

## U. Warlord 841

Chapter 841: The Stubborn Li Zongming

As a regressor, Zhang Lie was patently familiar with some secrets and rules of superior worlds that had been revealed to him in the past.

Li Zongming asked, "Just how strong are the superior worlds you know of?"

"Those aliens that rule over superior worlds are all ancient existences, ones who have lived for tens of thousands of years and have the treasure to show for it. They've been reaping world after world, and have since built up a frightening stockpile of energy.

"The kings of the realm are monsters in their own worlds, and they're able to make use of all that stored energy at will. The amount of energy they have is directly correlated with their strength."

Li Zongming, as a king of the realm himself, understood that point. Compared to superior worlds that had been stockpiling energy for millennia since he was even born, the world of the east was nothing more than a child—no, more like an unborn baby.

"What do you plan to do?" Zhang Lie asked.

Li Zongming sighed. "What will come will come."

Zhang Lie nodded.

If Li Zongming wanted the world of the east to advance to the level of a superior world, he would have to face the assault of the other superior worlds sooner or later.

Only if his world were able to survive that assault would it have the qualifications to become a true superior world, but in tens of thousands of years, no world had ever managed such a feat. The ten original superior worlds had never been defeated or replaced.

Zhang Lie clarified, "Do you still intend to continue the merger?"

"Are you trying to prevent me from doing so?"

"No: I simply want to prepare you for what's about to happen."

"Are you going to help me?"

Zhang Lie rolled his eyes. "Do you really think that highly of me? The opponent's a superior world!"

"You will, won't you?" Li Zongming glanced at Zhang Lie seriously.

Zhang Lie sighed. "Do I have any other choice?"

Li Zongming was Li Qianlin's father. If Zhang Lie didn't want to see Li Qianlin upset, he would have to make a move.

Of course, that was only one among many reasons. In truth, even without Li Qianlin's presence, Zhang Lie would have been quite interested in breaking through the monopoly that the ten superior worlds had on the realm.

Li Zongming smiled in relief. "I knew I wasn't wrong to entrust my daughter to you. If you really can't hold back the superior worlds' assault, don't force yourself to stay and die. Run away with Li Qianlin, as far away as you can."

Zhang Lie rolled his eyes. "Don't say that as though you're going to die—I won't allow you to!"

"Haha, haha! You truly are bold..."

As Li Zongming raised his head to the skies and laughed for real, the gloomy atmosphere and dark clouds dissipated. The world basked in sunlight once more.

Li Zongming had made up his mind. He wouldn't be cowardly, not even against superior foes.

His goal wasn't to showcase his own talent, but rather to inform the superior worlds that not all large worlds were pigs or crops to be harvested, that even the superior worlds wouldn't be able to stop them all.

Not all kings of the realm could become heroes, but they were each talented.

At the very least, they were the strongest members of their races in one or more aspects, and they were paragons for their kind.

Li Zongming could hardly back down just because he would be facing a difficult fight. So what if the superior worlds were stronger than any foe he had faced to date? That was no reason to back down. At worst, he would perish with them.

The world of the east's hard work and accumulated resources would allow them to hold out against the superior worlds' invasion, he was sure of it.

The predominant reason for Li Zongming's courage, however, was that he had never truly experienced the strength of a superior world for himself. From his perspective, a superior world was just a world that was larger, with a more robust population and a stronger king.

The merger ceremony continued without a hitch.

The world of the east was a large world that had millennia of history, and it was far superior to the draconian world. There weren't many inhabitants of the draconian world, and the draconian sage only needed a few days of preparation. If the world of the east was a proper kingdom, then the draconian world of the past was little more than a village. Now, after it had combined with nine other medium-sized worlds and evolved into a large world, although it still couldn't hope to match the world of the east's culture and history, it was at least as large as a small kingdom. There was no fuss, no pomp, and a minimum of ceremony—but the world of the east was different.

There were too many inhabitants in that world, and it would be very problematic if some disaster were to arise during the ceremony.

Li Zongming also wanted to take advantage of this occasion to make his citizens feel as though they were working together to achieve a lofty goal.

The merger ceremony between the worlds of east and west was to be held at the wormhole that connected the two worlds and the port of the eastern world. On either side of the port were flowers in red and blue. The red flowers were a specialty of the west, and the blue ones that of the east.

The trees were arrayed with traditional folk attire of the two worlds. The east favored elegance and subtlety; the west, extravagance and lordliness. The trees were arrayed alternately in the two worlds' outfits, as though they represented citizens from the two worlds holding hands, signaling friendship, peace, and prosperity to come.

The land within a hundred miles had been locked down and placed under security. This wasn't something that could be accomplished with wealth alone—one needed strong political backing as well.

The ground had been swept clean, without even a speck of dirt.

Strong aliens had dispelled the clouds in the air, making the sky shine as brightly as a gemstone. Rays of light from the morning sun struck the mountain in its entirety.

Outside the cordon, quite a few citizens had gathered.

"The two worlds really are about to combine! I never thought I would see the day..." Apparently, the strongest champions of the eastern and western realms will put together a show together, too."

"A historical occasion indeed!"

"It's a pity we won't be able to witness it ourselves. The only ones who can make it into the port are the rich and famous."

"I wonder how those in the west are reacting to this news?"

"How else could they react? Didn't you hear about all the unrest?"

It's not as though they can refuse. Their king was taken down, and ours obtained their proof of kingship. They don't have the right to refuse!"

"I have to say, our king is truly ambitious and daring!"

A red carpet unrolled out of the wormhole, surrounded with flowers on either side that gave off a pleasant scent. Their rich, fragrant blooms lent an air of elegance to this occasion.

As the guests arrived at the scene, the ceremony began in earnest...

#### Chapter 842: An Extravagant Ceremony

All manner of luxury transportation parked by the port: carriages drawn by genetic lifeforms, ornate to the extreme, studded with gold and jewels. Each carriage was more extravagant than the last, as though the guests were each trying to outshine the other.

There were all sorts of lifeforms being used as mounts, but they were uniformly at least superior-grade.

Guests dressed in traditional eastern and western attire came pouring out, businessmen and politicians all, each influential in their own right. Essentially everyone rich and famous was present, including the nouveau riche of the west.

After the king of the east Li Zongming took control of the western world, he stripped much of the wealthiest and most influential westerners of their land and riches, then distributed them to his supporters.

Suited attendants passed through the crowds of guests, passing them beverages and exquisite hors d'oeuvres.

A gigantic stage stood in the middle of the venue, a temporary construction that was nonetheless as ornate as a palace. Clearly, no expense had been spared for this occasion.

As beasts began to cry out and howl, an imposing authority spread through the sky as two great beasts made their presence known. Antlers shining in all the colors of the rainbow adorned their heads like crowns. Their aura pressed on the guests despite how far away they still were.

The lifeforms on the ground all lowered their bodies, as though paying respects to those above. They were the size of small cities, and the air shook as they passed through. Their scales glittered with such radiance that even the sun seemed to pale in comparison.

