

U. Warlord 851

Chapter 851: Descension of the Great Lords

Feitian's voice heralded the appearance of yet another figure, one whose body seemed to bridge ocean and sky. The lower half of its body was a long serpent's tail. A large ring of silver appeared behind his back. His black palms were so humongous they were half his height, and they sucked in the light around them.

Luo Hou lowered his head and bowed. "Master!"

Vemacitrin's nine heads all smiled at the same time. "Fuzhang, you're finally back. Have your wounds recovered?"

"The injuries I sustained on clashing with the king of the death spirits? Largely."

Vemacitrin smiled again. "To be able to take a palm strike from a crazy bastard like the king of the death spirits and still recover so quickly—even our forefather would be hard-pressed to do the same."

"I was simply lucky," Fuzhang replied, sighing. "It's truly a pity for Pozhi. I thought I would be able to rest a little longer, only for him to die so quickly—even among the descendants of the xuluo, Pozhi is outstanding."

Fuzhang was one of the four great lords before Pozhi rose up to that position. He was the commander of the xuluo forces, and among the oldest of the lords. He came from the same generation as Vemacitrin.

As such, they got along rather well. Compared to them, Qiantuo and Luohou were still from a far younger generation.

Feitian replied, "Fuzhang, you'll head to this newly evolved world with Qiantuo and Luohou."

Fuzhang nodded. "My life on it, forefather."

"Three of the four lords?" Vemacitrin called out in surprise. "Is this new superior world really that strong?"

If he included Pozhi in the count, four great lords in total would have been dispatched to the world. Four lords was enough manpower to wage war against another ancient superior world—but they were only being sent to deal with a newly evolved one!

The xuluo had always thought of these new superior worlds as pigs that were now ready for slaughter. The xuluo only had four such butchers, and for all of them to be mobilized for a single pig was exceptional. Vemacitrin thought that Feitian was making a mountain out of a molehill.

Feitian roared, "There will be no second defeat. With absolute strength, we will crush the inhabitants of the three thousand worlds and prove that the superior worlds rule over them all. We will annihilate all resistance."

Feitian wanted to make an example of the new superior world that had dared to resist its advances.

He continued, "This time, we lost ten million xuluo. Vemacitrin, pick out ten million fighters among those xuluo you control."

Li Zongming began to familiarize himself with the authority of a superior king, while Zhang Lie dissected the xuluo corpses and Pozhi in order to understand the secret behind heaven's might. Although he hadn't managed to do so, he did discover something interesting.

"As expected."

The moment he saw Pozhi, Zhang Lie felt a sense of familiarity.

After analyzing the bodies of the xuluo, Zhang Lie thought of a hypothesis, one which he had validated by the time he dissected Pozhi's body.

The xuluo were evolved forms of the sura—or, more precisely, the xuluo and the sura belonged to the same genus, like dogs and wolves, humans and apes, or tigers and cats.

Of course, there were still significant differences between the xuluo and the sura. The key connection was between the xuluo and an evolved form of the sura—the asura.

Those sura who had grown strong enough to evolve into asura were genetically distinct from the sura, but they bore nascent similarity to the xuluo. This was a topic worth investigating in more detail: how could the race that had once dominated the second realm, the sura, be so similar to the xuluo of the third realm? Only the asura had been known to have the ability to break through the barrier between these realms, as the hunters of the Milky Way did.

Zhang Lie hazarded a new hypothesis. The sura hadn't evolved into the xuluo; instead, the xuluo had devolved into the sura. Perhaps there was an accident that had caused a xuluo to fall into the second realm, after which point his offspring many generations hence grew into the sura race.

This was why the sura were so unusual among the second realm: they alone had the ability to consume the lifeforce of other species. Zhang Lie's second hypothesis was that the sura had deliberately been placed in the second realm—the hakoniwa, or "garden-in-a-box", theory.

Back in the Milky Way, some hunters had suggested that the dimensional realms were artificial worlds created by some yet-unknown entity.

After all, the five realms seemed to belong to parallel universes, but were somehow all ensconced in the same hidden dimension that was accessible to hunters of the Milky Way. Could this stunning artifice have occurred naturally?

Zhang Lie chose not to ponder such a question for the time being. After all, this was information that he wasn't privy to even in his past life, and he would need to advance further to even begin to deduce clues for that question.

"In that case, would I be able to produce peak limit-breaking potions from xuluo bone essence...?"

The reason peak limit-breaking potions couldn't be mass-produced was because they required asura thorns as a main ingredient. Now that Zhang Lie had noted the similarity between the xuluo and the asura, would he be able to substitute materials from xuluo bodies instead?

"I won't be able to use the original recipe, in that case. It'll take some more time..."

Zhang Lie stored all the xuluo bones he had acquired, intending to study them carefully.

Beyond the Zongming world, a gigantic eyeball popped into existence. An inhabitant of the world would immediately notice that this eyeball looked identical to the one that had appeared right before the invasion of the xuluo: Feitian's eye.

Feitian's eye closed and was replaced by a huge black hole, from which emerged a gigantic palm that sucked up all light around it. The palm grabbed at the edges of the hole and forcibly widened it.

Cracks spread out from the hole as another hand emerged and widened the opening.

Fuzhang emerged from the enlarged hole, followed by Qiantuo and Luohou. Qiantuo glanced at the Zongming world with confusion in his eyes.

"This is where Pozhi lost his life? It looks just like an ordinary world..."

As Qiantuo spoke, the entire Zongming world shook. Lightning crackled over the void.

The successful evolution of the Zongming world meant that it was protected by the will of the world. There was a formless barrier protecting it from outside intrusion, and even a superior king wouldn't be able to bypass it easily.

Feitian could only put the opening of the wormhole beyond the Zongming world.

Fuzhang warned, "Remain cautious. None of your predecessors died in battle—the xuluo who possess heaven's might are invincible, but this invincibility breeds carelessness. The deaths of previous great lords is because of carelessness, not combat ability."

As he spoke, twenty million xuluo soldiers emerged from the black hole, filling the void like buzzing mosquitoes...

Chapter 852: An Intense Strike

Fuzhang continued, "The reason I've been able to survive so long isn't because I'm any stronger than the other great lords, but because I'm more cautious."

Luohou lowered his head. "Yes, I understand, Master!"

Fuzhang nodded. "Qiantuo, greet the inhabitants of this world. We xuluo need to be polite, respectful guests."

"Yes, Master!"

Qiantuo stepped forward and shouted, "You inhabitants of the world, listen up! You've been surrounded by the xuluo, so if you don't want to die, surrender immediately! King of this world, if you surrender now and hand over your world's energy immediately, I'll consider allowing you to live on!"

Qiantuo's shout caused an impact like a tsunami breaching the shore. Lightning crackled over the skies of the Zongming world, and the sound wave enveloped it entirely. If the lightning were to strike, it felt as though the Zongming world would be pierced through.

Li Zongming had noticed the unwelcome guests the moment they arrived at the scene. Before the lightning could strike the barrier surrounding the Zongming world, he stepped forward and out beyond its boundaries.

Six-colored light surrounded him and morphed into a solid shield that stopped the lightning cold.

At the same time, he sent a request for assistance to Zhang Lie, who was currently investigating Red Comet's growth.

Red Comet had been given a boost during the evolution of the world, and its carapace had taken on a golden sheen as a result. Its attributes had improved dramatically, and it gave Zhang Lie a hint as to what lay beyond disaster-grade.

If Red Comet were able to advance into a post-disaster-grade lifeform, then Zhang Lie could very well obtain even more advanced gene fragments.

