The giant whale bayed in rage. "Your sons killed my daughter! Their lives are forfeit, and so is yours!"

As the two races battled to the death with each other, the entire ocean was in turmoil. Waves a hundred feet high swept the ocean as the seafaring races evacuated to land for safety.

The giant whales had a hard time dealing with simultaneous attacks from the rampaging sharks and bone-corroding shrimp, but they were reinforced by their subordinate clans—the seals, manatees, walruses, oysters, and many more whom the giant whales had agreements with.

Many of these lifeforms were peak- or higher-grade, and the rampaging sharks grew stronger and stronger with every battle and every foe they devoured.

The battle that raged between the three forbidden regions impacted all five.

Some oceanic lifeforms, realizing that the defeat of the giant whales would portend doom and unleash the rampaging sharks and bone-corroding shrimp on the ocean at large, joined the battle on the side of the whales.

This was Zhang Lie's first time seeing the true strength of the second realm's oceans, which were almost unimaginably deep. The truly strong lifeforms roamed not the surface of the ocean, but rather its depths.

The seven forbidden regions of the ocean hardly represented its full strength; no, far from it. Thirteen more forbidden regions were known to oceanic lifeforms, though these were deep underwater. The seafaring races only knew of the forbidden regions on the surface of the ocean, but not what lay below.

One of the underwater regions consisted of deep-sea jellyfish, whose tentacles could paralyze with the briefest touch.

The rampaging sharks were forced back by the combined assault of the giant whales, the whales' subordinate races, and the other powers of the ocean that feared the sharks being unleashed. Driven to a corner, they had no choice but to use their trump cards—five peak-grade sharks who were at the cusp of disaster-grade.

Over a few centuries, the sharks had amassed a considerable amount of strength. Knowing that their opponents were wily giant whales, however, they consolidated that strength in a small number of sharks, which roamed underwater and were hidden from the surveillance of the whales.

The whales had once blocked the sharks from expansion, but they didn't kill them all off. As a result, the sharks had united against a common enemy. Under the tremendous pressure and threat of the whales, the sharks grew stronger more and more rapidly.

As the fighting continued, the numbers of the oceanic races dwindled. No one noticed this problem; they assumed that they were simply casualties from the fighting. In truth, Zhang Lie had captured a large fraction of the missing peak-grade lifeforms.

The leader of the giant whales frowned as he oversaw the fighting. "Just what unusual ability have the sharks obtained now?"

Under the rainbow fog, more and more of these peak-grade lifeforms vanished from sight. Zhang Lie smiled at the new farm he had started up, a small patch of ocean wholly his own. He had used the whirlpool tyrant's soulshard to set up a miniature patch of ocean, then populated it with the peak-grade lifeforms he had sequestered from the fighting.

He had instigated the battle from the very beginning. The children of the leaders of the two clans had perished because of Zhang Lie—he had controlled them with his mistmeld clam soulshard.

Not only that, Zhang Lie was sending a large group of these lifeforms into the hands of the rampaging sharks so that they could grow stronger even more quickly.

The rampaging sharks didn't disappoint him. Over the course of the battle, another ten peak-grade sharks reached the bottleneck to disaster-grade. Zhang Lie continued squirreling these lifeforms away as they grew stronger and stronger.

He was very pleased about how his miniature ocean was developing.

With the bone-corroding shrimp around, he didn't have to worry about the source of the lifeforms' food. It was only because of the giant whales' interference that the bone-corroding shrimp and rampaging sharks couldn't work together.

In truth, these two races were particularly compatible with each other—the shrimp would reproduce rapidly, and the rampaging sharks could grow much stronger much more quickly by consuming these shrimp.

As long as Zhang Lie could resolve the issue of the shrimp's food, he would have a factory that could churn out disaster-grade lifeforms at will. In the future, the members of Team Zenith, and even the human race at large, would be able to obtain disaster gene fragments much more easily.

Of course, getting to this point would require far more time and energy on his part.

Back in the human world, another war was waging.

As the schism in the world federation cut deeper and deeper, Hong Tianqi and Amurong's supporters formed two opposing factions that contested control over the Milky Way. Amurong represented old power and the largest conglomerates, whereas Hong Tianqi represented new activism and the representatives of the four prime races.

Simultaneously, the war between the sura and the people of Renhuang had begun in earnest, and it had, by now, persisted for months.

Much of the potency of the Yeluo poison had been stripped by the sura's new techniques, but Renhuang wouldn't give in quite so easily.

The members of Team Zenith showed off their burgeoning skill and growth, killing the majority of the sura kings who participated in the fighting.

"[Blinding Flash: Hundredfold Echo]!" Sun Xiaowu's body split into over a hundred clones, so many they seemed to fill the sky.

"[Golden Divide]!" The hundred clones all used [Golden Divide] simultaneously, coloring the sky in gold. Sun Xiaowu's battalion, composed of none but his clones, was a lethal strike force that could appear anywhere on the battlefield.

"[Birth of the Holy Dragon]!" On another battlefield, a light dragon descended from the heavens like a beacon of shining light, dissipating the black flames that lay below.

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

On yet another battlefield, Fang Yi pierced the ranks of his enemies like a spear that could penetrate anything...

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"[Heaven's Judgment]! [Tiger's Howl, Dragon's Bellow]!"

Along the spear's breadth rose a dragon of wind and a tiger of thunder. As they twined around each other, the tip of the spear gleamed, crackling with concentrated power.

The spear strike rent the battlefield in half.

Yang Ze alone handled the eastern front. The battlefield was shrouded in thick white mist, and a horde of blue sharks seemed to roam within it.

Many of the sura fighters quickly developed a phobia of mist and fog, and even of the water vapor that emerged from the most mundane of things.