A halo of light shone above their heads. Nine pairs of wings kept them aloft, forming strong winds that buffeted the guests below. The lifeforms seemed to be staring at them with an air of disdainful arrogance.

"The stars of the show are here," a guest whispered.

The two beasts carried a lavish palace between them, resplendent in its wealth. Just a jewel studded on its outer walls was comparable to the total wealth that the average guest possessed.

As the disaster-grade beasts flapped their wings, radiant light shone through the sky, spreading out from them like stardust. They shone as brilliantly as the sun, their gigantic wings covering up the skies, their eyes piercing sun and moon, star and sky.

The two disaster-grade lifeforms landed on stage as the rainbow light they brought with them spread throughout the venue. The palace they carried between them radiated such light the guests had to shield their eyes. A black figure appeared from its doors.

The golden light materialized in the form of stairs. A long sheepskin carpet rolled down the steps, and a rain of flower petals floated down from the top of the palace.

The first people to step down from the palace were two black-clad bodyguards, one on either side of the stairs, followed by twenty to thirty aliens dressed in suits. They clasped their hands behind their backs, standing straight up. As the golden radiance dimmed, the figure of the eastern king, Li Zongming, came into view.

Thunderous applause filled the venue.

Li Zongming extended a hand behind him. "Let's go, Qianlin."

A woman of peerless beauty appeared behind him, graceful and lithe, as radiant as a chrysanthemum blooming in the summer heat, as lush as a pine tree whose branches unfurled in a spring breeze, as pure as a rising sun at dawn, as fresh as a lotus flower blooming amidst a patch of verdant green.

Her shoulders were narrow, her hips slender, her neck a graceful line that revealed her white, perfect skin. Her brows were fine and thin, her lips red and luscious, her teeth as white as ivory. Her eyes shone as bright as stars, and two dimples appeared on her face as she smiled.

She was graceful and reserved, warm and unassuming, gentle and carefree.

She dressed in the elegant attire of the east, with exquisite ornaments that magnified her beauty. Gold and silver hairpins studded her fine black hair, pearls radiant against her skin.

Her accessories and clothing only served to embellish her beauty.

She walked down the steps with practiced ease, giving off a fragrant scent that didn't lose out to the flowers around her, her beauty so picturesque that one could get drunk on it. On that day, no one could think of her as anything less than a heavenly maiden.

The nouveau riche of the west felt their hearts beating out of their chests. "She's too beautiful—I'm in love!"

"I heard that the princess of the east was a radiant beauty, but not to such an extent!"

"She has captured my heart..."

"I don't think I'll be able to avoid comparing any other woman to her now..."

"I'd give ten years of my life just for a touch of her hand!"

The eastern guests couldn't help but titter at their uneducated western counterparts.

"You didn't attend our princess' wedding, did you? She was even more beautiful then, so much so that I'm having trouble expressing it in words. Even a celestial maiden wouldn't have been fit to do more than be one of her attendants."

The eastern guest who had spoken looked into the air, as if reminiscing about a dream.

A frown marred the appearance of a middle-aged western woman. "You must be exaggerating, surely?"

"No, certainly not. No one comes close to matching our princess' peerless beauty. The day of her wedding, our children were all struck down by an affliction: they fell in love at first sight, swearing never to marry any but her."

The nouveau riche of the west clenched their fists. "We'll work hard to be deserving of that princess!"

"Hah! Keep dreaming. She's already spoken for."

"What? By whom?!"

"You'd better keep your mouth shut. The groom snatched the princess away from the hands of the king himself."

"Wasn't the king incensed?"

"Surprisingly not. He's strong enough to win her hand, after all. He slaughtered his way through the western world and delivered the head of the western king to our king himself as her bride price. Even if the eastern king didn't want to recognize him, he had no choice—if the man could kill the king of the west, he could kill the king of the east, too."

The nouveau riche gulped: truly, he was no match for this groom.

Chapter 843: The Center of Attention

"It's him!" Everyone's gaze turned toward the direction the guest pointed at. The doors to the palace opened once again as Zhang Lie walked out in a tailored suit, stretched, and leapt down the stairs in one fluid move. He landed by Li Qianlin's side, and she turned and smiled at him.

Li Zongming and Li Qianlin had, by then, walked to the stage. Li Zongming stepped forward and announced, "Thank you, one and all, for taking the time out of your busy schedules to witness the merger of east and west! The worlds of east and west each have millennia of history. Many of you present might not even know that these two worlds were once just a single world."

Indeed, most of the guests weren't aware of this fact.

Li Zongming explained, "Long ago, when the two worlds were still one, the last king of the realm had two outstanding sons. Perhaps an ordinary father would have been overjoyed, but not the king. When the king suddenly passed away, the succession to the throne became a problem, and the two princes both feuded for that privilege."

While everyone was engrossed in Li Zongming's story, one of the nouveau riche's eyes glinted as he stepped through the crowds and toward the stage.

Li Zongming shouted, "In the end, the two princes tore apart the proof of kingship, splitting the combined world into the worlds of east and west you know today.

Only a few people are aware of this history behind the worlds—so few they might be able to be counted on two hands. This information has been lost to time and history.

The guests at the ceremony were shocked.

"The worlds of east and west were one?"

"This isn't something the king of the east made up, is it?"

"No, it can't be," another guest argued. "There's no reason for him to do so. I did hear a rumor like this in the past: that the worlds of east and west were initially one world, which separated into two because of a schism, a huge conflict. Could it be the one the king of the east just mentioned?"

Another guest murmured, "To be able to tear a proof of kingship into two..."

No ordinary person would be able to damage a proof of kingship, let alone split it apart. How had someone managed such a feat? To have split apart the will of the world, too?

"Could it have been the two princes of the last king of the realm who did it?"

Perhaps because the king of the east had planted some of his men among the crowd, the guests rapidly began to believe his words.

"That's very likely. Don't you think it interesting why the two worlds were known as the worlds of east and west to begin with? None of the other worlds share this naming pattern—only us! I always wondered whether there might have been the worlds of north and south, too, but now I really do understand!"

"I always felt like east and west were names that were far too simple, that the kings of the realm should have changed them..."

Li Zongming continued, "As generation after generation passed away, fewer and fewer remembered this piece of information. However, even if all the citizens were to forget this fact, we royalty have known this for millennia, hoping against hope for the one day during which the two worlds might recombine into some semblance of their former glory."

The guests understood what the king of the east was saying. "So the kings of the realm have been working toward this goal all along—never giving up on conquering the other, and never changing the name so that subsequent kings of the realm are ever reminded of their directive."

Li Zongming nodded. "Every successor is told by the previous king about this long history between the worlds. When I became the king of the east, I succeeded not just the throne, but also the hopes and desires of all kings past, the plans they concocted toward this end."

While Li Zongming continued his speech, a nouveau riche from the west, his face sunken, crept closer and closer to the stage.

Everyone focused on Li Zongming; no one noticed him besides Zhang Lie, who smiled coldly and did nothing.

"Every king has been working hard to achieve this goal, and not just in the east. Kings of the east and west have both been fighting to reunite the two worlds, growing stronger and stronger in order to keep up with each other and to accomplish this goal."

