

## **U. Warlord 991**

Chapter 991: Believe in Yourself

"We won't move. If we do, you'll disrupt our formation!"

Zhang Hanxiang's face was as cold as sleet. "Scram."

Using the whirling violet lasers and the black spirits all around them as an excuse, the aliens refused to make way for the draconian forces. "There are purple lasers all around us, and black spirits that haven't been dealt with! How do you expect us to make space for you now?"

The flashing purple lasers meant that no one wanted to fight with the black spirits at the moment. Both sides were cutting their losses; the only ones still fighting without care or regard for their lives were the gray monstrosities. They alone were sufficient to deal with the remaining black spirits; indeed, they even had the upper hand.

As such, the reason the aliens refused to move boiled down to their displeasure with the draconian forces' actions—they wanted to hinder what they thought were a bunch of cowards and weaklings.

If they refused to budge from their formations, the draconian forces would have a hard time retreating. It wasn't impossible, but their speed was greatly reduced.

Hong Xi was once again reminded of what Zhang Lie had warned her—beware of your allies, who could well be more dangerous than your purported enemies. These "allies" of theirs could very well be sending the draconian forces to their death.

However, there were a few other aliens willing to listen. One scaleman called out, "There are purple lasers all over! How are we supposed to retreat?"

Hong Xi replied, "Avoid their trajectories as much as possible."

Zhang Hanxiang added, "It doesn't matter if we get struck by the smaller lasers. We just have to avoid the biggest, thickest one, from the death spirit flagship."

"I understand!"

To Zhang Hanxiang and Hong Xi's surprise, there were finally aliens willing to listen to them. The forces of the Zongming world followed their command.

There were many aliens from the Zongming world, and their combined numbers allowed the draconian forces to move more freely. With so many aliens moving at once, the other superior worlds' forces didn't dare to hold them back any longer.

Even so, they cried out, "What are you doing? You need to believe in his highness Nightdemon!"

"Believe in his highness Nightdemon! If he were to find out that all of you were causing chaos in our formation while he's trying to block the attack, he'd be very upset!"

"His highness Nightdemon saved us all during the spatial storm. I'm sure he'll be able to deal with this crisis too!"

"Yes, he must have an ace up his sleeve!"

The aliens tried to stop the commotion, not with their bodies, but with their words.

"Are you certain?" The scalmen pointed at the Shining Trapezohedron in the sky. "It's already been forced back quite some distance."

The intensity of the purple laser was forcing the Shining Trapezohedron back, bit by bit.

The scalmen cried out, "I do believe in his highness Nightdemon, but I trust Hong Xi more! When the spatial storm erupted, she was the first to react and to propose a solution. If not for her timely and accurate judgment, we'd have lost another third of our forces."

The scalmen were willing to believe Hong Xi not just because Zhang Lie had warned them to be careful of their allies, but also because of her prudent judgment and track record.

Another alien from the Zongming world called out, "Look at the forces that Hong Xi commands! She lost the fewest forces when the spatial storm erupted."

The other aliens put too much blind faith in Nightdemon.

"His highness Nightdemon surely has a way out of this mess!"

"He definitely knows what he's doing. We just have to listen to him!"

"His highness Nightdemon is the clone of the king of chaos, the strongest king! He slew a death spirit on the level of a superior king in the past. There's no way he'd be pushed back by the death spirits' weapons! We have to believe in him!"

These aliens were immediately forced to confront the truth of their beliefs.

The death spirits' flagship, having dealt with Zhang Lie's sharks, flew straight at Nightdemon, who was unable to react because of his intense focus on the Shining Trapezohedron.

The aliens all inhaled in shock.

Wilbow sent a battleship flying, while the frost spirit commander held another one back. Gold Comet emerged in a beam of golden light, zipping around and distracting a third battleship.

"[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.

The remaining two battleships flew toward Nightdemon as the aliens began to panic.

Nightdemon, who had to devote his entire attention to the Shining Trapezohedron, was completely unprotected. Any blow that the two battleships dealt him might be lethal—and that blow would strike at the very heart of the allied forces.

Zhang Lie shot forward with his black serpent. "[Fists of the Silent Sea: Fade]!"

Zhang Lie punched forward, and the black serpent behind him shot forth. The black serpent wrapped around the two battleships and halted their motion as the aliens wiped the sweat off their forehead.