"[Avatar of the Fae: Earthbound Prison]!" Zhou Ying released all her stored energy, causing the ground to quake as thousands of jade-green wood dragons rushed out of the earth. Each was at least thirty meters long, and they easily covered the skies with their combined bodies.

They swooped down toward the sura, turning them into petrified wood on contact.

In the center of an outburst of green light, Zhou Ying's hair rapidly grew so long it reached her leg, fluttering in an invisible wind. The vitality radiating from her was visible to the naked eye. She seemed to have become one with the land. Pulses of green energy rippled from her, healing the wounds that the Renhuang fighters had sustained.

Zhou Ying and the shaman of the wood spirits were always able to take to the battlefield at the most crucial of moments. She was heralded as the goddess of life, able to petrify the sura and

simultaneously heal the wounded. She was bane to the sura and boon to her allies; allegedly, she had even forced back a sura monarch.

The member of Team Zenith who stood out most as a result of the large-scale warfare, however, was none other than Sun Mengmeng. She alone provided artillery support for countless battlefields.

Where she set her bow, purple-red flames filled the air. Fire-attuned genetic energy burst from Sun Mengmeng's body as her body erupted in flames. She pulled her greatbow taut. Only a series of afterimages were visible of her hand as she shot countless arrows of purple flame of her bow, producing what seemed like a meteor shower that tinted the air purple and gave the battlefield a phantasmagorical appearance. The air turned dry and arid, as though a cataclysm was nigh.

Under the brilliant purple sky, the sura fighters began to burn, drowned in a sea of purple flame.

Where Sun Mengmeng went, a fatality of meteor showers followed.

The members of Team Zenith had all made a name for themselves during the fighting, and all the sura fighters knew and feared them. Their names spread throughout the sura and the alien races working with Renhuang.

The sura monarchs convened a meeting at their headquarters.

The monarch of the sun boomed, "To date, he still hasn't made an appearance."

The monarch of the moon nodded. "According to our spies, the governor of Renhuang may have left Renhuang some time ago."

"Shall we strike?" the monarch of the sky asked.

The monarch of the sea shook his head. "The reason the governor of Renhuang hasn't appeared is because we haven't put enough pressure on Renhuang yet. Just like us, he doesn't think his side needs his help."

The monarch of mountains concluded, "In either case, it seems like as long as our opponent doesn't use its trump card, neither will we."

"I wonder if that's good or bad..." the monarch of the sun mused.

The monarch of the moon: "Regardless, let's try to apply pressure to Renhuang. I'd like to see whether or not the governor of Renhuang is indeed present. If he isn't—"

The monarch of the sky cut in, rubbing his palms. "If he isn't, it's time to rid ourselves of Renhuang's damnable army."

Zhang Lie hadn't appeared on the battlefield at all, but his presence was keenly felt. Without the threat of Zhang Lie, the sura monarchs would have leveled the Renhuang army long ago.

The monarch of the sea asked, "Is it time to enact our plan?"

"Yes—move those pawns!"

Back in Renhuang, Hong Xi nudged Sun Mengmeng. "What do you think of the nicknames you've gotten on the battlefield? The demoness of purple flame, the tyrant of—"

Sun Mengmeng cut her off with a sigh. "Well, it's not as if we want those titles, but you'd better not laugh at mine. Don't they call you 'the maiden of sun and moon'?"

Hong Xi clutched her head as she moaned. "I don't want a title like that!"

In the battle against the sura, Hong Xi's aura of [Eclipse] had proved to be a great boon.

She changed the topic. "Why do you think the Yeluo chieftain summoned us all back?"

The members of Team Zenith all played instrumental roles in the fight against the sura army, but Sun Mengmeng and Hong Xi had temporarily left the battlefield. They had received a transmission from Yun Bing claiming that the Yeluo chieftain had succeeded in a piece of research that would turn the tides of war.

With this research, they would apparently be able to finish the sura off for good.

Sun Mengmeng sighed. "It would be amazing if it were really that impactful."

The sura army seemed to be fighting on equal footing with the Renhuang forces, but there were a number of hidden problems with the Renhuang forces that were only now making themselves known.

After all, Renhuang's forces were a coalition of wildly different races, and it was basically a given that there would be spies mixed in.

The sura were frequently able to lay ambushes for Renhuang's forces, and the unstable stalemate had only been preserved so long because of the members of Team Zenith.

It was impossible to ferret out these spies, so the members of Team Zenith instead decided to decentralize command of the army to a cohort of supervisory tacticians and strategists formed largely from members of the four prime races.

While these spies still had a detrimental effect on Renhuang's strategy, the overall result was acceptable, and Renhuang's forces fell prey to sura ambushes much less frequently.

The problem was that the five sura monarchs had barely made an appearance on the battlefield, and if they were to strike simultaneously, Renhuang's forces would surely suffer even if they could hold the five sura monarchs back. After all, there was currently no force sufficient to counter their simultaneous incursion.

Perhaps the members of Team Zenith could take them on for a while, but it was unlikely that they would come out victorious.

Furthermore, Renhuang had far fewer resources than the sura, and a prolonged battle would prove more and more disadvantageous for Renhuang once it started to drag on.

Renhuang would run out of provisions and supplies, and once they began to suffer defeat, the morale of the alien races would drop and the army would fragment.

At that point, Renhuang would have well and truly lost.

Chapter 575: Yeluo Poison #2

Sun Mengmeng could sense that the sura were gearing up for a big move.

Among the allied forces, there were a few races who seemed to be behaving strangely—they were wandering around the encampment of the other races. Sun Mengmeng specially assigned a few fighters to follow them around.

"I hope these other races won't be so easily tempted to defect, but if they do..." Renhuang wouldn't show them any mercy.