"The evolution of the world simply provided an opportunity for Red Comet to consolidate its experience. Genetic lifeforms need to fight and gain experience through combat in order to grow—there's no way around it."

Red Comet had participated in all manner of battles during its travels with Zhang Lie, giving it the means to take advantage of the opportunity. Otherwise, it might have taken Red Comet many more years to advance.

"It's time to start planning out a post-disaster-grade farm..."

Just then, Zhang Lie sensed a disturbance that spread across the world, followed by an urgent communication from Li Zongming.

"Something's wrong! The xuluo are back, and they're right outside the world's boundaries!"

Zhang Lie had expected that the xuluo wouldn't be willing to give up on a rare prize like this recently ascended superior world. He was right about to head out when Red Comet pointed at itself.

Zhang Lie understood its intent. "You want to participate, too?"

Red Comet nodded. It too understood the need to gain experience to unlock its true potential and ascend into a higher form of life.

"In that case, let's go together."

Beyond the boundaries of the world, Li Zongming was panting as he tried to defend against Qiantuo's attack.

Qiantuo sneered. "So you're the king of the world that killed Pozhi? You don't look like anything exceptional—hardly comparable to the ancient superior kings."

Qiantuo's speech was interspersed with crackling lightning. Li Zongming hurriedly manipulated the world's energy into a screen that could defend against those attacks.

Fuzhang said, "Pozhi arrived at this world during the merger process. This king didn't participate in the battle; it's clear that what killed Pozhi wasn't the king himself, but rather something unique about this world."

Qiantuo yelled out, "King of this world, you have no hope of taking down three xuluo lords on your own. Hand over the world's energy, and we'll allow a fraction of your citizens to leave."

Li Zongming called back, "I, Li Zongming, am not so cowardly as to take such an offer! Don't think that you're superior to us just because you're from an ancient superior world. Even if I have to die, I'll take pieces of you with me!"

"You overestimate your own abilities, fool!" Luohou cried out. The suns and moons he carried in his four arms shot out blinding rays of light straight at Li Zongming.

Qiantuo roared. His sound waves combined with crackling lightning and Luohou's attack into a devastating strength that could annihilate the world.

Li Zongming's eyes widened. He was confident he would be able to block the blow, but there was no chance at all that he would be able to shield the entire world as well. Just as he was at a loss, space shattered around him, forming a black hole. A fish rushed out of it, sending a huge wave soaring 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. The waves roared through space like galloping steeds, like a rampaging sea, interfering with the xuluo lords' attack and dissipating it in an explosion of energy that sent the xuluo fighters flying away. The only ones who withstood the force of the explosion were the three great lords of the xuluo.

By then, clouds had gathered over the skies of the Zongming world. Flashes of light could be seen over the horizon. The disaster-grade five-colored dragon and Li Zongming's sunbird, sensing something amiss, flew toward where the battle was taking place.

Zhang Lie's pale-blue waves rippled with spatial fluctuations. They devoured the beams of light, sound waves, and lightning that the xuluo lords shot his way, growing into a tsunami that threatened to wipe out the entire xuluo army.

Fuzhang made his move then. His pitch-black palms grew larger and wider, until they were the size of the entire Zongming world. They covered the entire battlefield like a wall, shielding the xuluo behind from all harm.

The palms emitted an unusual suction force that absorbed the pale-blue genetic energy entirely.

Fuzhang took a deep breath, and his palms shrunk to their usual size. Clasping them behind his back, he commented, "You must be the one who killed Pozhi."

Zhang Lie and Red Comet stepped out from the black hole from which they had teleported to the scene. Before him were three massive xuluo, each the size of the Zongming world.

Zhang Lie laughed. "The xuluo sent three of their great lords over—they truly think highly of us, don't they?"

"Zhang Lie, you're here!" Li Zongming breathed a sigh of relief, as though Zhang Lie were his savior—and indeed, he was.

Zhang Lie asked, "Can you take on one of them, father-in-law?"

"If it's only to delay them, certainly..."

"Very well. Red Comet, you'll deal with the one with four arms. I'll deal with this one with big palms. Father-in-law, you'll handle the last one! We'll deal with this rabble quickly. I'm planning on having dinner with Qianqian, after all..."

Chapter 853: Against the Great Lords

Li Zongming nodded upon hearing Zhang Lie's command. Red Comet morphed into a beam of light that shot toward Luohou.

Qiantuo opened his mouth to howl, with sound waves crackling with the force of lightning. Li Zongming defended against the blow with six-colored light that transformed into a shield before him.

Zhang Lie activated his [Ninecarp Transformation]. An ocean of water-attuned genetic energy billowed from him, and a pale blue shark rose into the air from behind.

Water-attuned genetic energy condensed around him at a frightening rate, swirling around his index finger in the form of a small whirlpool and forming a sharp blade of water.

Fuzhang cursed at the xuluo warriors. "What are you all doing, standing around like that? We'll hold these defenders off—go and attack the superior world!"

The xuluo reacted immediately. They ran around the three lords' battlefields and toward the Zongming world. None of them dared to go anywhere near the three lords while they were in combat. A single flick of their fingers could easily kill one or two million of them. If they were uncautious and were struck by a wide-area attack, they would turn to dust immediately.

A dense cloud of xuluo, like flies, divided into two clouds of ten million xuluo each. They routed around the battlefield and set off for the Zongming world.

Zhang Lie slowly raised his index finger up high as the pale-blue genetic energy rushed into the depths of space and formed a waterfall that cascaded down. The waterfall struck like a blade, and the shark that swam through it seemed as though it could swallow up the sky.

"[The Boundless Blade: Yawning Wave]!" Zhang Lie swung downwards with a heavy blow.

The shark swam forth and opened its bloody maw as Fuzhang extended his palm and blocked the blow.

Zhang Lie's genetic energy wasn't able to penetrate Fuzhang's palm. Instead, Fuzhang caught the shark and held it still. Compared to Fuzhang's ridiculous mass, the shark looked like nothing more than a small fish.

Fuzhang's black palms boasted an unusual suction that drained the shark of its genetic energy. With his other palm, he sent a gale blowing toward Zhang Lie, almost forcing him to stumble back. Fuzhang was very surprised, but he seemed to come to an understanding quickly.

"No wonder. No wonder Pozhi was slain by you—heaven's might is ineffective."

In his near-immortal existence, Fuzhang had only met a handful of people who were immune to the effects of heaven's might. As he suffered the backlash from heaven's might, a trickle of blood leaked out of Fuzhang's lips, and his eyes widened in shock.

All those whom Fuzhang's heaven's might was ineffective against were superior kings of the realm, who made use of their world's energy to counter heaven's might. The only person he had met who was not a superior king and still somehow able to counter this near-invincible ability made Fuzhang very shocked indeed.

If not for Feitian's direct command, Fuzhang would drop everything and run.

Fuzhang was as strong as a superior king, so the fact that his heaven's might was ineffective against the unprotected Zhang Lie meant that Zhang Lie had to be someone absurdly strong.

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

Although Zhang Lie's genetic energy was nominally still water-attuned, it had essentially taken on the corrosive properties of his serpent transformation.

On the other hand, on the other side of the battlefield, Li Zongming was being completely suppressed by Qiantuo.

Although Li Zongming could control the energy of the world and use it to defend himself against heaven's might, Qiantuo was still able to win out. Li Zongming wasn't weak; he was simply so concerned about the fate of the Zongming world that he found himself distracted during this critical battle.

As the xuluo warriors approached the Zongming world, they began to cheer. The moment the xuluo made it inside, they would easily take over the world—a newly evolved superior world didn't have the resources or manpower to stop them.