"I told you, there won't be a problem!"

"His highness Nightdemon isn't the only one fighting out there—the other commanders have joined in! Nothing bad will happen."

"Even if you doubt Nightdemon's strength, you shouldn't doubt the other commanders as well."

The aliens tried to persuade the draconian world's forces, only to find that they had already evacuated quite some distance away.

"Just what are all of you doing? Look, we're all fine!"

"Believe in your own commander, at least!"

"These cowards—what's there to fear?!"

The retreating forces spared no thought for the aliens they left behind. They certainly did believe in Nightdemon's strength, but not to such an extent that they would bet their lives on it.

They didn't intend to rely on blind faith and laziness—they'd fight for their own lives themselves.

There were quite a few aliens who were wondering whether or not to flee with Hong Xi and her forces.

"These fellows have upended our entire formation!" some aliens began to grumble. "If they can't even trust their own commander, who will they trust?"

#### Chapter 992: The Heaviest Price

The other aliens found it shockingly difficult to understand that Hong Xi and Zhang Hanxiang were acting in this fashion precisely because they trusted Zhang Lie.

Zhang Lie had emphasized to Hong Xi to trust her own judgment, rather than to be led by the nose by the other superior worlds' forces, and Hong Xi had kept Zhang Lie's advice in mind.

On the other hand, the stubborn aliens continued to be entrenched in their position.

"These fellows—they're completely unwilling to listen to us! Look at the state of our battle lines!"

In truth, the formation of the forces had already been disrupted by the barrage of purple lasers even before Hong Xi's departure.

Zhang Lie and the other commanders' actions bought Nightdemon a bit of time, but in the end, he was unable to hold out any longer. The Shining Trapezohedron was forced back.

The ground quaked and split open. The coffin-carrier, who had been pressed into the ground, clambered out of it. The black, skeletal arm from within the coffin snatched at the purple laser.

Black energy wafted from the bone in a continuous stream. Struck by the laser, the bone seemed to transform, as though it were about to come back to life. It was surrounded by black energy that formed muscles around the bone.

The arm of black energy grabbed a hold of the purple pillar of light as space shattered around it. A storm of black and purple emerged from the void, and the aliens were forced to shield their eyes from the blinding light.

The black energy fought against the purple light, stabilizing the Shining Trapezohedron.

The aliens watching the scene all cheered.

"Our commanders are amazing!"

"Those rascals—with our commanders around, there's nothing we need to fear!"

"I told you all, didn't I? They're blind, useless commanders!"

Upon seeing the coffin-carrier block the purple laser, the aliens all cheered, as though victory were within sight.

"What do those women know about commanding an army? Who appointed them to that position? They must be crazy!"

"Unblockable? Our commanders have just blocked the attack!"

"Once the violet laser runs out of energy, it'll be our turn to counter-attack!"

The purple light was so intense that the bone forming the black arm began to crack—it boasted so much energy that it was beyond the level of a superior king to handle. As the black energy dissipated and the cracks propagated through the bone, the black skeleton seemed to be on the verge of falling apart.

Nightdemon turned his head and commanded, "Run! Disperse!"

Th-This wasn't going as planned! The aliens' cheers suddenly halted. They could tell that something was amiss, too.

"Shouldn't we start running?"

"We should trust in our commanders... Start running!"

However, the skeleton crumbled more quickly than expected. By the time the aliens reacted, it was already too late.

The violet light washed over the coffin-carrier, whose resistance to the light was finite. It could shrug off the lasers from the ordinary death spirit battleships, but this thick pillar of light, with tens of thousands of times more energy, was completely different.

The upper half of its body was evaporated by the light. After losing the support of the skeleton, the Shining Trapezohedron was also on the verge of giving out. Nightdemon was unable to give the aliens more time to react; the Shining Trapezohedron was sent flying by the intensity of the light.

The solar corps and the frost spirits joined hands, combining a solar storm and icy blizzard, golden light and silver snow—but against the violet light, it was all meaningless. Their resistance succumbed in the blink of an eye.

Zhang Lie, Nightdemon, and the other commanders were already starting to flee when the aliens finally came to their senses. This was proof that no one could hold the violet light back.

Zhang Lie noticed approvingly that the Zongming and draconian worlds' forces had already retreated. He didn't care about the aliens from these other worlds—as warriors, they had to be prepared to die.