Sun Mengmeng and Hong Xi quickly arrived at Renhuang's academy. Much of the equipment had been grown naturally by the wood spirits, though they resembled modern electronic lab equipment. The lab they headed towards was geared at biological research.

The Yeluo chieftain met them with huge eyebags and messy, wild hair. When he saw them approach, however, his eyes lit up with anticipation. "You're here!"

The Yeluo chieftain boasted combat strength at least equal to that of a sura king, but at the moment, he seemed unbelievably weary.

For someone with his constitution to get so exhausted would have required operating without sleep for a few weeks, not just days.

Sun Mengmeng frowned. "Chieftain, I understand how much you value your research, but you have to take more breaks. If you collapse—"

Ever since the Yeluo poison had been countered by the sura's simple techniques, the Yeluo chieftain had gone into a frenzy as he pursued a refinement of the poison.

"No, no, let's not talk about this now. Come, have a look! I've made an incredible breakthrough—this is the newest formulation of the Yeluo poison!"

Sun Mengmeng and Hong Xi's eyes brightened. The Yeluo poison was a potent tool against the sura, but the sura had begun guarding against it.

Renhuang's original strategy of having flocks of birds dump that poison over the Yeluo troops had faltered, and they had no choice but to slather it over their weapons instead. The poison was effective, but not as instrumental as it had been.

With the Yeluo chieftain's new breakthrough, however, it might reclaim its original presence.

"Come, follow me." The Yeluo chieftain brought them to what was essentially a fume hood.

The fume hood was made not with a chemically resistant polymer, but rather a thin membrane made from the eyes of a certain insect-type lifeform from the second realm. The Yeluo chieftain had specifically issued a bounty for them in Renhuang's guild.

Within the fume hood was a squirming object, something that looked a bit like a slime. "This is my new invention."

Sun Mengmeng frowned. "It looks like... a genetic lifeform?"

"Have a look."

As the Yeluo chieftain depressed a button, a sura corpse dropped into the chamber from above. The squirming lifeform pounced on it and stuck to its body.

In a matter of moments, the corpse had been dissolved whole.

"This is a biological wonder," the Yeluo chieftain introduced happily.

Hong Xi seemed rather perturbed. "It feels a little disgusting. Is this a biological lifeform?"

"Essentially. It acts on instinct and is unable to think for itself."

Sun Mengmeng asked, "How did you make it?"

"Oh!" The Yeluo chieftain smiled happily. "Well, I'll have to thank Zhou Ying and the shaman of the wood spirits for that."

When Zhou Ying's body merged with the shaman of the wood spirits', their merger represented an elevated form of life, one distinct from anything I've ever seen before."

He directed the two of them toward what seemed to be a microscope constructed out of a flower, with almost the same functionality. He displayed a cell sample of Zhou Ying and the shaman's combined form by the base of the flower and motioned for Sun Mengmeng to have a look.

Sun Mengmeng saw, to her surprise, that that cell sample was growing at a rate visible to the naked eye.

The Yeluo chieftain continued excitedly, "These cells have a frightening vitality and regenerative ability, so much so that they seem to be able to subdivide without any limit whatsoever."

Sun Mengmeng asked, "Does Zhou Ying know of this?"

Hong Xi answered before the Yeluo chieftain could. "Of course not—or she'd beat the chieftain up!"

"These cells possess unusual characteristics reminiscent of a plant. They can survive even in bitter cold, and all they fear is extreme heat. Under ambient conditions, they can grow and reduplicate endlessly, needing nothing more than sunlight to survive. These cells are truly a miracle, as though they came from the goddess of life herself."

The Yeluo chieftain became more and more agitated as he spoke—to him, this was a discovery that would revolutionize the very foundations of the world.

He retrieved a vial. "At the beginning, I used these cells to manufacture poison in much the same way we had been doing before, and the quality of the resulting poison far surpassed anything we had ever made—compared to the new poison, all our concoctions to date are worthless. Any other concoction is worthless!"

"Are these cells really that impressive?"

The Yeluo chieftain nodded firmly. "You know about the potions of regeneration we make, don't you? In the past, if you had an arm chopped off, you'd need to retrieve that arm and make sure that the wound isn't too damaged if you wanted to use a potion on it. The potion of regeneration we made with Zhou Ying's cells is far superior."

Hong Xi frowned. "Do you mean to say that it can even regrow limbs?"

The Yeluo chieftain shook his head. "No. More than that—if you're still alive, even if half your body has been chopped off, that potion can save your life and regrow it all."

Sun Mengmeng's eyes widened. "What?! Doesn't that mean that we can prevent the deaths of any Renhuang troop?"

The Yeluo chieftain nodded. "That's right, but this potion is still nothing compared to the new Yeluo poison we've developed."

"You mean to say that the new Yeluo poison has an even stronger effect?"

"Of course—it'll end the war against the sura all by itself."

"Truly?!" Sun Mengmeng listened with bated breath, unable to believe the truth of the Yeluo chieftain's words.

The Yeluo chieftain nodded. "It's as instrumental as the nuclear warheads of your past, the starbreak annihilators of your present."

The combination of Zhou Ying's cells and the Yeluo poison had produced something beyond his wildest imaginations—a biological lifeform.

Sun Mengmeng asked again, "Can this new poison really win the war against the sura?"

"Yes, definitely."

The Yeluo chieftain walked deep into the laboratory and retrieved a tub of powder kept securely under lock and key. "This is the inactive form of the new poison."

"A powder?" Sun Mengmeng seemed a little disappointed. The sura now guarded against any mysterious liquids or powder thrown their way, and this new form of the poison seemed rather unusable...