Just as they were about to break in, however, two humongous shadows rushed out of the Zongming world. One opened its maw wide and swallowed up a large number of the xuluo.

Its five-colored scales glimmered with light, like the most precious of gems. The horns on its forehead looked like a crown. It was the size of a small city, with a mouth to match. A halo of light shone above its head. Nine pairs of wings kept it aloft, forming strong winds that buffeted the xuluo. It stared at them with an air of disdainful arrogance. On its back was a luxurious palace, ornate and intricate.

The other disaster-grade lifeform was equally extravagant. The ring of light on its back shone as brightly as the sun. Its huge wings covered up the sky, and its lithe body exuded grace. Its sharp eyes looked as though they could pierce through the sun and stars.

As it flew, space seemed to ripple. Its rainbow-colored feathers gave off light in the seven colors of the dawn, and it left a rainbow trail behind it, so beautiful that any onlookers would be instantly attracted to it.

Atop the sunbird was a palace that didn't lose out to that carried by the five-colored dragon, with exquisite architecture and a stream of flowing water. It was a style that harmonized with nature, and the clouds and mist surrounding it made it look like a building of myth and legend.

The two disaster-grade lifeforms were none other than Zhang Lie's five-colored dragon and Li Zongming's sunbird.

As they noticed the explosions ringing out through the air and the danger their masters was in, they hurriedly flew toward the outer extremities of the world and arrived just in time to hold the xuluo back.

Li Zongming was so touched by their timely arrival that he felt as though he were about to cry.

With the two lifeforms stalling the xuluo, the Zongming world would be safe for a little more time. In that case, he could devote his full attention to the fight ahead.

While Fuzhang was still in shock at Zhang Lie's strength, Zhang Lie struck.

"[Fists of the Silent Sea: Fade]!" Zhang Lie punched forward, and the black serpent behind him shot forth.

Fuzhang came to his senses and struck forward with a pitch-black palm, which swiftly grew until it was thrice the size of his body.

Zhang Lie's black serpent nimbly darted through the cracks between the fingers.

Fuzhang sneered. His tail reached out and grabbed the serpent, but the moment it came into contact with the serpent's body, it began to sizzle. Fuzhang ignored the pain of contact, reached out with his other hand, grabbed the serpent's head, and sucked it into his palm.

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

The next moment, Zhang Lie vanished from sight and appeared behind Fuzhang, swiping down with his claws.

Fuzhang's tail curled back and defended against the claws. An explosion rang out in the depths of space. The snake-like tail twisted and bent under the impact. Fuzhang whirled around and struck with his palms.

Zhang Lie widened his eyes in shock. Fuzhang's palms were covered in pale-blue water-attuned genetic energy, with ripples erupting in front of them. A shark swam forth in a dense layer of genetic energy—an exact replica of the blow that Fuzhang had absorbed from Zhang Lie earlier...

Chapter 854: Fuzhang's Strength

Zhang Lie pulled away, and the black serpent appeared behind him again. Its thick body wrapped around Zhang Lie and corroded away the force of Fuzhang's replica of Zhang Lie's attack. Its scales turned a blood-red color and horns protruded from its forehead as it transformed into a bloody dragon.

"[Fists of the Silent Sea: Fade]!" As Zhang Lie punched forward, the bloody dragon tore apart the shark and shredded the pale-blue genetic energy with its signature corrosion.

"It's useless!" Fuzhang defended with his palm again, and the bloody dragon was sucked inside his pitch-black skin. Just when it was almost entirely absorbed, Zhang Lie suddenly smirked.

His plan had succeeded.

With a snap of his fingers, the bloody dragon self-destructed, releasing a force of annihilation right in the middle of Fuzhang's palm.

Fuzhang's eyes opened wide as pitch-black energy billowed from his palm. His palm was unable to handle the impact of the destruction. The unstable energies formed a black hole over it, which devoured half his arm.

Zhang Lie smiled coldly. "Your ability isn't to devour anything, but rather to reverse heaven's might."

Heaven's might turned cause into effect, skipping the process in between. Fuzhang's genius was to reverse-engineer this process and revert effect into cause instead.

Although it looked as though he were devouring Zhang Lie's attack, he was simply reforming the energy into its basal state, then temporarily holding that energy in—though to someone not in the know, it would look as though he had absorbed that attack.

The reason Fuzhang was able to replicate Zhang Lie's attack wasn't because he had absorbed the technique and released it, but because he had used heaven's might to turn cause into effect once more.

And once Zhang Lie understood the principles behind the attack, it was trivial to defend against it.

Zhang Lie waited until Fuzhang had begun activating heaven's might before he triggered the power of annihilation, causing an explosion that spread to even the part of the energy Fuzhang had converted. That had cost Fuzhang an arm.

"Let's end it here! [Fists of the Silent Sea: Hundred Dragons Soaring]!" Zhang Lie cocked back his left arm, channeling his genetic energy into the attack, and sent its full force at the golden roc.

Howling with the force of thunder, causing even space itself to tremble, the horde of dragons flew toward Fuzhang as one. The black dragons were fierce and domineering, and their trajectories crisscrossed in mid-air.

All hundred dragons boasted the power of annihilation, as though Zhang Lie had used [Fists of the Silent Sea: Fade] a hundred times in succession.

Fuzhang was incapable of stopping even a single bloody dragon, let alone a hundred. The battle had come to a close—or so Zhang Lie thought.

However, Fuzhang remained calm even in what seemed like insurmountable odds. His fist clenched tightly. A serpent wrapped around it and shot forth as he punched forward with heaven's might, causing them all to explode at once.

The power of annihilation mushroomed through space, forming eddies and vortices of energy that devoured everything in the vicinity—not just a black hole, but a strip of barren void.

Even Red Comet and Li Zongming, who were fighting in the distance, had to hurriedly avoid the spreading devastation. Man and beast alike felt cold sweat dotting their back—no one but Zhang Lie could have unleashed such devastation.

If Zhang Lie had used this in a large world, he would have destroyed at least a full third of it.

Qiantuo and Luohou emulated their opponents and fled from the roiling waves of black, but the ordinary xuluo had no such capabilities. They were unable to escape the black clouds of annihilation and were killed in an instant.

Fuzhang unclenched his pitch-black hand and absorbed the energy of annihilation.

Zhang Lie's face turned ugly. He had intended on using [Fists of the Silent Sea] as a finisher, but he had failed.

"To think heaven's might could be used in such fashion..."

Fuzhang had used the power of heaven's might not on Zhang Lie himself, but rather on the black dragons. He might not have been able to hurt Zhang Lie himself, but he could certainly damage Zhang Lie's dragons easily.

As a result, Fuzhang was easily able to destroy all hundred dragons with just one punch.

"Thank you for the energy," Fuzhang called out, smiling. "Now, it's time for some payback."

Fuzhang cocked his arm and punched forward. Pitch-black annihilation shot forth like a cannon beam. The hundred black dragons had been sacrificed for this one attack.

"Do you really think I'll be hurt by my own attack?" Zhang Lie scoffed. He unsheathed the blade Guicang, then sliced at the beam with a will that seemed to be able to divide heaven and earth.

Zhang Lie easily cut open a path through the attack; the beam rushed forward on either side of him. "This energy is only the aftermath of my attack. If you think you can repurpose this waste to kill me—you must be the biggest fool in the realm."

Fuzhang lifted a palm to block Zhang Lie's sword slash, but his heaven's might was ineffective against it. As the slash struck Fuzhang, it cut his palm in half.