Neither king had ever contemplated the possibility of merging peacefully; both sides desired to overwhelm the other with brute force and claim their proof of kingship. Li Zongming made grand claims about all kings of the east inheriting their predecessors' will, but they were simply covetous of their sister world.

In order to gain the strength to devour each other, the two worlds had initiated quite a number of wars and invaded their neighbors.

According to him, the worlds of east and west were initially worlds that belonged together. The combined world had been among the top of large worlds, and even after the split, the worlds of east and west barely maintained their status as large worlds.

After millennia, as they fought against each other and grew with every attempt, the two worlds each grew into the peak of large worlds after having assimilated with many small worlds in the meantime.

Li Zongming raised his arm to the sky and announced, "We have finally achieved the goal of generations of kings of the east: today, I invite you all to witness the merger of east and west!"

The guests below the stage all clapped in earnest.

Li Zongming exclaimed, "Being able to witness the two worlds merging for myself, having finally finished the task laid down by generations of kings of the east, is a high honor indeed."

"Li Zongming, die!" Just as Li Zongming reminisced about the success of this lofty goal, the western revolutionary scrambled on stage, took out a weapon hidden by his chest, and was pushed to the ground by Li Zongming's bodyguards before he could do anything.

Zhang Lie smiled coldly at the interloper. The reason he hadn't bothered with him was because he thought the westerner too foolish and too weak. If he weren't strong, what could he do even if he managed to get close to the king?

There wasn't such a thing as dynamite within the three thousand worlds. Even if there were, it would be difficult for him to harm anyone else given the tight security and what little he had managed to sneak in...

#### Chapter 844: A Wave of Attention

"Let go of me, let go of me! Li Zongming, you bastard! I'm going to avenge the king of the west!" The western revolutionary struggled in vain, pinned down as he was by a number of bodyguards. He was barely able to pull out a bottle securely wrapped within his clothes and smashed it against the ground, sending a fog of black smoke gushing out.

"Poison!"

"This scoundrel—he snuck poison into the venue!"

"Help! Poison!"

The revolutionary laughed as the guests gasped and cried out in shock.

"Haha, haha! All of you, go and die!"

The three figures on stage remained perfectly calm. As Li Zongming pointed at the mess, a gust of wind blew past, and the poison fog vanished as though it were never there, leaving only the revolutionary's mad, raucous laughter behind. As the revolutionary himself discovered that the poison was missing, his laughter grew softer and softer until it dissolved into an awkward silence.

This was why Zhang Lie hadn't made a move: he knew that his involvement wasn't necessary.

The king of the realm would be able to deal with all such trivial assassination attempts with barely a thought. Even if all the guests were to release a cloud of poison, Li Zongming could neutralize it all.

Li Zongming's bodyguards knelt on the ground. "Your majesty, we apologize for our negligence!"

Li Zongming waved a hand. "All responsible guards will be docked a year's pay. Don't let the same thing happen again."

"Yes, your majesty!"

Zhang Lie smiled wryly at Li Zongming. "It isn't easy being you."

Li Zongming shrugged. "You'll always have detractors, no matter what you do. Something as crazy as merging the worlds of east and west—it's only natural that some people would try to stop me. I simply have to deal with them."

Li Zongming said this response not only to answer Zhang Lie's question, but also to explain himself to the guests present.

He continued, "I know there are quite a few revolutionaries in the west who are attempting to stop me, but we shouldn't let that detract from our goal. The desire to merge the two worlds has been

passed down to me through a long line of eastern kings spanning millennia. I won't stop this plan just because of a bit of resistance.

...

...

...By merging the two worlds, we can combine and pool our forces into something better for both—to have the strength, speed, and adaptability on the universal stage," Li Zongming continued his speech.

Li Qianlin snuck a glance at the sky and whispered, hiding a bit of boredom, "Father, I think we had better initiate the merger soon."

Li Zongming nodded. "You're right. Now, I'll initiate the process of merging the two worlds!"

The guests all widened their eyes and focused on this historic moment, unwilling to miss out on even a second of the process.

Li Zongming pulled out the jade seal that was the proof of kingship of the west. As his entire body radiated with light, the proof of kingship of the east appeared in his hand.

The jade seal of the west was engraved with the image of a five-colored dragon; the jade seal of the east, with a firebird whose backdrop was the sun.

As both seals appeared in Li Zongming's hands, they began to glow and emit energy.

As the energy from both seals met, the heavens shook. Suddenly, the lifeforms engraved on the two seals came to life.

The five-colored dragon let out a howl that shook the skies. The firebird croaked out a call, flapped its wings, flew out of the jade seal, circled it, then soared into the sky. The five-colored dragon did the same, revolving around the seal and flying through the air.

The jade seal of the west in Li Zongming's left hand began to emit lightning and flame: scarlet flame, violet lightning, as though a disaster were descending onto the world, as though the flames of purgatory were cleansing the realm.

The scarlet flames and violet lightning gave way to a five-colored explosion, turning the seal into what seemed like a glowing moon. It was as beautiful as a gem, and its multicolored glow lit up the sky. The jade seal of the east in the king's right hand radiated golden light like a flaming sun.

As the golden sun appeared, the will of the world was summoned to the scene.

The western seal in the king's left hand, glowing like the moon, and the eastern seal in the king's right hand, shining like the sun, drew closer and closer to each other.

The five-colored dragon and the sunbird flew around each other in the air.

The sun and moon grew larger and appeared behind Li Zongming. The sun occluded the moon, forming the equivalent of a solar eclipse.

The five-colored dragon and sunbird likewise drew closer, until the two mythical creatures seemed as though they were entwined.

As Li Zongming finally brought the two seals together with a resounding clap of his palms, they combined into one. The shining sun and glowing moon released scarlet flames and violet lightning through the sky. A radiant outpouring of light lit up the skies with a golden glow.

Li Qianlin and Zhang Lie stood together by the side of the stage, watching Li Zongming's figure.

The wormhole connecting the worlds of east and west—and all the wormholes stemming from both worlds—vanished in that instant.

As the two seals merged, Li Zongming himself began to glow.

Behind him appeared a golden corona around a black solar eclipse. The outline of the western world could be seen over the horizon, and the five-colored dragon and the sunbird had combined into a gigantic six-colored egg which reflected all the light that shone toward it.

Li Zongming's body flared with light, and a thick pillar of it shot into the skies and enveloped the egg above. It struck the western world, causing the will of the world there to materialize.

The two worlds began to tremble violently as they neared each other.

The illusory world of the west gradually grew clearer. The two wills of the world were like white and black, mutually attracting and entangling each other without any resistance at all, as though they were a natural pair.

The landmasses and oceans from the two worlds began to combine. A ring of energy surrounded them both.

Li Qianlin frowned. "This didn't happen when the draconian world merged with the others, did it?"

"As expected." Zhang Lie seemed to have predicted it all. The merger of two exceptionally strong large worlds immediately resulted in the formation of a superior world.

The phenomenon that Li Qianlin had observed was a hallmark of that superior evolution.

As the will of the world supervised the process, natural law was instated on the worlds with runes falling from the sky like rain.