Chapter 576: The Eve of War

"Powder, yes, but not any old powder. As soon as this powder touches a sura, they'll be melted from the outside in, then transformed into the biological lifeform I showed you. This lifeform is almost impossible to kill, especially for the sura. Its only weakness is fire. Burning it will convert it to powdered form, where it'll be blown into the air."

Hong Xi murmured in surprise, "In that case, can't it live on indefinitely?"

The Yeluo chieftain nodded. "Exactly, just like Zhou Ying's cells—and it's even more frightening when burned, since it'll turn into airborne particles that, when sucked in, can destroy the sura from the inside out."

Sun Mengmeng's eyes widened. "What about the blood clots that the sura have been using to counter us?"

The Yeluo chieftain shrugged. "External sources of blood will protect them, but sura blood won't."

Sun Mengmeng grew visibly excited. "When will you be able to mass-produce it?"

The Yeluo chieftain smiled. "I knew what you were going to ask. The warehouse already has a significant stockpile."

Just then, Sun Mengmeng's doublegrowth flower shook. It turned red, a sign of imminent combat against the sura.

Hong Xi's eyes widened. "We have to hand the poison to the troops immediately!"

"No, wait," Sun Mengmeng suddenly said. "Hold on. We don't have that large a supply of this new poison. We should divide it among us humans and the first few races that joined Renhuang. We can hand the rest to the allied races from the Milky Way, but we have to ensure that they don't spread any information to the sura. If anyone dares do so, they'll be branded a traitor and treated accordingly."

The Yeluo chieftain smiled wearily. "Spies, I presume? It looks like you all aren't having the easiest time, either."

The sudden meeting among the sura monarchs shocked the Renhuang forces.

For the first time since the war began, the members of Team Zenith gathered together. Li Feng brought up the fact that the sura were mobilizing en masse, something they had all noticed during their respective fighting. "Do you think they'll finally come at us in earnest?"

Sun Xiaowu shook his head. "It's hard to say. Perhaps they're trying to distract us. From what I can see of the forces they've sent against us, I don't think they'll be able to take us down in a direct confrontation."

Fang Yi nodded. "We haven't seen any of the sura monarchs on their side, either."

Yang Ze frowned. "Are the sura actually using tactics against us? That's more annoying than I expected..."

Sun Mengmeng sighed. "They have their trump cards, and we have ours—though, well, ours is absent."

Everyone's faces turned glum. They knew whom Sun Mengmeng spoke of, of course. It was disappointing that they couldn't seem to achieve very much without his presence.

They turned to face the sura army massing in the distance, which outnumbered their own forces by over fifty million. So densely were they packed that they were like a black plague spreading over the horizon.

Li Feng sighed. "I hope this upgraded Yeluo poison will prove effective, or else..."

Just then, a sura king approached the neutral territory between the two forces and shouted, "Forces of Renhuang, surrender now!"

The sura have dominated over the sura realm for millennia, and no one has ever been able to disrupt our superiority—not in the past, not in the present, nor in the future. If you surrender now, we sura may consider going easy on you."

Before the battle began in earnest, such high-handed words would raise the sura's morale—in principle. The humans were particularly inventive with their insults, and the sura had come out on the losing end of every verbal battle, but the sura couldn't give up now. This was a tradition of the sura, and any army that didn't accede to such a tradition was widely recognized to be scared of their opponent.

Li Feng strode forward with swagger. "Oh? I thought I heard a dog barking, but it turned out to be a sura!"

The sura king's face turned green. "Do you truly think a ramshackle place like this 'Renhuang' of yours can take down us sura? You humans only deserve to be our slaves!"

Yang Ze spread his arms. "Sura, sura—you've grown fat from your time as tyrants of the realm. It's well past time that you be taken down!"

"Indeed? You lot truly are asking to die, aren't you? Sura, charge forward!" With the wave of an arm, the sura king summoned forth the forces that had been massing over the horizon. The stomping of their feet made the very earth shake.

"Charge!" The members of Team Zenith took the vanguard, followed by Renhuang's forces.

"[Lunarflame Shot]!" Fire-attuned genetic energy burst from Sun Mengmeng's body as her body erupted in flames. She pulled her greatbow taut.

Sun Mengmeng's right hand blurred as countless arrows of purple flame shot out of her bow like a meteor shower that tinted the air purple and gave the battlefield a phantasmagorical appearance. The air turned dry and arid, as though a cataclysm was nigh.

Under the brilliant purple sky, the sura fighters began to burn, drowned in a sea of purple flame.

Dozens of sura kings made a beeline toward Sun Mengmeng. If she were allowed to launch technique after technique undeterred, the sura would all die to her aerial bombardment.

"If you want to attack my sister, you'll have to get past me, first! [Blinding Flash: Hundredfold Echo]!" Sun Xiaowu's body split into over a hundred clones, so many they seemed to fill the sky.

"[Golden Divide]!" The hundred clones all used [Golden Divide] simultaneously, coloring the sky in gold as they rained down on the sura kings.

"[Birth of the Holy Dragon]!" A light dragon descended from the heavens like a beacon of shining light. Li Feng leapt up to the head of the dragon, his sword gleaming brightly as though it had been dipped in liquid light. As he raised the sword to the skies, it glowed and expanded, morphing into a huge blade of light that descended on the sura kings.

He turned back and called out, "Sun Mengmeng, keep unleashing your techniques! We'll hold these rabble back!"

Sun Mengmeng cast [Black Sun], forming a corona of purplish-black flame around her. She activated her most impactful soulshards for battle, transforming from a young woman to a fierce warrior with a chitinous carapace, wreathed in black flame.

"[Syzygy]!" Sun Mengmeng shot out dozens of arrows toward the battlefield, sending pillars of purplish-black flame flaring toward the skies. The pillars exploded in mid-air and transformed into a violet moon, whose rays of light shone down on the entire battlefield...