"Master!" Noticing that his master was on the losing end of the battle, Luohou tried to rush over to help, but his momentary distraction gave Red Comet an opening to slice off one of his arms.

"For the glory of the xuluo!" Fuzhang's eyes burned with the blaze of death. Energy erupted from his body; his chest cracked. Fuzhang pounced toward Zhang Lie, intending to send both of them to their deaths—but Zhang Lie was faster.

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

He struck once more. An underworld river materialized in space, one so vast the entire world could see it. Everything turned cold—the temperature had dropped to sub-zero values, and a strong wind buffeted the battlefield. Blood-colored frost appeared around them all. As though the doors to hell had just been thrown open, tens of thousands of serpents rushed out in a flood.

Fuzhang's snakelike tail curled around him and activated heaven's might on the flood of serpents, which began to explode one by one, but they came in such great numbers that heaven's might was unable to stop them all.

In the end, Fuzhang was drowned under a flood of serpents...

Chapter 855: A Mysterious Power

The serpents consumed Fuzhang's body rapidly with their power of corrosion. Fuzhang tried to self-destruct, but found that any energy he gathered was immediately consumed by the serpents.

In the end, he died an ignoble death, consumed to the last by the serpents.

After Fuzhang was dealt with, Zhang Lie turned to the battlefields on either side of him.

Li Zongming was bolstered by the world's energy, and heaven's might was ineffective against him. He would be able to hold out for a while longer.

Red Comet, on the other hand, was suffering terribly. It had no means of countering heaven's might, and its gleaming carapace was now riddled with holes and scorch marks. A large patch had been visibly burnt, and the blood-colored genetic energy that surrounded its body rendered its natural healing abilities far less effective. One of its scythes had cracked and half its head was gone.

If Zhang Lie had been any later, Red Comet might have died.

Of course, its opponent wasn't faring much better. Luohou had started the battle with four arms and was down to two.

One had been cut off by Red Comet with incredible speed at the start of the battle, whereas the other was cut off while Luohou was distracted by Fuzhang's death.

Red Comet outshone Luohou in speed, but its battered body meant that Luohou's heaven's might would be able to kill it quickly.

Zhang Lie could hardly stand for this. Red Comet was an important case study for Zhang Lie's future ascension to lord-class, and he couldn't let it die now.

"[The Boundless Blade: the River Lethe]!" Zhang Lie lifted the blade in his hand high above his head as pitch-black energy exploded from him. He looked like a demon descending on the world.

Pitch-black genetic energy filled the battlefield. Even the xuluo had never seen genetic energy so vast and so concentrated.

His genetic energy roared as it took the form of a vast, angry sea. Waves charged forward, sounding like peals of thunder, like stampeding hooves. The surface of the sea frothed with angry waves, like dragons emerging with the tide. The entire sea roiled, and lightning crackled amidst the void. Countless serpents swam across the raging sea as lightning flashed ominously overhead, a scene right out of an apocalypse.

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

As he sensed the tremendous pressure bearing down on him, Luohou turned to see the waves, serpents, and black, roiling energy about to overwhelm him. His face turned pale as he crushed the suns and moons he held in his hands, transforming them into the energy with which he mustered a final defense.

The blood-colored sun exploded when it came in contact with the black sea, forming a blood-colored solar sword. Luohou infused heaven's might into it and swung down at the incoming waves.

Solar flares formed the blade of the sword. The flares seemed to extend indefinitely and, bolstered by heaven's might, divided the sea in two.

A beam of sword energy emerged from the parted sea. Zhang Lie, with Guicang in hand, flew over upon launching a strike. Luohou hurriedly defended himself with his blade.

Zhang Lie's presence here meant that Fuzhang had died.

The death of his master enraged Luohou and sent him into a frenzy. He was unable to suppress his anger. His right hand tore apart the bloody moon it held. Fragments of bloody rock formed a storm in the air.

Zhang Lie intoned, clenching his other fist tightly as blue genetic energy gathered around him. Ripples of genetic energy emanated from that arm. A fish the size of a whale materialized in the air.

"[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 toward Luohou.

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.

Zhang Lie's attack struck Luohou's lunar storm and caused so massive an explosion that both combatants were sent flying from the impact.

As the explosion continued, it began to radiate a destructive purple energy.

Luohou hadn't expected that Zhang Lie would use a wide-range attack against him. Doing so at such close distance was essentially a kamikaze attack that would bring them both down.

From the fragments of his crushed moon, Luohou manifested a blood-colored lunar scimitar, which blocked the aftermath of the explosion.

Even so, his body was in tatters. One of his eyes was pierced clean through by a lunar fragment, but losing one eye was no big loss for Luohou, who had four to begin with.

On the other side of the explosion, Zhang Lie's giant fish acted as a shield and nullified the effect of the explosion.

Red Comet, sensing an opportunity, struck forward in a beam of red-gold light.

Luohou summoned a shield around him, but Zhang Lie attacked at the same time. A layer of water-attuned genetic energy covered Guicang. Ripples of energy emanated from Zhang Lie as the giant fish merged with his body.

Zhang Lie and Red Comet launched a pincer-style attack at Luohou. Luohou was forced to block Zhang Lie's attack with the solar sword in his left hand and Red Comet's charge with the lunar scimitar in his right.

"I'll kill you both!" he gritted out.

As heaven's might linked the solar sword and lunar scimitar, Zhang Lie had a bad premonition. Thinking back to the skill that Fuzhang had displayed, he called out to Red Comet, "Retreat!"

Red Comet followed Zhang Lie's command instinctively, and Zhang Lie did the same.

"A pity..." Infused with Luohou's heaven's might, the solar sword pierced through Guicang, and the lunar scimitar through Red Comet's scythe.

If not for Zhang Lie's quick thinking and Red Comet's fast reflexes, that attack would have dealt a heavy wound to both parties.

Luohou slashed his sword in Zhang Lie's direction, causing the solar flames that made up the blade to extend and strike at Zhang Lie. Zhang Lie didn't attempt to block at all; he dodged instead.

Luohou called out, "You're aware of what I'm hiding, aren't you?"

Chapter 856: Against Luohou

As a regressor, Zhang Lie knew that there were two types of heaven's might. One involved 'cause and effect', and the other involved 'penetration'. This use of heaven's might could penetrate all defenses; in other words, it allowed its user to deal true damage.

Water-attuned genetic energy gathered on Zhang Lie's blade as a pale-blue shark emerged from behind Zhang Lie. Guicang shone with a pale-blue sheen, as though ocean currents were travelling along the blade. A waterfall cascaded out of its tip.

"[The Boundless Blade]!" Zhang Lie swung downwards with a heavy blow, and the shark swam forth.

"The only reason my master could have lost to you was because he hadn't recovered fully from his injuries. Take this—the strongest blow my master taught me!" Luohou's sword and scimitar released a blinding glow. The solar flare and moonlight illuminated the entire battlefield.

Luohou cross-slashed with the solar sword in his left hand and the lunar scimitar in his right.

Solar flares and moonlight shot out simultaneously. The power of sun and moon combined, condensing into celestial energy. To this potent combination, Luohou infused his heaven's might. Blood-colored radiance forced everyone to look away.

The combined attack instantly pierced through Zhang Lie's shark and evaporated the sea of genetic energy.

Zhang Lie wasn't surprised. Luohou's weapons weren't particularly amazing; it was all thanks to the unbelievable strength of heaven's might.

"[The Boundless Blade: Dragon's Wrath]!" Zhang Lie thrust forward with Guicang, summoning a blood dragon. The dragon's howl shook the air, but it too was pierced clean through by Luohou's attack.