The violet light washed over the battlefield, and the aliens were unable to do anything to stop it.

Compared to the violet light, which could shatter even space, the aliens were powerless weaklings.

Only then, moments before their death, did they realize how foolish it was to hand their lives over to even someone as strong as Nightdemon. They finally understood Hong Xi's words, but their understanding had come too late.

If only they had reacted five minutes earlier! But instead, they had clung steadfastly and stubbornly to their conservative opinions and instead mocked Hong Xi for her actions.

In the end, they paid the heaviest price they could—their lives.

The void shook as the annihilating violet laser struck the battlefield, shattering the ground. Even boulders were vaporized by the beam, let alone the aliens within.

A huge crater was left in the ground, so deep and wide a mountain could be inverted into it. Within the crater, remnant purple light flashed and glimmered. Not all of it had dissipated into the air.

Fortunately, the Zongming and draconian forces had already retreated far away from the battlefield, and they were unaffected by the devastation. Everyone turned toward Hong Xi and Zhang Hanxiang in gratitude.

If not for their command, they would all have perished amidst the violet laser's destruction. Hong Xi and Zhang Hanxiang had saved them all.

Hong Xi couldn't help but recall Zhang Lie's advice. If not for her steadfast belief in Zhang Lie, Hong Xi wouldn't have insisted on following her own judgment—and if Hong Xi had saved the aliens, then Zhang Lie had saved Hong Xi.

Despite her close shave, Hong Xi wasn't elated at all. The situation didn't look promising. Most of the aliens, stubborn as they were, had perished where they stood. At least half the forces had fallen, and many were heavily injured. Only about a fifth were still in fighting condition, most of whom included the Zongming and draconian worlds' forces.

The coffin-carrier and gray monstrosities of the unclean world had been destroyed by the violet light, leaving behind only Zhang Lie, Nightdemon, the skiving Wilbow, and the weak frost spirit commander.

Their impending victory had quickly turned into an impending loss—the only consolation was that Zhang Lie was present, and he could very well turn the tides of the battle.

After shooting out the violet laser, the flagship grew dim, as though the laser had taken all the resources it possessed. Evidently, the intensity of the light, which even Nightdemon couldn't block, wasn't an attack that could be used at will.

Nightdemon shuddered. "The death spirits might not have a second fighter on the level of a superior king, but their weaponry is off the charts. We can't underestimate them." He peered at the remaining forces, only to find that the Zongming and draconian worlds' forces had survived almost intact. "Looks like you have a good subordinate!"

Chapter 993: Don't Be Lazy

Nightdemon didn't particularly care about the losses suffered by the allied forces, even if some night growlers died as well. No wars were bloodless, and the world of primordial chaos had stockpiled far more than enough resources than could be depleted by this confrontation alone.

"They're just flexible thinkers," Zhang Lie replied modestly, though he was smiling.

Wilbow asked, "The death spirits' weapons are far stronger than expected. Do either of you have a plan for dealing with them?"

"As far as I'm aware, whatever engine the death spirits are using must surely be overheating after producing a laser of such high intensity." Zhang Lie's eyes brightened. He very much wanted to claim the flagship for himself and carefully study its inner workings.

Nightdemon rolled his eyes. "Speak in English, please!"

Zhang Lie explained, "In other words, because it expended too much energy, it has to charge up more energy before it can function normally again. Under these circumstances, it won't be able to react as swiftly, and its attacks won't be as strong."

"You seem to understand this the best out of anyone present, so I'll leave it to you!" Wilbow patted Zhang Lie's shoulder.

"You just want to be lazy again!"

Wilbow pointed at the battleships surrounding the flagship. Someone has to deal with those battleships, surely?"

Nightdemon replied, "I was responsible for shielding against the violet laser, and I don't have much more strength left. I'll have to rely on you guys—though I can help clean up some of these black pyramids first."

"There's no time to waste!" Wilbow called out. "The death spirits' flagship is about to recover!"

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.

"Then I'll leave dealing with the battleships all around to you guys," Zhang Lie said.

Wilbow glanced around him at the numerous death spirit battleships. "This isn't an easy task..."

Zhang Lie rolled his eyes. "If it were easy, I'd do it myself!"

"We'll take responsibility for this," the frost spirit commander promised.