Chapter 577: Traitors One and All

"[Heaven's Judgment]! [Tiger's Howl, Dragon's Bellow]!" Along the breadth of Fang Yi's spear rose a dragon of wind and a tiger of thunder. As they twined around each other, the tip of the spear gleamed, crackling with concentrated power.

He pierced two sura kings in as much time it took to draw breath before glancing toward the remaining sura kings with a challenging stare.

The sura kings stepped back subconsciously. Eventually, one sura king suddenly yelled out, "What are you all waiting for? We charge together!"

As the sura king's voice rang out, several among the Renhuang forces struck at their allies.

Their allies fell, and those around them stared at the traitors with consternation. Who would have expected betrayal to struck so keenly?

"We've simply made the logical decision."

Sun Mengmeng glanced around her, seeing if she recognized any of the traitorous races. One group was the Goldherald clan, and another the Tangsan. The Tangsan would carry their forefathers' ashes with them, thinking that it would bring them strength. Before any major events, they would pray to those ashes hoping to be blessed.

Sun Mengmeng hadn't expected such a major clan to betray them.

The Goldherald envoy bowed his head apologetically. "The sura promised us lavish gifts and generous compensation. Now that so many sura kings have perished, there's land and resources aplenty for all of us. Once the sura take you down, we'll be awarded part of the conquered land for our own. If the sura are willing to sign a treaty with us and treat us on equal footing, why should we work with you underdogs? I do all this for my clan, for my race, for my family and children."

Among the defecting races were those that had once been subordinate to the sura, and those that had been secretly persuaded by the former races.

Most of the alien races had joined Renhuang's army in order to secure profit for their own race. Only a few truly viewed the sura as their enemies.

Now that the sura were promising them even higher rewards for victory, they naturally flocked to the other side. With one fell swoop, the sura weighted the scales further in their favor.

The members of Team Zenith watched this happen without any emotion. They had anticipated that the sura would do something like this, after all, but some of their allies couldn't help but turn enraged.

"Are you all crazy?! Once we perish, do you think they'll treat you as well as promised?"

"The moment we no longer become a threat, the sura will turn on you. Wake up! You're just a dagger to be used against us, a dagger that'll be discarded the moment it becomes useless."

"Haven't you seen what the sura have done to their enemies? You'll be next. They can't trust any of you—you've already betrayed a force once, and you can easily do so again."

Those races that had betrayed the sura refused to listen to any reason; the die had been cast. In fact, as some of the allied races recognized just how disadvantaged they were, even more began to defect from Renhuang's forces.

With the allied troops in turmoil, the sura charged forward. The allied races were trapped between the sura onslaught and the defecting races, and the battle turned more chaotic than ever before.

The sura king who had given the signal to defect stared at the scene with a mocking smile on his face. "I told you all, didn't I? Just the barest hint of stress, and this so-called army will collapse."

Beside him, another sura king licked his lips. "You, demoness of purple flame, Sun Mengmeng! Why don't you come be my concubine? I promise I'll treat you well!"

His words sent the other sura kings into a frenzy. "No, she's mine!" "I had my eyes on her first!" "Hold it, you fools! We still have to catch them all first."

The sura kings were so confident in their victory that they had already begun dividing up their expected spoils.

"You guys can lay claim to all the rest, but the goddess of nature is mine!"

"They're humans as strong as us sura kings, aren't they? I really am quite interested in seeing them for myself."

"The maiden of sun and moon belongs to me!"

Yang Ze smirked at the squabbling sura kings. "Surely you don't think you've won already?"

The sura kings shouted back, "Your so-called alliance has already fragmented. Do you think you can turn the tides of war?"

Yang Ze laughed again. "Renhuang has never had to rely on any alien race, and it never will. It's time to use our secret weapon, isn't it? I can't stand the sight of these trash anymore—let's have them all rot away!"

The other members of Team Zenith nodded, and Yang Ze called out loudly into the air, "Unleash the weapon!"

The skies clouded over, and the flapping of wings drowned out the sound of battle. Everyone raised their heads to see countless flocks of birds taking to the air, controlled by the crag eagles.

"What do you think you can accomplish at this point?" None of the sura kings seemed concerned. The sura fighters punched upward almost in unison, shattering the vials and dissipating the powder within.

The human hunters and forces from the four prime races each tossed out the vials of poison that had been distributed to them beforehand, but the sura fighters only watched on stoically.

They had seen such tactics being used in the initial skirmishes against Renhuang. Those tactics had quickly become obsolete once Renhuang's forces learned that the sura had come up with counters for them.

"Your resistance is futile!" a sura king called out.

Some of the other sura kings began to laugh and titter, but they quickly noticed that something was wrong. What the subsequent flocks of birds had dropped down on the sura army wasn't vials of poison, but rather the corpses of sura fighters!

The sura were enraged and incensed by this vile act. This was the greatest insult that the humans could bring to bear against them; the sura didn't fear death, but despoiling their bodies after death was a grave insult.

As the sura fighters clamored for vengeance, a cry rang out from their side of the battlefield.

"Calm down!" Everyone turned to the sura king who had spoken, some in rage, some in anger, some in bafflement. "The scales of war have tilted in our favor. The humans are clearly trying to enrage us, and we can't fall into their trap. Remain calm and logical."

Another sura king shouted back, "Our victory is all but determined. No matter what Renhuang does, it meets its end today. Kill them all!"

Chapter 578: One Trump Card

"No, there's no need to charge in! The forces of Renhuang have splintered, and we have nothing to worry about."

"Right, we have no need to worry. You can torture them however you want later, but before we secure victory, we have to present a united front."