Only the four great xuluo lords were able to command this extended power afforded to heaven's might, which represented an evolution toward true heavenly strength. Compared to 'cause and effect', 'penetration' was the simpler and cruder power, which only made it more devastatingly effective.

From a scientific perspective, the reason a steel sword could easily slice through a wooden sword was because steel was far denser than wood. One could order all materials in this fashion, but the ascended form of heaven's might allowed its user to rearrange this order at will.

Zhang Lie activated [Syzygy]. A burning black sun rose behind his back, and a bloody moon flared into existence at his feet. Under the combination of the two auras, Zhang Lie seemed to have transformed into a god. His aura was magnified tenfold, and a halo of black sun appeared above his forehead. Natural law seemed to warp around him.

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

As the domains of black sun and blood moon manifested around Zhang Lie, Luohou found his own energy being sapped away. Luohou didn't panic—instead, he almost wanted to laugh.

"Haha, just what do you think you're doing? Are you a professional clown?"

The xuluo that had gathered behind Luohou all began to laugh.

"Victory has been decided. The moment Lord Luohou's attacks land, the battle will be over."

"In the end, they're just a newly evolved world. They might have put up a bit of a fight in the beginning, but they were going to lose to us xuluo sooner or later."

"Once Lord Luohou finishes dealing with this opponent, he'll be able to turn to the king of the realm fending off Lord Qiantuo's advance. It's a pity about Lord Fuzhang's sacrifice, but all this was necessary."

Luohou couldn't help but taunt Zhang Lie, "No matter how many times you augment your strength, it's all useless. The ascended power of heaven's might isn't something you can hope to overcome so easily."

Zhang Lie's sword resonated as he intoned, "[First Form: Parting the River]!"

Gleaming light honed the edge of Zhang Lie's sword, and a beam of sword energy rose into the air. Waves of sword aura poured from Zhang Lie.

The bright sword energy radiated from Zhang Lie like brilliant rays of sunlight. As Zhang Lie swung his sword, they shot toward Luohou, who was about to laugh out loud when he found himself at a loss for words.

The sword energy didn't diminish as it struck his celestial blades the way he had assumed it would—no, what happened shocked Luohou immensely. The sword energy was so strong it bisected his celestial energy, and Luohou's attack shot harmlessly past either side of Zhang Lie.

Zhang Lie stood still, as though Luohou's attack had never appeared.

Luohou's eyes bulged. "Impossible, impossible! How could you have defeated heaven's might—no one in the three thousand worlds could do so!"

"Who knows? Heaven's might is a strong power, almost invincible in its own right—but not so the wielder."

A steel sword might be able to slice through a wooden sword, but not a tree. If Zhang Lie's attack was dense and thick enough, even heaven's might would be ineffective against him.

"You dare claim that I'm weak? You'll pay a heavy price for this, human!" Luohou roared. The solar sword in his hand began to burn brightly. Enraged almost to the point of losing his rationality, Luohou was just about to strike when Red Comet suddenly launched a sneak attack.

"You bastard!" Luohou hastily slashed in Red Comet's direction with his sword, imbued with heaven's might, and cut off one of Red Comet's wings. At the same time, Zhang Lie struck again.

"[Shadow and Light]!" Time suddenly sped up in the vicinity of Zhang Lie, and the tip of his blade arrived right by Luohou's nose in the blink of an eye.

Luohou's eyes widened. In the face of death, at the very last moment, he reacted just quickly enough to turn his head and survive the attack with half his face scraped off.

Zhang Lie allowed his momentum to propel him forward even as Luohou's sword and scimitar burst with bloody flame. He tore apart the flame with Guicang, revolved, and unsheathed Hanguang. The two swords criss-crossed and formed a web in mid-air—but an explosion from Luohou's swords tore it apart.

The two swords clashed against each other hundreds, thousands of times.

Zhang Lie's arms moved so rapidly that the xuluo, watching from afar, could only see a blur. With rapid slashes and strikes, Zhang Lie was slowly but surely chipping away at Luohou's celestial energy...

Chapter 857: A Massive Fight

Luohou spun faster and faster, turning himself into a hurricane. He imbued his surroundings with solar flame and lunar moonlight, causing the hurricane to spin toward Zhang Lie like a celestial drill—forcing Zhang Lie back and deterring him from his attacks.

"[Blade of the Heavens: the Sea Swells]!" Energy poured out of Zhang Lie in waves, honing the edge of his blade. The pulses of energy struck the sea like a tsunami, devouring everything within.

The stronger attack enveloped Luohou in an instant. Luohou's heaven's might was immensely strong, but Zhang Lie's [Blade of the Heavens: the Sea Swells] was on a different level entirely. Luohou's blades were crushed into powder by the force of the waves that Zhang Lie summoned, and Luohou himself spat out mouthfuls of blood from the impact.

He howled and transformed himself into a blade, infusing his own body with the ability to penetrate anything. With the threat of death hanging over his head, Luohou unlocked his true potential.

He burned more fiercely than his shattered solar sword, because his fuel was his own lifeforce. He had a keener edge than his shattered solar sword, because looking death in the eye had triggered the full power of heaven's might.

In that one instant, Luohou only had one thought on his mind: to become a blade so sharp that he could even pierce Zhang Lie.

Tens of thousands of years, hundreds of thousands of years of experience...

When Luohou traded all that for a single-minded vision, even an ancient superior king would avoid this attack—but not his opponent, because his opponent was Zhang Lie!

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

The twin blades Guicang and Hanguang emitted a fearsome aura, shining as brightly as the sun and moon. Sword energy materialized from Zhang Lie's blades into a blood dragon that revolved around his body. Hanguang's light coalesced into a black dragon that likewise curled up around him.

The blade Hanguang morphed into a black dragon, and the blade Guicang into a blood dragon. The two dragons, coiling together as one, shot out toward Luohou like a hurricane, carrying the waves of Zhang Lie's spiritual sea with them.

The strength of Zhang Lie's blades tore Luohou apart in an instant.

Luohou's death caused the remaining xuluo to panic.

Just who was this monster? How could a newly evolved superior world have a man like this, someone who could kill two great lords of the xuluo one after another? There were only a handful of such people even in established worlds!

For instance, the former commander-in-chief of the xuluo army, Fuzhang, was considered the strongest xuluo after the king himself for surviving a single blow from the king of the death spirits. Even Fuzhang couldn't claim to defeat two great xuluo lords simultaneously—and Fuzhang was one of the four great lords, with even the enhanced version of heaven's might!

Even so, these great lords that had once seemed invincible to the xuluo had been killed by a man who came from a newly evolved world, who wasn't even the king of the realm.

Just who was this man?

The xuluo had invaded countless newly evolved worlds and were veterans of all sorts of battles. This was the first time they had lost so severely, and the first time they had seen an existence who wasn't the king of the realm but was stronger than one.

They had encountered aliens from the Milky Way before, but they weren't particularly familiar with them. After all, most lifeforms from the Milky Way didn't know much about superior worlds, considering they were so weak. Even the premier warlords of the third realm wouldn't be able to handle a few blows from a xuluo lord.

Most of them were passersby who left the moment they collected enough superior gene fragments, without staying and partaking in the endless warfare among the three thousand worlds.

Before the knowledge of disaster gene fragments spread widely across the Milky Way, the hunters of the Milky Way had been uniformly rather weak.

Zhang Lie's appearance heralded the start of a new period, a renaissance for the hunters of the Milky Way. All the superior worlds would soon remember the name of one race in particular: the humans.