Just then, all the kings of the realm of superior worlds raised their heads as one, as though they had all received some form of signal...

#### Chapter 845: The Evolution Begins

Rain drizzled as a writhing pitch-black lifeform sat atop a sea of bones, as though the bones that lay beneath it were its throne. When it sensed the formation of a new superior world, it raised its head and looked toward the skies.

"How curious... a massive burst of energy just moments ago, and now a new superior world forming... How long ago was the last evolution into a superior world? A century, three centuries? Forget it: it won't succeed, anyway."

A humanoid figure leaned against a golden mulberry tree. Beneath its feet was scorching earth and soil, and a hundred suns revolved around the mulberry tree's branches.

Ten suns hung in the sky, and as time progressed, the ten suns in the sky descended from the west and landed on the mulberry tree. Ten other suns revolving around the figure's head flew into the sky

and toward the mulberry tree, which appeared over the horizon from the east. The mulberry tree itself seemed to have some ability to distort or warp space.

The figure who leaned against the mulberry tree glanced greedily at the sky as it sensed the merger of the two large worlds.

"How many years has it been? Another pig ripe for slaughter, but that direction... that damn fellow Feitian's gotten lucky again."

The nine superior worlds had agreed that they would each be responsible for a certain portion of the third realm and partitioned the worlds evenly between them.

Long ago, the superior worlds had warred with each other in order to compete for the energy released during the formation of a superior world, until one time, a superior king of the realm perished in such a conflict. Only then did the superior kings come to their senses: there was no reason for them to fight to their deaths just for these resources.

Instead, they brokered an agreement that would give them each a plot of land to tend to. They and they alone would be able to claim the superior worlds that formed within their land; none of the other superior worlds would make a move.

Just then, in a world submerged by blood, in which over ninety percent of its mass was a sea of blood, a monstrous creature emerged from its surface. It cast a shadow that seemed to stretch throughout the world.

It looked like a long worm with an unusual head. It had no nose or ears, only a single eye located at one end of its body. One arm grew out of each of its two flanks. The blood-colored eyeball seemed to be able to penetrate the sky.

"Come, Pozhi!" the worm howled.

The sea of blood frothed. A dark red palace rose from its depths, constructed out of bone with an unusual dark red coloring that couldn't be scrubbed off. It looked as though it had been coated in layers of fresh blood.

The doors to the palace opened wide, and a three-headed, six-armed monstrosity clambered out. Its heads each had three eyes and looked like a raging hog. Its hair and beard were made of flame.

Pozhi got down on one knee, showing utmost respect and deference to the worm.

The worm informed it, "A superior world has just formed."

One of Pozhi's heads visibly perked up. "Finally—after an entire millennium!"

That head then sprayed out a burst of fire.

Its left head did the same. "Haha, we can finally feast on more energy!"

Pozhi's right head licked its lips. "It's been far too long since I was on a battlefield. I miss the taste of blood already."

The worm nodded. "Gather a force of ten million xuluo, head to that world, and bring back its energy."

Pozhi's three heads all nodded immediately. "Yessir!"

With a wave of his hands, Pozhi summoned forth a myriad bloody figures from the sea, half of whom had three heads and six arms, and half of whom had three heads, four eyes, and four arms. All were uniformly fierce-looking.

"It's time to fight!" Pozhi announced.

The xuluo who emerged from the sea of blood roared in excitement, so loud the air seemed to vibrate.

Back in the world of the east, the merger of the two worlds continued. More and more runes fell to the ground like rain.

The two worlds rotated around each other, faster and faster as they approached, six-colored light strobing in the sky. Like yin and yang, the two worlds seemed at that moment to be perfectly balanced, to be in unity.

The energy from the merger spread throughout the entire world; the lifeforms within would be its beneficiaries. Their natural talent and physical fortitude would both be enhanced by leaps and bounds.

The lifeforms in both the worlds of east and west glanced at themselves in shock, noticing the changes to their bodies. Those who had been strong became even stronger; those who had been intelligent became even more intelligent.

Even though he was already a disaster-grade lifeform with maxed disaster gene fragments, Zhang Lie could likewise sense his cells furiously multiplying as he received the benediction from the world.

The lifeforms that received the greatest boon were undoubtedly disaster-grade lifeforms like Red Comet and the five-colored dragon. Compared to humans and aliens, their evolution was far more obvious. Red Comet began to molt; its new exoskeleton was still scarlet, but with traces of gold.

Zhang Lie felt as though he was able to sense the possibility of a higher level of evolution beyond disaster-grade from the changes to Red Comet's body—a post-disaster-grade lifeform!

Li Qianlin asked worriedly, "How long will the merger take?"

She had witnessed the merger of the draconian world with the eight other medium-sized worlds, which had finished in what seemed like the blink of an eye. On the other hand, the merger of east and west seemed to be taking far longer.

Although Li Qianlin could sense that the merger process was completely different between medium-sized worlds and large worlds, she was worried that the process would be interrupted midway through.

"At least a day," Zhang Lie replied. "The merger of the draconian world with the others only resulted in an evolution into a large world, but the merger of the worlds of east and west will form a superior world. Furthermore, the world of the east is as large as twenty medium-sized worlds, more than twice the size of the draconian world even after the merger.

"Also, the two worlds aren't merging quite yet—they're evolving into a superior world together first. That evolution will take even more time. Just be patient and wait."

Li Qianlin blinked. This was the first time she had heard that piece of information. "Hold on, what did you say? Isn't Father combining the two worlds?"

"He is, but during that process, this world will simultaneously evolve into a superior world."

"Really?" Li Qianlin murmured in excitement. She had never witnessed how strong superior worlds were for herself—of course she would be excited to find out that her world was evolving into one!

Chapter 846: The Xuluo Invasion

Zhang Lie couldn't help disappoint Li Qianlin. "The evolution won't be as straightforward as you think," he warned.

"Really? Is there some risk involved?"

"Not just mere risk—have you already forgotten what I told you?"

We'll be facing repercussions immediately. The current superior worlds will attack us in reprisal—look!"

Zhang Lie pointed toward the sky.

Li Qianlin glanced in the direction he indicated, only to see a huge eye appearing high in the sky.

It was abnormally large, and its pupil looked like a portal into an abyss of blood. Many of the guests stared at it in shock, only to cry out in pain as their eyes began to cry tears of blood.

The moment Li Qianlin looked into the eye, she found a fountain of madness pouring into her brain. Her sight was immediately glazed in a layer of red. She saw a bloody sky, a bloody sea, a monster that lay just below the surface of the sea—but before she could glean its true appearance, her eyes began to bleed as though they had been burned by fire.

Zhang Lie hurriedly shielded Li Qianlin. "Don't look into the eye. You'll go crazy!"

Li Qianlin shivered and called out to the audience, "Don't look at the sky!"

However, her warning came too late. The guests who had already done so were screaming and crying as they poked out their own eyeballs and placed them in their mouths.

Li Qianlin glanced all around her in alarm and fear.

"Just what is that eye?!"