"Surely there's no way the humans can launch a comeback now! All they're doing is trying to mount a last-ditch resistance—and failing at that, too!"

A large group of sura kings spoke up against the rash one who had called for a charge.

Sun Mengmeng chuckled coldly. "Do you really think that that will be the case?"

Li Feng pointed toward the ground. "Have a good look—this is a present we've prepared for you! It's time for this war to draw to a close."

The sura found, to their surprise, that the corpses of their fellow kind seemed to have gone wrong somehow. They quickly decomposed, and strange, sticky slimes emerged from within their corpses.

"What's this?!"

Any bits of flesh that touched the powder that had been dispersed through the air and scattered over the ground likewise became fleshy blobs that squirmed and writhed.

There were countless sura corpses scattered and strewn over the ground, which became hotbeds of infection and rapid development of the lifeforms that spawned from the revised Yeluo poison. These slimy lifeforms now instinctively moved toward the sura.

The sura attacked the slimy blobs, causing them to explode. As they did so, the sticky fluid that made them up was dispersed through the air. When a blob of fluid landed on a sura, that sura was near-instantly devoured and transformed into a larger slime.

People tended to fear the unknown; the sura were no exception. They began to panic.

A sura king roared in rage, "Damned Renhuang, what have you done?!"

Some of the sura kings, having guessed at what was going on, were even more furious. "Damn you, damn you all to hell! You've developed this monstrosity that only targets the sura—will you stop at nothing to see our race go extinct?!"

Yang Ze shook his head. "Please respect our science. These aren't monstrosities—we call them Yeluo Poison #2."

Li Feng held two fingers up before him in a V, as a sign for victory. "Science is the impetus for change. Instead of getting upset at us, why haven't you tried to surpass us instead?"

Some of the sura kings roared back, "Not only have you humans developed poison specifically targeted against us sura, you've even furthered your research with these monstrosities. You humans will all perish!"

Sun Mengmeng chuckled coldly. "That was true even before this battle. After this war, either the humans or sura will go extinct—and I think I know who the winner will be."

Another sura king shouted, "Don't panic. Remember, we have the techniques that the sura monarchs imparted to us! Activate your blood scabs!"

The sura fighters cut themselves open and allowed their blood to scab over their skin, but it was useless.

The upgraded Yeluo poison was perfectly able to dissolve scabs of Yeluo blood. The sura fighters had to make use of a different approach—to launch the slimy blobs away with whatever techniques they had in their possession.

At the beginning, this approach proved fruitful, but as the number and size of these blobs increased, the sura were unable to hold them back any longer.

Renhuang's forces, which had begun to fracture, suddenly pulled together in light of this new development.

"So you had this up your sleeve all along!" The same words carried a completely different tone when spoken from members of an allied or defected race.

Those who continued standing by Renhuang smiled in joy and relief, whereas those who had betrayed Renhuang roared in outrage.

The Goldherald and Tangsan clans gritted their teeth and regretted trusting the sura so fervently. If they had known that Renhuang had been hiding this Yeluo Poison #2, devised specifically against the sura, they wouldn't have betrayed the humans!

Why hadn't the humans told them anything?! Weren't they allies?

The alien races that were secretly subordinate clans of the sura felt much the same way. They could have lain in hiding—but now every last one of them was exposed.

They thought that they knew all of Renhuang's secrets, but here was one that had been kept hidden from them all along.

Indeed, even among the races of the universe, the humans' ability to scheme was almost unparalleled, especially compared to the sura who respected and revered strength above all else.

The upgraded Yeluo poison proved particularly effective when conveyed through a living medium, because the poison's mobility had been greatly increased.

The pincer-style attack that the sura had been counting on immediately broke down as the sura forces were waylaid by the Yeluo slimes.

"It's time to finish the sura once and for all."

Sun Mengmeng's garuda bow suddenly began to burn with purplish-black flame, so hot they caused the air all around them to warp.

A sura king sent a wave of force pushing the slimes back, but as he did so, blobs of slime exploded all over his body. The slime rapidly began to devour the sura king's body as they drained it of nourishment. The sura king tried to resist the poison, but it was far more potent than he had expected.

"Save me!" Before the eyes of the gathered kings, a sura king was devoured to the last.

A collective shiver passed through the crowd of kings. The original Yeluo poison was effective only on ordinary sura; sura kings boasted at least partial resistance to it, and the worst it would do was temporarily weaken them. This advanced form of the poison, however, could devour a sura king whole. In other words, they were no different from ordinary sura when it came to this poison.

Some of the sura kings used fire and found, to their surprise, that it was effective against the slimes.

"Quick, burn them all!"

However, the flames only made their problem worse.

The flames were indeed able to burn the slimes to a crisp, but the ash that was produced mixed with the resulting smoke. Suddenly, some of the sura who had made sure to stay away from the blobs of slime suddenly began to scream.

The poison had entered their bodies through their lungs, turning them into blobs of slime from the inside out.

This was the first time this Yeluo poison had appeared on the battlefield, and the sura kings were completely unable to defend against it.

The original Yeluo poison seemed to boast an astounding effect against the sura, but as long as the sura took proper precautions, that poison couldn't affect them. However, the revised Yeluo poison had appeared so suddenly that everyone was caught unaware.

At that critical moment, Sun Mengmeng made her move.

"[The Nine Moons of the Underworld]!" Nine more flaming moons appeared in the sky, so bright they eclipsed the sun and dyed the entire battlefield in shades of purple and black.

Chapter 579: The Victor is Clear

Nine suns of purplish-black flame hung in the air, unleashing a burst of heat that turned the battlefield into a sea of fire.

As the fires burned, even more of the slimes were incinerated. Particles of ash dissipated into the air and were sucked in by the hapless sura.