Though the xuluo were frightened by Zhang Lie's martial prowess, that didn't mean they had lost their wits completely. If nothing else, they were experienced fighters after so many invasions. Although their current situation was dire, they understood what they had to do.

"Don't be frightened. We still have one surviving xuluo lord. This fellow must have exhausted all his resources to kill the first two—Lord Qiantuo is almost finished with his battle against the king of the realm. Subsequently, while he handles this man, we'll charge into the superior world and claim it for ourselves!"

The xuluo knew that, as long as they could invade the Zongming world, they would be able to use it as a bargaining chip.

The five-colored dragon and Li Zongming's sunbird were guarding the Zongming world from the xuluo, but there were only two of them and far too many xuluo to count.

Though they were disaster-grade lifeforms, and strong ones at that, their defensive abilities were limited. There were a small group of xuluo that made it past the two lifeforms and into the Zongming world, but Zhang Lie didn't have the time to deal with them now.

After successfully killing Luohou, Zhang Lie rushed to Red Comet's side and checked on its wounds. It was badly wounded, but not in critical condition.

Indeed, after that grueling battle, Red Comet's body was starting to fill with energy once again—the reward for having survived it being the potential it had unlocked from the experience. Once Red Comet's wounds recovered, its strength would likely show marked improvement.

Zhang Lie turned to Li Zongming's battlefield.

Li Zongming was in poor shape, with wounds marring his body and blood leaking out of his orifices. If Zhang Lie didn't go help him now, this newly minted superior king of the realm would be struck down within moments.

Zhang Lie swung his sword again, summoning a huge black serpent. Water-attuned genetic energy gushed forward like violent waves. The serpent wrapped around Zhang Lie's arm and was infused into his next attack.

"[The Boundless Blade: the River Lethe]!" An underworld river materialized in the sky, one so vast the entire world could see it. Everything turned cold. The xuluo breathed out puffs of white air as a strong wind buffeted the battlefield. Blood-colored frost appeared around them all.

As though the doors to hell had just been thrown open, tens of thousands of serpents rushed out in a flood. Zhang Lie swung Guicang in an arc, teleporting through space and striking the last great lord of the xuluo...

Chapter 858: Counter-Invasion of the Xuluo

Qiantuo, sensing a threat from afar, opened his mouth to howl. The force of lightning imbued the sound waves he emitted. Heaven's might clashed against Zhang Lie's underworld river in a series of stunning explosions that sent genetic energy flying in all directions.

Even a single drop that struck the xuluo would cause them to decompose rapidly amidst a series of frenzied screams.

Qiantuo's face grew alarmed. Only now did he realize that, while he was fighting off Li Zongming, Zhang Lie had slain two of the great xuluo lords. Knowing that he wasn't as strong as Fuzhang or Luohou, Qiantuo would have immediately retreated if he could—but Zhang Lie would hardly allow that.

"[The Boundless Blade: the River Lethe]!" Zhang Lie lifted the blade in his hand high above his head as pitch-black energy exploded from him. He looked like a demon descending on the world. Black genetic energy filled the battlefield. Even the xuluo had never seen genetic energy so vast and so concentrated—a veritable sea of genetic energy, roaring in rage.

Waves charged forward across its surface, sounding like peals of thunder, like stampeding hooves.

The entire sea roiled, and lightning crackled amidst the void. Countless serpents swam across the raging sea as lightning flashed ominously overhead, a scene right out of an apocalypse.

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

Qiantuo roared once more, imbuing heaven's might into his voice. His sound waves and lightning formed a coherent attack that struck the surface of Zhang Lie's sea and caused the serpents swimming underneath its surface to explode into black genetic energy. As the energy seeped deeper into the sea, more and more serpents were generated.

Zhang Lie had revised his [Fists of the Silent Sea] as a result of inspiration from Sun Mengmeng's technique. For [The Boundless Blade: the River Lethe], he had taken inspiration from Yang Ze.

Yang Ze had surrounded the battlefield in mist, then conjured packs of sharks that would roam the mist.

Zhang Lie was a mentor and friend to the members of Team Zenith, and they all learned and improved from each other. The members of Team Zenith treated Zhang Lie as an example to emulate, while Zhang Lie refined his techniques with the help of Team Zenith.

Zhang Lie had incorporated Yang Ze's sharks and mist into his [The Boundless Blade], so that the serpents that swam within the sea could be reconstituted by the sea after being destroyed.

As long as the sea remained, more and more serpents would spawn—the boundless sea was the font of life, which gave birth to an endless stream of creatures.

Even Qiantuo's lightning-infused attacks were unable to counter the sea's might. The sea swallowed up Qiantuo, devouring him with corrosive genetic energy. The serpents within the sea gathered around him and bit at his body, causing Qiantuo to shriek and struggle as he tried to free himself in vain.

Qiantuo's body was very large, but Zhang Lie's [The Boundless Blade], at full power, could cover up a third of a superior world.

Qiantuo's body was slowly devoured by the serpents, leaving only his bones behind—but even so, with Qiantuo's tremendous vitality and strength, he somehow remained alive. That didn't, however, mean that he had survived.

"Sleep forevermore! [The Boundless Blade: Requiem of the End]!" Zhang Lie thrust the blade into Qiantuo's skeleton. A small black hurricane of genetic energy seeped within the cut, and blades of shining light erupted all over Qiantuo's bones.

The bones cracked and dissipated into powder as the remnant genetic energy exploded.

The xuluo stared at the scene in shock as the final xuluo lord was defeated. Their last hope had been extinguished; Qiantuo too had fallen to Zhang Lie.

None of the four great lords of the xuluo were a match for Zhang Lie—but before the xuluo could think about what to do next, Zhang Lie struck at them.

"[The Boundless Blade: Dragon's Wrath]!" Zhang Lie thrust forward with Guicang, summoning a blood dragon. A dragon's roar shook heaven and earth. The blood dragon's figure overshadowed a huge swathe of the xuluo.

Zhang Lie slashed forward with Guicang. "[Blade of the Heavens: the Sea Swells]!"

Energy poured out of Zhang Lie in waves, honing the edge of his blade. The pulses of energy struck the sea like a tsunami, devouring everything within. The pitch-black sword slash grew larger as it headed toward the xuluo, slicing them all apart in one fell swoop.

The battlefield filled with silence.

Li Zongming hobbled over. "Zhang Lie, th-thank goodness you were here!"

Zhang Lie smiled. "Can you open a wormhole to the xuluo world?"

Li Zongming nodded. "Now that I've familiarized myself a little with the power of a superior king, I can. What's more, that arrogant bastard from the xuluo world opened a wormhole right by my doorstep. I can easily reverse the manipulation.

"As long as the Zongming world remains a superior world, the xuluo world will never give up on their invasion—we have no choice but to fight. Rather than have them come to our doorstep, we may as well go to theirs."

Thirty million xuluo had died, as well as all four of the great xuluo lords. The only defense the xuluo world boasted was its king.

"The king must be lonely without his subordinates—I'll go pay him a visit and send him to the underworld myself," Zhang Lie replied, sheathing Guicang and Hanguang.

Li Zongming smiled wryly. "Do you need my help?"

"No. You'd better deal with the xuluo that got past the two disaster-grade lifeforms and have invaded the world. Don't let them hurt Qianlin—leave the counterattack on the xuluo world to me."

Upon being reminded of the dregs of the xuluo still remaining in the Zongming world, Li Zongming's face turned ugly. "I'll leave the xuluo world to you, then. Don't force yourself to keep going if you can't—you have to come back alive."

Zhang Lie laughed. "Take good care of Qianlin. If she's missing even a finger, I'll raze the Zongling world to the ground myself."