Zhang Lie glanced at Wilbow. Look how much more diligent the frost spirit commander is! Zhang Lie really couldn't understand Wilbow, who had been sent as a commander for the war against the death spirits, but who repeatedly tried to do as little work as he could on the battlefield.

Wilbow pretended not to notice Zhang Lie's glance.

Zhang Lie stepped forward, a blood-colored wind surrounding his body. "Furthermore, protect the remainder of the allied forces. When I fight against the flagship, I won't have any attention to spare for those around me. If the allied forces get in the way, our losses will increase even further."

Wilbow shrugged. "We've already suffered tremendous losses, haven't we?"

Nightdemon added, "The remaining allied forces are largely from the Zongming world—we might as well call them Zongming forces by now."

"Details, details! If you care too much about these fine details, you'll go bald. There are still aliens from your respective superior worlds and surrounding domains, aren't there?"

Nightdemon shrugged. "I can manifest illusions. There's no way I'd go bald." Nightdemon could make others see him in any form he wanted. "Even when I transform into a bat, I don't have to worry about going bald."

Wilbow touched his head. "And I have fur on my head, not hair."

At any rate, given their strength, they would easily be able to regrow their hair even if it were to fall out.

Zhang Lie grumbled, "As commanders, surely none of you would want to win a war but return with all your troops dead?"

Wilbow nodded. "That does make sense... I don't mind, but my father wouldn't be happy if I were to do so."

Of course, the king of keys didn't really mind either. To the superior kings, everyone else was akin to ants.

Nightdemon nodded. "Protecting these forces won't be an issue."

Wilbow slumped. "It just means that we'll have more work."

"Don't worry, I have a helper for you. Gold Comet, work with Nightdemon and the others to deal with the death spirits' battleships while I handle the flagship."

Nightdemon and Wilbow glanced at Gold Comet. Indeed, this was an acceptable arrangement. Gold Comet was about as strong as a superior king itself, and their workload could indeed be reduced by a fair portion—certainly more than it would take to protect the allied forces, largely from the Zongming world.

As a blood-colored whirlwind formed, Zhang Lie morphed into a beam of red light and flew toward the death spirit flagship, clawing apart any obstacles in his way.

The death spirit flagship was surrounded with black energy and a flurry of bandages. Zhang Lie swiped at those bandages, but more spawned from the heart of the flagship.

A black serpent manifested 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]!" As Zhang Lie punched forward, the blood dragon roared in outrage and shot forward.

The black bandages wrapped the blood dragon up, intending to tear it apart, but this was part of Zhang Lie's trap. Zhang Lie's attack wasn't the blood dragon itself, but rather the energy of annihilation that made it up.

At that moment, the blood dragon burst apart. A wave of annihilation exploded around the dragon. Pitch-black energy swallowed everything in the vicinity like a storm at sea, covering up the sky.

By the time the death spirits realized their mistake, it was already too late. The explosion was like a black hole that sucked up everything in sight. Boulders and the death spirits' battleships were sucked into the black hole, along with the remnant black spirits on the battlefield.

Nightdemon sighed. "That fellow..."

Nightdemon and Wilbow were forced to defend the allied forces against the aftermath of Zhang Lie's attack.

Even the death spirit flagship was sucked into the black hole.

From within the black hole came a burst of purple energy, producing a glow so bright everyone could see it. As the black hole shrunk, a purple laser emerged from it, encapsulating the death spirit flagship at its center.

Right as the flagship escaped, the black hole vanished, leaving a vacuum behind. A storm manifested as the air itself cavitated. A hemispherical hole was left behind on the battlefield, as though a bomb with a few megatons of energy had just been detonated.

## Chapter 994: Push Him to His Limits

Zhang Lie was shocked that the death spirit flagship had managed to survive the black hole.

Given his current strength, his [Fists of the Silent Sea: Fade] should be beyond the level of a superior king's skill, which meant that the flagship was able to defend even against such attacks. Even so, the flagship had paid a heavy price. Its exterior, once polished to a glossy finish, was now pockmarked and worn.

"[Fists of the Silent Sea: Hundred Dragons Soaring]!" A horde of over a hundred black dragons launched out of Zhang Lie's left arm as he expended half his genetic energy in one supercharged attack.

Howling with the force of thunder, the hundred dragons soared through the air. They were fierce and domineering, and all hundred of them boasted the power of annihilation.