"Weak lifeforms can't look at superior kings of the realm directly. Otherwise, terrible phenomena will appear—aliens who grow that strong will be able to affect weaker lifeforms with their mere presence alone," Zhang Lie explained.

Everyone within a hundred kilometers of the venue would be able to see the eye, and they would immediately go crazy as a result.

None of them were as lucky to have someone like Zhang Lie around to block their gaze, nor were they as strong. Many of the inhabitants of the eastern world went mad immediately.

Within the event venue, Li Qianlin cried out in shock. "you mean that that eye in the sky is from a superior king of the realm!"

Zhang Lie pointed at one of his eyes. "Not the king itself—just one of its eyes."

Li Qianlin glanced all around her at the chaos that had ensued. "All this because of an eye...?!"

"Anyone below a certain threshold of strength will go crazy the moment they see a single part of such a king's body—not even an eye. Even a strand of hair would be sufficient. In severe cases, they might even go mad. Just look over there."

One guest that had gone crazy was turning into a bulbous ball of flesh and meat. Dozens of heads and dozens of arms grew out of it, each head with just one lone eye and a mouth—and extending further and further from its main body.

With a wave of Zhang Lie's hand, the monsters in the venue all burst apart. Flesh and blood scattered like raindrops.

"Once the transformation begins, there's no hope for them," Zhang Lie continued calmly.

"What are we to do? Why has the eye of a superior king appeared here?!"

Zhang Lie seemed rather nonplussed. "You're panicking already?"

Li Qianlin blinked a few times, then sucked in a deep breath. "You're right, I can't panic now. I'm the princess of the east, and my father has to concentrate on merging the two worlds. I have to stabilize the situation!"

Zhang Lie scratched his head. "No, you're misunderstanding me. This is just the beginning."

"What?!"

Li Qianlin was staring uncomprehendingly at Zhang Lie when the eye in the sky closed, leaving behind a gigantic hole—a wormhole into another world.

Figures of blood crawled out from within the wormhole as Li Qianlin gasped in shock. "What are those?"

"The army of the superior world." Zhang Lie peered at the bloody figures. "From the xuluo world, I believe." Zhang Lie had seen their like before in his past life, during the great defense against the death spirits' incursion.

They were fearless fighters who advanced without any regard for their lives.

"Why has an army from a superior world appeared here?" Li Qianlin wasn't the only one who was thinking that—all the guests were.

Zhang Lie rolled his eyes. "Isn't it obvious?" They were invading the world!

"But why?" Li Qianlin asked, refusing to believe her eyes.

"To consume the energy released by the world's evolution, of course."

A world that had initiated the process of evolution into a superior world was simultaneously at its weakest and with the richest rewards for any invaders. It was far from able to defend itself against other superior worlds, and its energy would greatly enhance whatever world claimed it for its own.

A humongous three-headed, six-armed monstrosity clambered out of the wormhole. Its heads each had three eyes and looked like a raging hog. Its hair and beard were made of flame.

It sucked in a deep breath with all three heads as it stretched. Its middle head sprayed out a burst of flame as it guffawed, "Ah, the sweet scent of an evolving world!"

The moment it appeared, everyone present felt pressure akin to a mountain pressing down on their bodies.

The head on its left said, "The air is fresh, and there's nothing weird about the weather. We're lucky that this world seems so normal."

The head on its right said, "No drizzling rain, no ten suns in the sky—those would have greatly diminished the strength of our army."

The head in the middle rolled its eyes and said, "Among the three thousand worlds, how many worlds like that do you think could ever evolve?"

There were quite a few worlds among the three thousand that had terrible environments—for instance, among the six worlds that the members of Team Zenith had invaded, the world of frost and ice and the primordial demon's world had the most challenging environments.

Of the three thousand worlds, perhaps a thousand had such crippling environments, and only a rare few among those thousand would ever evolve to become a superior world.

#### Chapter 847: Heaven's Might

A massive army gathered in the air through the wormhole. Half the world of the east could see their invasion, not just the guests gathered at the venue.

"What's that in the sky?"

"Just what is going on...?!"

Pozhi shouted at the entire world with all three heads at once, "Useless trash! Quail and tremble—your doomsday is here!"

The next moment, before anyone could react, Pozhi commanded his troops, "Xuluo, charge!"

The xuluo soldiers that had gathered in the sky now leapt toward the inhabitants of the eastern world, flooding out of the hole in a black tide.

Even the most foolish inhabitant of the eastern world could understand the xuluo's purpose now—they were none other than an invading force.

Li Qianlin was calmer than Zhang Lie had expected. She immediately called out, "Protect the king!"

Zhang Lie reached out and grabbed her icy-cold hand. "There's no need to worry. Your father and I expected that the other superior worlds would interfere. The superior worlds that have existed since ancient times aren't willing to see more members join their fray. They've been treating the three thousand worlds like their personal pigpen."

"Father prepared for this?" Li Qianlin clarified, but before Zhang Lie could respond, the elite troops of the eastern world rose into the sky.

Ever since he had informed Li Zongming about the secret behind the superior worlds, Li Zongming had been planning for this eventuality, and he had managed to gather his forces outside the venue before the start of the ceremony.

The guests' morale instantly rose.

"The eastern forces are here!"

"They'll surely be able to deal with all our enemies!"

"Daring to invade the eastern world at this critical juncture—these invaders are asking to be slaughtered!"

Pozhi coldly mocked the eastern troops charging forward in response to the xuluo invasion.  
"Ignorant fools!"

The sound of slaughter echoed through the sky. A simple sweep of the xuluo's hands killed a large swathe of the eastern elites even though they hadn't seemed to move at all. Blood and corpses rained down from the sky. In just a single clash, the eastern troops found themselves overwhelmed.

Indeed, even the peak of large worlds wouldn't be able to compare with a superior world in terms of strength.

"Why? Just how could this be?" Everything had happened so quickly that the guests in the venue didn't know how to react nor what had happened.

Li Qianlin's fingers trembled. Her face was so pale that Zhang Lie was pained just from looking at her. The eastern elites had risen up to, and subsequently fallen from, the sky in the blink of an eye, leaving nothing behind but blood and corpses. No fighting had happened, only bloodshed and slaughter.

"Heaven's might..." Zhang Lie murmured.

The xuluo cultivated a strange power known as heaven's might, a power that gave them superhuman strength.

Zhang Lie had witnessed this unusual power for himself in his past life during the defense against the death spirits. The hunters of the Milky Way had tried to analyze this mysterious power in detail, and some genius or another had actually succeeded.

The xuluo were an unusual class of lifeform that hovered between life and death. It was this precarious balance that allowed them to access this otherworldly power. In terms of the scientific principles that governed the Milky Way, it was quantal in nature.

The famous thought experiment of Schrodinger's cat details an experiment in which a cat is placed in a box, along with a poisonous capsule with a certain chance of breaking and killing the cat. Before the box is opened and the state of the cat is observed, the cat would exist in a superposition of live and dead states.

The xuluo's power was the ability to choose the desired outcome if it were more likely than not—if they were more likely than not to kill the eastern soldiers, it would be guaranteed. In other words, they could manipulate cause and effect.