Yang Ze sent white mist out to envelop the entire battlefield. Hordes of sharks formed from genetic energy roamed the mist, attacking the sura and the races that had defected from Renhuang.

The shaman of the wood spirits melded with Zhou Ying. In the center of an outburst of green light, Zhou Ying's hair rapidly grew so long it reached her leg, fluttering in an invisible wind.

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

The dragons shot toward the sura and their allies, petrifying whomever they caught. Against the roaming shark hordes and wood dragons, the sura and their allies were completely unable to retaliate against Renhuang's forces.

Only when the defectors were forced to fight Yang Ze and Zhou Ying as enemies did they realize how frightening they were on the battlefield. The sharks and wood dragons seemed to spawn endlessly, and there was no end to their barrage.

The defectors shouted in regret, "Please, let us go! We understand that what we did was a mistake—we were wrong to believe in the sura! We're willing to do anything for Renhuang. Please, let us go this once, please, let us go on account of the fact that we were once allies!"

The members of Team Zenith ignored the defectors. If apologies were all it took to resolve a problem, why would wars be necessary?

"[Dance of the Incandescent Wyrms]!" Dozens of dragons brimming with light spawned on the battlefield, attacking both the sura and their allies.

Chaos descended on the defectors.

"It's useless trying to reason with them. If we want to live, we have to defend ourselves against their onslaught!" the leader of the Tangsan race howled as he charged toward the members of Team Zenith.

"[Tiger's Howl, Dragon's Bellow]!" Fang Yi's spear took on the aspect of a dragon of the winds and a storm tiger as he charged forward. The leader of the Tangsan clan swerved to the side, barely avoiding a killing blow.

"[Wind's Spirit]! [Floating Clouds]!" In a flash of wind and thunder, Fang Yi appeared behind the leader of the Tangsan.

"[Heaven's Judgment]!" Wind and storm combined and crackled at the tip of Fang Yi's spear, and a dragon's howl echoed resoundingly in the air. As he manipulated his spear, a tower of lightning crashed down on the Tangsan clan leader.

The leader of the Goldherald clan raged, "I finally understand, I finally do! This was all a set-up to ferret us out! You already knew that there were spies among your ranks, but instead of trying to ferret us out, you concocted this plan to have us betray you of our own accord! Team Zenith, I have to give you credit—you're far more devious than I expected."

The members of Team Zenith had done nothing even as they revealed themselves to be traitors, knowing that they had a trump card that could reverse the tide of war.

The Goldherald clan head laughed at his own naivete and foolishness. "What a devious plan, what a devious plan!"

He regretted what he had done. Why had he listened to the sura's insidious whispers? Renhuang, who had been able to provoke such a severe response from the sura, surely was prepared to deal with them.

He looked up, his eyes brimming with anger. "But it won't be that easy to take me down."

"We'll see about that!" Sun Xiaowu yelled out, raising his hands. "[Goldenscale Palm: Split]!"

Golden radiance struck the land. Sun Xiaowu's palms brimmed with golden light as he attacked the Goldherald leader.

A huge explosion sounded. By the time the Goldherald leader regained his senses, all he could see was the sky above him. His body had been smashed into the earth in the shape of a '大'. It ached all over, and he was sure some of his ribs were cracked.

Among the four prime races, one of the nightdemon elders had experienced this precise attack. "Ah, I remember how much that blow hurt!"

As the sura charged forward again, heedless of the slimes surrounding them, Sun Mengmeng pulled her bow taut.

As her peak-grade bow began to burn, Sun Mengmeng fired an arrow into the skies, creating a glowing purple-black moon whose rays shone down on the battlefield and covered the sura in flame.

By then, the sura kings understood their fate. With the revelation of the refined Yeluo poison, the victors of the battle were clear.

One of the sura kings shouted, "Retreat!"

"Do you think we'll let you leave so easily? You really don't think anything of Renhuang, do you?" Zhou Ying intoned, her body glowing with pulses of green light.

Zhou Ying radiated an imposing but benevolent aura. Her long hair fluttered in an immaterial breeze. The green pulse of energy that limned her body made her look beautiful, sanctified, and holy, as though she were a true goddess.

"[Avatar of the Fae: Worldbound Enclosure]!" Zhou Ying released all her stored energy at once, causing the ground to quake.

Tens of thousands of jade-green dragons rushed out of the earth, The dragons covered the entire battlefield, forming a prison between heaven and sky. None of the sura fighters were able to do much against the onslaught of hordes and hordes of dragons before being trapped within.

The sura kings were able to muster some resistance, but fleeing was out of the question.

"[Netherworld's Torrential Flame]!" Sun Mengmeng's hand blurred as she shot out an entire field's worth of arrows.

A frightening fan of flames poured out from Sun Mengmeng's bow, an attack far stronger than the purple moon she had summoned.

The flames arced across the air, swallowing up all the sura kings within. Fire scoured the battlefield; as long as Sun Mengmeng didn't stop channeling her technique, the inferno would never end.

Not only did the sura kings have to contend with the wood dragons that came from below, they also had to deal with Sun Mengmeng's aerial bombardment. As the members of Team Zenith charged forward, they fell from the skies one by one.

"[Blinding Flash: Hundredfold Echo]!" Sun Xiaowu's body split into over a hundred clones, so many they seemed to fill the sky.

"[Goldenscale Palm: Explode]!" Sun Xiaowu and all his clones leapt up into the air, performing exactly the same action. Golden light flashed from their arms and illuminated the sky.

The clones merged into Sun Xiaowu's main body, and the countless activated copies of the technique merged into one. Golden scales covered up Sun Xiaowu's arm as it grew thicker and thicker, and the image of a golden qilin appeared behind him. As it cried out, Sun Xiaowu rushed forward, golden scales appearing over his arm as he punched at the sura kings...