Black bandages spooled out of the death spirit flagship, attempting to stop the dragons but to no avail. There were too many dragons, and they were able to tear apart the bandages as they drew closer to the flagship.

Suddenly, the flagship transformed. Purple lines appeared over the surface of the flagship as the octahedral structure unfolded. In the blink of an eye, it became a mecha.

Zhang Lie stumbled back in shock. "This battleship can transform?!"

A purple core was inlaid in the center of the mecha's chest, and six sharp pairs of wings unfolded behind its back. Its head was flared like that of a cobra, and two triangles on each arm like shields.

Zhang Lie was shocked beyond words that the death spirits' technology had developed to this extent.

If the death spirit king were allowed to continue his research, the technology of the third realm would soon catch up to that in the Milky Way.

The black bandages wrapped around the mecha and formed its outer layer of armor. It threw a punch and caused a black dragon to explode. However, the black dragon was formed from the energy of annihilation. As it burst apart, it spawned a chain reaction, and the black dragons all exploded at once.

Upon witnessing this sight, the death spirit mecha instantly grew fearful after having suffered so miserably from the first such explosion. It immediately tried to retreat, but it was too slow. The mecha was sucked into the explosion against his will.

When it finally emerged once more, its shiny body had become dull and sooty, and its core was dim. It extended an arm and shot out a beam of violet light, which was easily blocked by the blade Guicang that Zhang Lie raised.

The mecha's core burned as violet light poured out of it. The sizzling of the flames sounded like a soul's shrill scream. In order to defeat Zhang Lie, the mecha was burning the equivalent of its lifeforce—initiating a meltdown, as it were.

Its shield-like arms locked together. The black bandages unwrapped themselves from its body as the mecha rushed forward, rotating quickly like a spinning top, an electric saw. Violet light surrounded it.

Zhang Lie raised the blade in his hand high into the air, encircled by black genetic energy. The temperature of the battlefield dropped to sub-zero values, and a strong wind buffeted all combatants present. Blood-colored frost appeared around them all.

"[The Boundless Blade: the River Lethe]!" An underworld river materialized in the sky, one so vast the entire world could see it. As though the doors to hell had just been thrown open, tens of thousands of serpents rushed out in a flood.

As Zhang Lie swung his sword in an arc, the underworld river surged toward the mecha. The serpents exploded as the violet light struck them, but there were countless such serpents. The revolving mecha charged up the river against the current, destroying all serpents that came into contact with it.

Zhang Lie responded to the attack calmly. Before the mecha struck him, he leapt high into the air and slashed down with Guicang from above. The moment the sword came into contact with the mecha, violet sparks flashed as black bandages exploded from the mecha, sending Zhang Lie flying into the void.

The mecha faced Zhang Lie as its violet core whirred. Energy condensed around its hands as a violet pillar of light, one much like the one that the flagship had initially shot out.

Pitch-black energy exploded from Zhang Lie, as though a demon were descending on the world. "[The Boundless Blade: the River Lethe]!"

As the energy covered up the void, even Nightdemon and Wilbow grew shocked.

Nightdemon chuckled. "To think even what he'd shown us before wasn't his full strength..."

Zhang Lie had depths deeper than the abyss. Who knew what his limits were? Perhaps only his original body could push him enough to figure that out.

Zhang Lie's 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.

A tremendous amount of pressure bore down on the mecha—a black sea formed of genetic energy and filled with serpents.

The pillar of violet light shot into the pitch-black sea, causing all the serpents in its path to explode. Black genetic energy roiled as it vaporized, but more energy manifested to fill its place.

In the end, the mecha gave out first. It roared in outrage as it overclocked its engine. Cracks appeared over its core. The violet light, as intense as a hurricane, clashed against the sea once more.

It felt as though there were tens of thousands of malignant spirits screaming, as though they were struggling against the serpents of the underworld river.

The confrontation between Zhang Lie and the death spirit mecha played out in the void, with a layer of black energy above and violet light below.

The shockwaves resulting from the confrontation tore apart the surrounding space, causing large numbers of the nearby battleships to explode...

#### Chapter 995: World of Black Rain

If not for Nightdemon and Wilbow's assistance in shielding the allied forces, they would have been obliterated in an instant.

The dead worlds all around the shattered battlefield were struck by errant shockwaves from the attack. Without the protection afforded by the will of the world, they crumbled to dust.