A seed that was planted in the ground and watered daily would slowly grow into a tall tree. Planting the seed was the cause, watering it was the process, and the tall tree was the effect. Heaven's might allowed the xuluo to skip the process between cause and effect and turn the seed directly into a tree.

The seed that was to grow into a tall tree would be subject to the elements for years and years, and all sorts of incidents could happen in the meantime—floods, fire, a hunter chopping it down for wood—but as long as it was more likely than not to survive into maturity, heaven's might would allow it to mature immediately.

The most potent use of this ability was in reproduction.

The xuluo had four heavenly kings, each of whom had a fighting force of ten million xuluo. There were four hundred million xuluo in all, and they were the only one among the ten superior worlds with such immense reproductive abilities.

A male xuluo could get a female xuluo pregnant with that heaven's might in the blink of an eye, and the female xuluo could gestate that fetus in just a single night. It was obvious how potent this ability could be.

The xuluo, who possessed this heavenly power, were a force that none of the other superior worlds could afford to ignore.

Zhang Lie let go of Li Qianlin and stepped forward, but Li Qianlin held him firm. "Where are you going?"

Zhang Lie caressed Li Qianlin's cheek. "To help your world resolve this challenge."

"But this isn't your world!" Li Qianlin was touched, but logic jolted her awake. This wasn't Zhang Lie's world, and Zhang Lie wouldn't be protected by the will of the east...

Zhang Lie shook his head and replied seriously, "Don't worry. These xuluo can't do anything against me."

He took a single step forward, cut through space, and vanished from the spot.

The forces of the east were slaughtered in a mere instant, and none of them knew how such a feat had been accomplished. Even the veteran soldiers began to shrink back as the xuluo fighters smirked and grinned maliciously.

Zhang Lie appeared before the xuluo.

"Haha, another victim!"

Zhang Lie didn't respond to their taunts. He clenched his fists tightly and gathered blue genetic energy around him. Ripples of genetic energy emanated from his arms. He flicked his wrists, spawning a frightening aura in the rapidly darkening skies.

A fish the size of a whale materialized in the air. Howling gales shook the air around him. Everything within a radius of ten kilometers was blown away.

When Pozhi noticed him, his face suddenly grew serious. He sensed a major difference between Zhang Lie and the eastern troops who had charged forward like lambs to the slaughter—even he couldn't use heaven's might to damage Zhang Lie, meaning that, if they were to fight against each other, he was the disadvantaged party.

"Be careful!" Pozhi shouted at the xuluo, but it was already too late...

#### Chapter 848: Pozhi's Nightmare

A whirlpool of energy had gathered before Zhang Lie by the time he punched forward with a shout. "[Fists of the Silent Sea: Soar]!"

A huge wave soared into the air. As Zhang Lie punched forward, the fish slammed its huge tail on the ground and sent a torrent of water surging into the air. Ripples of energy spread out from Zhang Lie, warping the space around him and roaring through the skies like galloping steeds, like a rampaging sea.

The xuluo were sent flying by the tidal wave of energy that rushed toward them, shattering space and swallowing up all life in its vicinity.

The venue looked as though it had been struck by a Category 5 hurricane. The guests were all sent stumbling to the ground, and the artfully crafted stage flew off into the sky. Even the aliens standing beyond the cordon found it difficult to maintain their balance.

Zhang Lie's strength had crossed a threshold ever since he capped out his disaster gene fragments.

The waves of energy cleared out large patches of the xuluo.

"Oh?" Zhang Lie was very surprised that a few xuluo had managed to withstand the might of his skill. "Not bad!"

Pozhi's body was covered in flame. Like a bulwark, he protected the xuluo behind him from harm. Thanks to Pozhi's defense, not all the xuluo perished under Zhang Lie's blow.

Pozhi's three heads and nine eyes glared daggers at Zhang Lie. "Just who are you?"

Zhang Lie chuckled coldly. "A passerby who's going to slaughter the xuluo to the last!"

Pozhi's left head looked up at the sky and laughed uproariously. "Hah! You and whose army?"

Pozhi's middle head narrowed his eyes at him thoughtfully. "The superior evolution couldn't have happened for no reason..."

Pozhi's right head pronounced, "I am Pozhi, the commanding general of the xuluo world, the right hand of the xuluo king! Your strength isn't too bad. If you surrender now, I'll report this matter to my king, and you'll be granted the opportunity to reincarnate as a xuluo. Given your strength, you might well become the fifth xuluo lord."

Pozhi's left head threatened him archly, "On the other hand, if you try to resist, you'll certainly die."

"[Ninecarp Transformation]!" Zhang Lie didn't waste his breath on these invaders. A black serpent materialized behind Zhang Lie, by now so large and so developed that it resembled the world-swallowing serpent Jormungandr.

Though it was a construct of genetic energy, it looked tangible and physical. It let out a threatening rustle as its scales creaked.

Pozhi's middle head commented, "Looks like it's another disobedient one..."

Pozhi's left head mocked, "Pitiful alien, you don't understand just how strong the xuluo are, or how frightening our heaven's might is!"

Pozhi's right head scoffed. "Do you really think you're all that strong just because you managed to get this world to evolve? We xuluo have destroyed so many superior worlds that you wouldn't be able to count them on both hands."

Pozhi's middle head shouted, "Ignorant fool, shake under the power of heaven's might!"

Pozhi raised an arm high over his head, then swung it down while an intangible force spread out from his palm.

It ignored the constraints of space and distance and landed squarely on Zhang Lie's body before floating by harmlessly.

Pozhi's three heads seemed to suffer indigestion. His left head turned darker, his middle head greener, and his right head pale. He spat out a mouthful of blood along with a spray of flames.

The backlash from a failed usage of heaven's might was more severe than Pozhi had expected. He had never experienced a situation in which his heaven's might was ineffective; in the past, no matter what, he had always been able to injure or at least drain his opponent.

However, the force had had absolutely no effect on Zhang Lie, as though his hands were trying to push against a mountain's worth of mass. It simply wouldn't budge.

Pozhi's understanding of heaven's might was very basic: he only used it as a force multiplier to send his enemies flying. However, when he used that technique on Zhang Lie, it felt as though he were trying to push apart a planet—completely impossible given the strength he possessed.

The heaven's might that was the xuluo's pride seemed to be entirely useless against Zhang Lie—or rather, Pozhi's heaven's might was ineffective against him.

Pozhi had heard that weak xuluo were incapable of attacking far stronger opponents with heaven's might; heaven's might would only function if there were a greater chance than not that the desired effect could take place.

In other words, if the xuluo wanted to strike a killing blow and couldn't do so with over 50% probability, that blow wouldn't land. If the xuluo wanted to deal an injury and couldn't do so with over 50% probability, that injury wouldn't be dealt.

The will of the world was indirectly implying that Pozhi couldn't even do anything to his opponent.

Pozhi couldn't accept this result. Was he no different from the xuluo who had perished in front of Zhang Lie?

It was only natural for Pozhi to be panicking—he had leaned on heaven's might for all his fights, and even if he didn't have a 50% probability of killing his opponent, he surely had a 50% probability of wounding them.