Li Zongming rolled his eyes. "Who do you think I am? Would her father allow Li Qianlin to come to any harm?"

Chapter 859: Entering the Xuluo World

"Ah, help me bring Red Comet back as well!" Zhang Lie handed the badly wounded Red Comet to Li Zongming.

Li Zongming condensed the energy of the world over himself and infused it into Red Comet's body in a flash of rainbow light. Although it was somewhat of a waste to use the world's energy for simple healing, this was treatment that Red Comet deserved.

If not for Red Comet, he, Li Zongming, wouldn't have been able to survive his fight against the xuluo lords. If Red Comet hadn't fought off Luohou, Luohou and Fuzhang would have attacked Zhang Lie simultaneously. Even if they couldn't kill Zhang Lie, they would have slowed him down enough that Li Zongming would be in danger of dying to Qiantuo. He was a recently ascended superior king, and he didn't have the reserves to fend off a great xuluo lord for extended periods of time.

Li Zongming continued to infuse the world's energy into Red Comet's body. "This fifth-level beast has contributed greatly to the survival of the Zongming world, and I won't let anything happen to it! The sacrifice of its body and life will be repaid multiple times over, this I swear."

Red Comet hadn't done so in order to protect the Zongming world—rather, it was just listening to Zhang Lie's orders.

As the six-colored rainbow light spread throughout its body, Red Comet's wounds healed and began to glow in rainbow light. After absorbing the world's energy from Li Zongming, and after having survived a fight to the death, Red Comet's strength would increase by leaps and bounds, and he might even reach a new threshold of being.

Zhang Lie instructed, "Open the wormhole. I'll head off immediately."

Li Zongming waved his hand with a frown of concentration. The wormhole from which the xuluo had emerged slowly began to open up, revealing the blood-colored heaven and sea of the xuluo world.

Zhang Lie stepped forth on his campaign.

Back in the xuluo world, Vemacitrin was grousing at Feitian. "Forefather, what are you doing? I'm accomplishing the task you assigned me—picking out thirty million xuluo warriors among the population! This is a massive undertaking, and I need time to carry it out."

Vemacitrin was in the middle of his selection when Feitian suddenly summoned him back for an audience.

Feitian slowly announced, "I have some bad news. Fuzhang and the others are dead."

"What?!"

Vemacitrin thought he had to have misheard.

Feitian repeated, "The xuluo forces were killed to the last before they were able to invade the world!"

Vemacitrin's eyes grew wide. "That's impossible! Fuzhang and the others are all xuluo lords, and Fuzhang himself was from the first generation of lords! Even the king of the death spirits was unable to kill him, so how could he have perished in a nameless world?"

Feitian replied, "This is the truth, unbelievable as it may be. I cannot sense Fuzhang or the other two any longer."

Vemacitrin suggested, "They might have encountered some accident or entered a special territory that could block your senses. At any rate, I won't believe that an invasion force consisting of three xuluo lords and thirty million xuluo could be wiped out by a newly evolved superior world!"

After all, this was the largest invasion force they had sent out in years.

Feitian continued, "The power I left on the xuluo lords' bodies allowed me to sense their conditions to some extent. I am certain that they've all been killed."

Vemacitrin couldn't help but ask, "Forefather, if you could sense their conditions, why didn't you save them?"

"Far easier said than done."

By the time Feitian sensed that the three xuluo lords were in danger, it was already too late.

"The most important thing to do now is to make sure that we xuluo can survive the upcoming crisis."

Vemacitrin snorted. "You think the opponent will be so daring as to invade the xuluo world? They're just asking to die!"

Feitian frowned. "Do not underestimate our opponent's ignorance and foolishness, nor their strength. For three xuluo lords to be slain one after the other—this is a foe we have to pay attention to."

Vemacitrin frowned. "Forefather, aren't you a little too worried? I'd rather that they invade the xuluo world more quickly so I can kill them all."

Vemacitrin's perspective was very different from Feitian's.

The xuluo world belonged to the xuluo, and they had reserves of energy that had been steadily collected over millennia. Any invaders would swiftly die.

Vemacitrin continued, "I'll take this opportunity to avenge the other three lords."

Rationally, Feitian knew that no lifeform would be able to do any damage to the xuluo world while he, Feitian, remained in power.

Even so, Feitian felt a budding sense of unease. He didn't believe in a sixth sense or the like, but the pinnacle of heaven's might allowed him to sense the connections of fate that lay between objects.

In some sense, Feitian could predict the world's future. What he saw wasn't an unknown opponent, but rather the karmic retribution that was about to befall the xuluo world.

In order to strengthen their homeworld, the xuluo had attacked any newly evolved superior worlds in their vicinity and slaughtered huge quantities of life. The number of casualties under the xuluo invasions would fill up a superior world and more—and would eventually result in a karmic backlash as a tribulation to the xuluo.

Feitian could sense that their enemies were drawing near.

Vemacitrin suggested, "Forefather, if you're so worried, why not dispatch my brother? If I'm working with him, I'm sure we'll be able to deal with this enemy easily—even if he's managed to kill three xuluo lords in succession!"

Feitian mulled the suggestion over.

Vemacitrin whined, "Forefather, my brother's been trapped for long enough!"

"I'm worried that if I release your brother, it'll incite a larger disaster."

Vemacitrin asked, "Forefather, in that case, may I ask how long you intend to trap my brother underground? For eternity?"

"I'm unable to control him, and I don't know what sort of disaster he would unleash as a result."

Vemacitrin sighed. "In that case, I'll start preparing for battle, then."

After a long pause, Feitian finally said, "If the enemies are too difficult to handle, I'll consider releasing Potian."

Zhang Lie passed through the long, winding wormhole before finally arriving at the xuluo world, with a blood-colored sky and a blood-colored sea. The air carried the stench of blood, and a palace made of bone was visible near the horizon. This was the first time that Zhang Lie had been to the xuluo world; or, more accurately, the first time he had had the opportunity to go to one.

Even so, Zhang Lie didn't feel at all pleased or interested by the idea. Instead, he felt visceral disgust. The moment he entered the xuluo world, the wormhole behind him was sealed shut. From the sea of blood beneath him, he sensed a burgeoning killing intent...

Chapter 860: The Final Xuluo Lord

A nine-headed spider with thousands of eyes on every head emerged from the bloody sea. Nine hundred and ninety-nine hands grew out of various parts of its body like fur or hair. Its nine heads sprayed out purplish-black flames.

Zhang Lie raised an eyebrow. Clenching his fists tightly, he gathered blue genetic energy around him. Ripples of genetic energy emanated from his arms. A frightening aura descended on the world. The skies began to darken, and a fish the size of a whale materialized in the air.

Howling gales shook the air around him. The surface of the sea raged, and the purplish-black flames that Vemacitrin exhaled were sent flying by the gales of wind that Zhang Lie conjured. As more and more genetic energy gathered around Zhang Lie's arms, it looked as though he were at the heart of a whirlpool.

"[Fists of the Silent Sea: Soar]!" A huge wave soared into the air. As Zhang Lie punched forward, the fish slammed its huge tail on the ground and sent a torrent of water surging into the air.

Ripples of energy spread out from Zhang Lie, warping the space around him. The towering waves looked like enraged black dragons, and they swamped the nine-headed spider.

The spider's heads tilted in shock. Zhang Lie's attack had snuffed out the flames that it produced. Its eight legs flung waves of the bloody seawater into the sky, clashing against Zhang Lie's pale-blue genetic sea.

Zhang Lie's energy easily won out. As the pale-blue genetic energy overwhelmed the spider's defenses, the nine-headed spider leapt high into the air.