Chapter 580: Pushing the Responsibility Around

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

"[The Boundless Blade: Shark Horde]!" White mist swept over the sura as hundreds of translucent sharks attacked them.

The result of the battle was, of course, a full victory for the forces of Renhuang. They had killed over fifty million sura and countless sura kings, turning the tide of war against the sura for good.

Amidst a battlefield filled with slime, the alien races let out ear-splitting cries. Morale reached its peak; the atmosphere was joyous.

The sura monarchs convened a meeting at their headquarters.

The monarch of the sun slammed a palm on the table in rage, causing it to cave in. Fiery-red cracks spiderwebbed from the point of impact and caused the table to split into pieces. In a flash of red light, the table was incinerated.

The monarch of the moon glanced at the monarch of the sun coolly. "There's no reason to be so angry. The outcome of that battle can't be changed."

The monarch of the sun roared, "What would you have me do?! Let those arrogant pieces of trash be?"

The monarchs' intention was to overcome Renhuang with a massive army. By making use of the traitors in their midst, the sura would gain the upper hand and decimate Renhuang's forces in a pincer-style attack. Even if they couldn't destroy it all, they would force Zhang Lie to show his hand.

In the end, not only had they not managed to force Zhang Lie out, their entire army had been destroyed.

The monarch of the sky's face was dark. "None of us could have anticipated that Renhuang would have had such an ace up their sleeves."

If they had known, they would have destroyed that poison at any cost.

The monarch of the sun's eyes glinted with flame. He was unable to rein in his aura any longer; a sun appeared by his back. "Despicable scum. Not only has Renhuang developed a poison that specifically targets the sura, they've also come up with these monstrosities. Just where did they learn of such malicious tactics?"

The monarch of the moon said, "We should focus on how to deal with the Renhuang army."

The monarch of mountains snorted. "More and more of these alien races are joining Renhuang after their victory. They're completely ignoring our dominion, and they're even spreading into sura territory."

After the disastrous results of the last battle, the sura were unable to resist the human incursion any longer. The forces of Renhuang rushed into sura territory and claimed a large quantity of their land by conquest.

"At its core, Renhuang's army is controlled by the members of Team Zenith, those odious humans," the monarch of the sea pointed out. "As long as we kill them, we won't have to worry about the army as a whole."

"Indeed, we can't allow them to spread any further," the monarch of mountains replied. "Even if the sura are to perish, we have to destroy Renhuang's core."

Renhuang was far too dangerous a threat, able to create poisons and lifeforms that were specifically tuned against the sura.

The monarch of the sun nodded. "This is a matter of life and death for the sura," he stressed. "If we don't defeat Renhuang, we'll perish."

The monarch of the sky rolled his eyes. "You don't have to state the obvious."

"Onto the specifics, then," the monarch of the moon suggested. "Are the three of you going to strike at Renhuang yourselves?"

A silence dragged on. The monarch of the sea, mountains, and the sun were silent.

None of them could guarantee success.

Not only did they have to deal with the threat of the governor of Renhuang, who still hadn't made an appearance, they wouldn't easily be able to handle the refined Yeluo poison or the members of Team Zenith.

According to the few sura who had managed to escape from the culling, even sura kings fell prey to that poison. In that case, they couldn't be confident that they, as sura monarchs, wouldn't suffer the same fate.

That said, the only opportunity they had to test that hypothesis out was to go onto the battlefield themselves, but they would have to put their lives on the line to do so.

The monarchs all looked at each other, waiting for one of them to take the lead.

The monarch of the moon was the first to speak up. "I don't feel that these lifeforms can be all that strong. After all, science still obeys basic principles. The original version of the poison was only effective against ordinary sura fighters, with significantly reduced effect on sura kings. It's very likely that this biological lifeform follows the same principles, but one level more advanced."

The monarch of the sky nodded. "A very reasonable analysis—it might be effective against sura kings, but not sura monarchs. Sura kings are quite a bit weaker than sura monarchs, after all. In that case, why don't you test the effects of this poison for yourself?"

The monarch of mountains clapped his hands. "A very reasonable suggestion. Moon, you're confident in your analysis, aren't you? If you lead a charge against Renhuang's army, I'm sure you'll be able to take them all down in no time at all."

The monarch of the sea gave him a thumbs up. "Indeed, Moon!"

None of the sura monarchs were idiots, and none of them wanted to risk their lives without any certainty.

The monarch of the moon immediately shook his head. "Oh, no, I couldn't. I haven't been feeling very well lately, you see. Why don't we have Sun take the lead? He's the strongest among us all, as well as the ruler of the strongest sura kingdom. I'm sure his strength will cause the humans to cower."

"Enough!" the monarch of the sun shouted.

The other four sura monarchs all shut up.

The monarch of the sun scowled at the four monarchs. "Have you forgotten that our common enemy is the humans, not each other?"

The four sura monarchs lowered their heads.

The monarch of the sun waved an arm. "No one need go. None of us know what Renhuang is hiding—we didn't know of their poison then, and we didn't know of these lifeforms now. Who knows if Renhuang might have even more trump cards up their sleeve?"

The silence dragged on. In the past, while they had spies in Renhuang, they would have been able to obtain information quite readily, but now that all their spies had been rooted out, the sura monarchs were entirely blindsided.

The monarch of the sun made a final proclamation. "None of you will have to test the waters, and neither will I."

The monarch of the moon's eyes widened. "In that case, are we to do nothing against the human incursion?"

The monarch of the sun shook his head. "Just because we won't test the waters doesn't mean no one will."

"Y-You want to wake him up?!" the monarch of the sky's eyes bulged in shock.