As long as that were the case, heaven's might would be effective—and if it were effective, then he would be able to consistently deal more and more damage with heaven's might. Very quickly, he would then also be able to kill his opponent with a 50% probability.

Pozhi was stronger than the strongest kings of the realm of large worlds, and he had never before seen an existence whom he couldn't even hurt with heaven's might.

Pozhi refused to believe that this could happen, that he would be nothing more than a weak xuluo who was unable to defeat his opponent.

The xuluo race had grown so prosperous because of heaven's might that Pozhi didn't know how to defeat an opponent without using it. He had never learned how to deal with stronger opponents whom he couldn't handle.

"No, impossible! This is impossible—there's no way heaven's might can be ineffective, no way at all! Heaven's might is invincible!" Pozhi fell into a blind panic. His arms waved around madly, depleting his supply of heaven's might again and again.

All that energy landed on Zhang Lie's body and passed through him as though he were being caressed by a gentle breeze.

Pozhi groaned in pain as he clutched his chest and spat out a mouthful of bloody flame, spraying it all the way toward Zhang Lie.

The black serpent behind Zhang Lie uncoiled and dissolved the flame with its pitch-black energy—only to see Pozhi falling from the sky and crashing into the ground.

Zhang Lie: ???

What was going on? Why had his opponent suddenly collapsed?

Chapter 849: The Zongming World

Zhang Lie understood the situation quickly after recalling what had happened to the xuluo who had failed to use heaven's might.

Heaven's might was a particularly strong racial power, with the ability to skip the process between cause and effect, bypassing natural law and picking out the best future. How could such a ridiculous strength not come with any drawbacks?

More accurately, this drawback was a risk that users of heaven's might took. If heaven's might were to have no effect on its target, the user would suffer karmic backlash—the cause of Pozhi vomiting blood.

Heaven's might was so strong that Pozhi had never encountered any foe immune to it, and he had all but forgotten its risks.

After all, the xuluo just needed to be able to deal an injury to the target with 50% probability, and heaven's might would do the rest. After a few injuries, the xuluo would have over 50% chance of killing the opponent, and heaven's might would take care of that too.

Who could be so strong as to resist heaven's might, especially given Pozhi's own strength?

Pozhi hadn't considered such a possibility until he met Zhang Lie.

Zhang Lie drew closer and stepped over Pozhi's prone body, a boot on his head.

Pozhi found his body growing so weak and emaciated it was as though he were nothing more than bones, as though he had just survived an illness that had brought him to the gates of death. With a quavering voice, he called out, "You can't kill me. The moment you do so, the xuluo world will take revenge. All of you will have to die!"

"I've never feared the superior worlds, and I'll hardly start with the xuluo!" With a wave of Zhang Lie's hand, the black serpent behind him shot forward and began to dissolve Pozhi's body with a mist of black fog.

Pozhi's cries echoed in the world of the east as his body was reduced to nothing.

The death of Pozhi drained the morale of the xuluo, but they didn't retreat. If they were to retreat to the xuluo world, they would face the same fate: death. The xuluo howled, then rushed toward Zhang Lie and tried to swamp him with sheer numbers.

Zhang Lie didn't want to sully his hands against such trash. He motioned to the black serpent, which stuck out its tongue, hissed, and darted toward the xuluo.

Heaven's might was useless against Zhang Lie; it was likewise largely useless against the serpent he summoned. Although heaven's might did manage to do some amount of damage to the serpent, it was a manifestation of energy, and damage to its physical body was irrelevant.

It opened its maw wide and swallowed up large swathes of the xuluo, dissolving them in mere moments.

Red Comet rushed into the air and transformed into a beam of blood that zigzagged through the battlefield, destroying the xuluo it encountered even before they could use heaven's might.

The disaster-grade five-colored dragon likewise made its move, spraying out multi-colored flames and burning the xuluo to a crisp. Try though they did, the xuluo were unable to break through the dragon's defenses with heaven's might.

From ground level, Li Qianlin watched the fighting ensue. Her eyes focused on Zhang Lie, who stood above the heavens like a martial god.

In the blink of an eye, the fighting ended. Zhang Lie had successfully protected the evolving world.

Within Li Zongming's pillar of light, the egg that had formed from the synthesis of the two worlds' proofs of kingship began to crack. A massive beast emerged, with such a strong aura that the pillar of light fizzled away.

It had scales in six colors, with a pair of golden wings behind its back. It had a long, narrow mouth, with eight horns on its head like a golden crown. A ring of light glowed behind him as brightly as the sun. The moment the mythical beast emerged from its egg, runes seemed to flare over the entire world.

As the energy from the evolution condensed and the will of the world descended, Li Zongming began to radiate six-colored light.

After the world of the east evolved into a superior world, Li Zongming's own strength grew by leaps and bounds. His aura revealed the current state of his strength.

Those inhabitants of the east and west who had survived the xuluo incursion found themselves kneeling on the ground, praising Li Zongming's strength.

Now, Li Zongming could immediately and intuitively control natural law. He seemed to be bathed in a golden glow, as bright as the sun, preventing anyone from looking directly at him. If they were to do so, they would feel a scorching pain in their eyes.

After the world's evolution, Li Zongming had gained a shred of divinity, as though a piece of the world had been infused into his own body. That divinity was imbued with a few commandments.

The first was the inability to bear direct witness to a god: if someone weak were to look directly at Li Zongming, their eyeballs would burn to a crisp. Because Li Zongming had just ascended, the penalty for doing so was still weak compared to observing the king of the xuluo, Feitian.

The second commandment was a mark of identity: anyone who noticed Li Zongming's presence in the world of the east would know that he was its king.

The third commandment was a weak form of omnipresence: anyone in the world who mentioned "the king of the east", "Li Zongming", "the king of the realm", or other such related phrases would be overheard by Li Zongming himself.

Li Zongming looked down at the inhabitants of both worlds and began to speak, his voice reverberating through the air. "The merger of the worlds of east and west is complete. From today onwards, neither world shall exist independently. I name the world by my identity: henceforth, this world shall be known as the Zongming world!"

The easterners cheered; the westerners had no choice but to accept this reality.

Li Zongming let out a deep breath. The wishes and expectations of generations of kings of the realm—he had been the one to fulfill them all.

"Rise." With a wave of Li Zongming's hand, the people who had been kneeling down were now supported up by formless energy.

Li Zongming frowned as he noticed the carnage at the venue. Half the eastern world had suffered from the xuluo invasion.

Many of the elite troops had died or were injured, and quite a few inhabitants of the world had gone mad from their brief view of the xuluo king. Some were even turning into monsters. Time flashed in Li Zongming's eyes; he reviewed what had happened while he was engaged in the evolution of the world.

With a huff, he forced those who had gone mad to their knees, stripped them of their recent memories, and waited for them to recover. However, those who had begun turning into monsters didn't revert to their usual selves—as Zhang Lie had claimed, they couldn't be helped any longer.

"A superior world's forces really did show up... Thank goodness he gave me that warning, and thank goodness he was here himself..."