Underneath it, the pale-blue genetic energy exploded upon coming into contact with the bloody sea. The pale-blue genetic energy rampaged like a storm, causing the bloody seawater to swirl up into the air and strike the nine-headed spider.

The spider's sneak attack had failed miserably. Not only had it not managed to hurt Zhang Lie, it even lost three of its legs to Zhang Lie's counterattack. Even so, the nine-headed spider didn't seem

to mind. "You must be the fellow who killed Fuzhang, Luohou, and Qiantuo—and Pozhi as well, I suppose."

"Looks like the xuluo predicted I would be coming..." Zhang Lie wasn't too surprised. If the xuluo couldn't even sense enemy presence in their own world, they would have no right to call themselves inhabitants of a superior world.

The nine-headed spider continued, "Let me introduce myself. I'm Vematricin, last of the four great xuluo lords, prince of the xuluo. We've been waiting for you."

Battalions of xuluo warriors surrounded Zhang Lie.

Zhang Lie didn't speak. Instead, a tidal wave of water-attuned genetic energy appeared behind him. A violent shark appeared from behind Zhang Lie's body as the energy circled around his body and condensed by his index finger.

Vematricin's thousands of eyes gleamed. "Today will be the day of your death."

"I have no intention to be a guest to the xuluo," Zhang Lie replied mildly. The shark swelled as it merged with Zhang Lie's body.

"[The Boundless Blade]!" Zhang Lie swung his sword, and a wave of water-attuned genetic energy spread out all around him.

While Zhang Lie and Vematricin were deep in battle, Feitian found himself at a mountain range deep within the sea of blood. Feitian reached out with a hand and prodded at the mountain, which began to crack. The cracks propagated at an extremely fast rate, and the entire mountain began to collapse. Huge boulders fell and tumbled down the mountain, causing seawater to surge forth.

A localized whirlpool formed at the scene, and a centipede's head poked out of the eye of the whirlpool. The centipede looked around until it saw Feitian. Curiously, it asked, "Father, what are you doing? I was having a good sleep. Why did you wake me up?"

The centipede who had poked its head out of the eye of the whirlpool was none other than Feitian's first son, Potian.

Feitian informed him, "A strong foe has come to the xuluo world."

Potian replied in exasperation, "So what? I was having such a nice nap!"

"As you know, I'm quite skilled with heaven's might. I can see that this person brings with him the karmic retribution for the xuluo's indiscriminate slaughter of so many newly evolved superior worlds."

"And then?"

Potian didn't seem as though he wanted to do anything about it. His relationship with his father was rather poor, and he lived a relatively indolent life.

If not for Feitian waking him up and trying to pester him to fight, Potian might have been interested in the intruder who had dared to step into the xuluo world, but now that Feitian had come over himself to seek his assistance, Potian was far less happy about the idea of doing so.

He wasn't Feitian's tool, after all; wasn't it embarrassing for him to make a move just because his father wanted him to?

Feitian continued, "Vemacitrin is in battle now, and I don't expect he'll be able to survive."

"Oh, that fellow?" Potian murmured, without any intention of helping out.

Vemacitrin worshiped Potian, but Potian didn't necessarily like him back—at best, he tolerated Vemacitrin's presence. After all, Potian and Vemacitrin shared the same lineage.

"If you slay the invader, I'll free you from captivity."

"And why do I need freedom? I was doing fine sleeping all day. Wouldn't you agree?"

Potian continued, "If there's nothing else, scram! Don't bother me any further."

Feitian sighed. "I know that you're upset at me because I've been suppressing your strength, but your natural affinity for heaven's might is simply too strong. If I don't do it, the entire xuluo world would be destroyed!"

"This is something that happened so long ago that I don't care about it any longer. Just leave!" Potian couldn't be bothered to deal with Feitian and slowly slunk back into the whirlpool.

Feitian felt a headache pounding. His son, who had once claimed that he would rule over the third realm, had lost all that motivation after being chained down for ten thousand years.

Perhaps he had been too harsh.

Feitian continued, "If you don't stop that fellow, you won't have a place to sleep any longer."

Potian frowned. "That would be troublesome indeed, but there are three thousand worlds in this realm. I can find somewhere else."

"You—you really do hold a grudge against me, don't you? Your brother's about to die! What will it take to get you to fend off the invaders?"

"Can't you do it yourself, Father?"

"I have my own plans!"

"Then carry them out—goodnight!" Potian slunk back into the blood-colored whirlpool.

"Half of the world's energy from the new superior world—I'll give it to you!" Feitian shouted.

Potian turned back around. "Ninety percent."

"Sixty percent, at most."

"Eighty percent, and the freedom to choose which eighty percent I want."

"Deal!"

"Haha, haha!" Frightening laughter came from within the whirlpool of blood, as though thousands of people were simultaneously laughing.

"Father, you should have opened the negotiation with these terms. I wouldn't have had to waste time on this charade in that case."

The whirlpool of blood burst apart, turning into a red mist. A long, segmented body rushed out of the whirlpool. The centipede was composed of thousands of segments, each of which had a human face embedded in it. On either side of each segment were human-like hands and legs.

Feitian was exasperated by the behavior of his eldest son. "Just who does he take after, I wonder..."

Meanwhile, Zhang Lie's battle with Vemacitrin was growing more and more heated.

Zhang Lie's shark burst apart into a horde of smaller pale-blue sharks that spread out over the sea, sweeping away the xuluo that had prepared an ambush for Zhang Lie.

They tore apart the xuluo as Vemacitrin barely defended against Zhang Lie's blows. As more and more sharks manifested in the sea, Vemacitrin found itself hard-pressed to handle the horde of sharks with its five remaining legs.

Its nine heads frowned as over eighty percent of the xuluo strike force was defeated at once. The remaining were being chased by Zhang Lie's sharks and forced to scatter.

Although they were all fighters from a superior world, and elites at that, they seemed weak and pathetic in front of Zhang Lie.

Zhang Lie laughed coldly. "Is this the famed might of the xuluo?"

"You!" Vemacitrin's nine heads spat out purplish-black flame, condensed to an extreme.

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

Zhang Lie sneered. "You think these flames can hurt me? You really are overconfident! [Fists of the Silent Sea: Fade]!"

Zhang Lie punched forward, and the black serpent behind him shot forth. Its skin sizzled as it came in contact with Vemacitrin's flames, but the black serpent was able to survive the flames intact with the power of its corrosion.

Vemacitrin imbued heaven's might into its flames, sliced the serpent apart, and rushed toward Zhang Lie.

Zhang Lie's body glowed as he transformed into a russet dragonwolf, his aura instantly magnifying. As a blood-colored storm formed over the battlefield, Zhang Lie vanished and reappeared near-instantly behind Vemacitrin.

Black flame appeared in mid-air and flew toward Zhang Lie like heat-seeking missiles, but Zhang Lie ignored them all. He swung his sword, causing green blood to spurt out from Vemacitrin's body. Its nine heads howled as the flames flared around Zhang Lie, but he snuffed out the flames with nothing more than a few slashes of Guicang as Vemacitrin watched in disbelief.

How could heaven's might be ineffective against Zhang Lie? Vemacitrin quickly realized how the three xuluo lords had fallen against Zhang Lie—their opponent was completely immune to heaven's might.

The black serpent coiled around Zhang Lie. Its scales turned a blood-red color and horns protruded from its forehead as it transformed into a bloody dragon.

"[Fists of the Silent Sea: Fade]!" It charged along with Zhang Lie's fist, roaring in rage as it flew toward a stunned Vemacitrin...