Li Zongming glanced at Zhang Lie, then reined in his energy. He had expected that, once the worlds of east and west combined and the world evolved into a superior one, his newfound strength would be sufficient to defeat Zhang Lie and wipe clean the humiliation from having suffered a loss to him.

Instead, only now did he realize just how frighteningly strong Zhang Lie was.

Before, he had only seen the sea from its surface; now, when he dove into it, did he realize how deep it was. He had known that Zhang Lie was strong, but not how strong. What his evolution had allowed him to do was to comprehend the enormity, the whole, of that strength—but he was as far away from defeating it as ever.

Zhang Lie was like an abyss, but it was only now that he had been able to see his unimaginable depths.

Li Zongming began to sweat. That Zhang Lie hadn't destroyed the world of the east during their fight was a blessing he didn't deserve.

Of course, what Li Zongming didn't know was that Zhang Lie hadn't possessed such strength from the beginning. It was a result of his maxing out his disaster gene fragments.

Zhang Lie landed in front of Li Zongming. "Congratulations on becoming the king of the realm of a superior world, your majesty."

Li Zongming raised his head to the sky and laughed. "Haha, there's no need to be so formal. Just call me father-in-law!"

Chapter 850: The Four Great Lords

Li Qianlin flushed crimson. "Father!"

The success of the merger of the two worlds made Li Zongming very pleased. "You deserve at least half the merit—no, three quarters!—for facilitating the process. Without your help, the two worlds couldn't have merged, and we would all have suffered a terrible calamity."

Now that the calamity was over, new life would flourish, and the world of the east, now the Zongming world, would grow even stronger than before.

Zhang Lie asked, "What do you plan to do about the xuluo?"

Li Zongming had been intending to grant Zhang Lie a prize or award, but it seemed that Zhang Lie didn't much care for anything that Li Zongming could provide him.

Zhang Lie continued, "The xuluo belong to a superior world, and it's not likely that they would give up on trying to claim this one for themselves. The next time they come, their numbers will be even larger than before."

Zhang Lie's words struck Li Zongming like a bucket of cold water, depleting him of his excitement.

Li Zongming shook his head. "I can't think of any other approach but to resist them head-on."

The Zongming world was a new superior world, and it hardly had the reserves that an ancient world like the xuluo world did.

The eastern elites had perished almost the moment they encountered the xuluo troops; heaven's might was too potent a power, and they had no defenses against it.

If not for Zhang Lie, the two worlds wouldn't have been able to combine and evolve, and he, Li Zongming, would have perished. In some sense, his life was beholden to Zhang Lie.

"I have never intended to give up. Even if they come at me with all their strength, I shall live and die with the world itself." Li Zongming took a deep breath. "You don't need to do the same. Leave with Qianlin, please."

Li Qianlin's eyes widened. "Father—!"

Li Zongming raised an arm, preventing Li Qianlin from speaking further.

Zhang Lie shook his head. "It would be a pity for this newly minted superior world to be annihilated. I may have a solution."

"What solution?"

"The xuluo king was able to create a wormhole linking the xuluo world to this one. Are you able to do the same?"

Li Zongming mulled it over for a moment, and then his eyes lit up. "Before the evolution, definitely not. Now, however, I have this authority. When the xuluo king forcibly opened a wormhole to this world, it left the coordinates to the xuluo world behind: when you look into the abyss, the abyss looks back at you."

Zhang Lie nodded. "It'll be easy, then. I'll head over and kill the xuluo king!"

Li Zongming sucked in a deep breath. "Can you do it?" The opponent was none other than a king of a superior world!

Zhang Lie smiled. "I'm not sure, but given my current strength, even if I can't kill the king, I doubt he'd be able to trap me there."

Li Zongming nodded. "Give me some time to familiarize myself with my authority first."

"Very well!"

Within the xuluo world, the sea of blood frothed.

"Why have you sought me out? I was enjoying my sleep," a humongous black figure spoke. The sea of blood frothed and shook with every word. Blood-red lightning flashed through the bloody skies. The black figure drew near; its appearance would have made anyone gasp. It was large and tall, so tall its head seemed to broach the sky.

Its name was Qiantuo, one of the four great xuluo lords like Pozhi.

Another xuluo approached, with four eyes and four arms, carrying four suns and moons in its four palms. It strode above the surface of the water, a long dragon's tail behind it. The blood-red suns and moons caused the sea of blood to shine in eerie red light. Flames raged on its head, and horns grew out of it. This was the xuluo lord Luohou.

Just then, the sea began to surge once more. Another massive figure appeared, the size of a continent. It had nine heads, each wreathed with blood-colored flowers whose petals gave off a rotting stench. The flowers shook, revealing the sharp teeth hidden in the bud at their centers. Some sort of clear, viscous liquid dripped from those buds.

Each of its nine heads had thousands of eyes, and it had eight spidery appendages. Nine hundred and ninety-nine hands grew haphazardly out of its body, giving it a frightening appearance. The

spiderlike creature stood up, making it apparent that it was at least four times the size of Qiantuo and Luohou.

"Vemacitrin." Qiantuo and Luohou both bowed down toward the nine-headed spider, the oldest of the four xuluo lords. Although they were all great lords in title, Vemacitrin had another identity: the son of heaven's might.

Three of the four great lords had assembled.

Vemacitrin glanced around itself, flames shooting out of its mouth as it spoke. "Where's Pozhi? He's never been late before."

The sea of blood roiled as Feitian emerged from the depths of the sea. Qiantuo and Luohou immediately knelt, and even Vemacitrin lowered its nine heads. "Forefather!"

Feitian's words stunned the three lords. "Pozhi is dead."

"What?!" Vemacitrin cried out, "Impossible! We are in no conflict with the other superior worlds. The death spirits' war is still a decade away."

Feitian continued, "Recently, a world evolved into a superior world."

"A new superior world!" Vemacitrin, Qiantuo, and Luohou's eyes shone with greed.

"Forefather, you mean that Pozhi was killed by the defenders of this world?" Vemacitrin's voice was like peals of thunder. As it spoke, lightning flashed in the sky.

Feitian nodded.

Luohou frowned. "A new superior world—how could it boast the strength to kill Pozhi?"

Vemacitrin nodded. "Among us four, weak and young though he might be, Pozhi is at least as strong as the king of a large world. It would be trivial for him to deal with a newly ascended superior king with heaven's might."

One of the four lords had recently perished in the frontlines, and Pozhi had been his replacement. There were large gradations in strength even among the four heavenly lords, and Pozhi was far removed from the other three.

Pozhi called Feitian "your highness", whereas Qiantuo and Luohou called him "forefather." This was because Qiantuo and Luohou were related to Feitian by blood and within ten generations; Pozhi, on the other hand, was far too many generations away from Feitian to count.

"An accident must have occurred during the xuluo invasion. Qiantuo and Luohou, the two of you will head to this new superior world and claim it for the xuluo. The death of Pozhi leaves an opening among the four great lords. I think Fuzhang has had enough time to rest, by this point."

Vemacitrin's eyes brightened. "Is Fuzhang returning?"

"I've summoned him back already."