The confrontation between Zhang Lie and the mecha would have been far more difficult if the mecha were in perfect condition, but it had already consumed far too much power after shooting out a high-intensity laser for so long. Subsequently, Zhang Lie's sneak attacks had given the mecha no time to recover from its energy consumption.

The cracks in the mecha's heart began to propagate. The violet storm lost its impetus, and it was struck down by the sea of black energy that Zhang Lie had manifested.

The black genetic energy burst, destroying and annihilating everything.

Within the center of the explosion was a bead of purple light, just like a firefly shining brightly in the night sky. It flew out of the sea of energy, straight at Zhang Lie.

The projectile turned out to be the mecha, missing half its body and all four limbs. Only a small fraction of its core still remained, but it was glowing brightly.

"Die!" The mecha's voice invoked malice and wrath. As it approached, the fluctuations in energy around it went through the roof.

Zhang Lie quickly realized what the mecha was trying to do—to self-destruct and bring Zhang Lie down along with it. Of course, Zhang Lie wasn't about to give the mecha such an opportunity.

"[The Boundless Blade: Dragon's Wrath]!" Zhang Lie thrust forward with Guicang, summoning a blood dragon. The dragon's roar shook heaven and earth. Zhang Lie's sword pierced through the mecha's body as violet light rained down the sky—and exploded.

As it did so, a pale white sword slash flashed amidst the void.

"[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, thousands of meters high.

The bright sword energy radiated from Zhang Lie like brilliant rays of sunlight. As Zhang Lie slashed down, the sword energy fell, splitting apart the violet energy and forcing it back.

The explosion of violet energy was so intense that it took long moments to settle. As the explosion receded, Zhang Lie let out a breath of relief. Nightdemon and Wilbow had defended the allied forces against the worst of the impact.

The death spirit battleships had all perished in the aftermath of the explosion. Seeing that the battle was over, the Zongming forces cheered.

Zhang Lie slowly descended to the ground, whereupon Zhang Hanxiang rushed up and embraced him. "Brother, you're amazing!"

Hong Xi gave him a thumbs up. "Master, I idolize you!"

The frost spirit commander asked, "We're finally done now, aren't we?"

Wilbow nodded. "We paid a high price, but we secured a victory."

After just two battles, there were only about a fifth of the allied forces remaining. The coffin-carrier of the world of black rain had sacrificed itself, and all the monstrosities of the unclean world had perished.

Only the Zongming world's forces were relatively intact. The remaining commanders were Zhang Lie, Wilbow, Nightdemon, and the frost spirit commander. Although they had won, it was a Pyrrhic victory.

The frost spirit commander frowned. "The death spirit king's trump card—his flagship—exploded, but where's the death spirit king? He never appeared, even at the end."

Nightdemon asked, "Why did you think that the death spirit king would appear?"

The frost spirit commander replied, "I thought he would be within his flagship..."

Zhang Lie walked over. "When did you get that mistaken impression?"

The frost spirit commander looked around. "Didn't you all think that?"

Zhang Lie shrugged. "I thought so at first, but I understood what was going on after I fought with the mecha."

Nightdemon replied, "I thought so as well. After all, there was a huge amount of energy stored in that flagship. After the initial laser burst, however, I still couldn't sense any living matter in the ship, let alone the death spirit king."

The frost spirit commander asked, "In that case, where is he? Why isn't he participating in such an important battle?"

This was the perfect opportunity for getting rid of the allied forces.

Wilbow shrugged. "Who can say? Only the death spirit king knows what he's doing."

"Where else could he be but the frontlines...?" Zhang Lie looked out into the void.

Suddenly, Nightdemon stilled. "I know where the death spirit king is now."

Everyone turned toward him. How had Nightdemon known? He was right in front of them, and he hadn't exchanged any communication with anyone. When did he learn of this information?

Nightdemon continued, "I have clones around most of the superior worlds, and one clone has just transmitted some information to me."

Wilbow replied in shock, "Hold on, you have clones around most of the superior worlds?"

"Has the king of chaos been surveilling all the superior worlds?" Zhang Lie asked.

The frost spirit commander grew visibly alarmed. "It's possible that the king of chaos has been doing this all along. Who knows how many subordinates he has, and how many of them are on the level of superior kings...?"

Nightdemon cut them short. "That's not the point! Ignore these details. My clone near the world of black rain has important information for us."

Wilbow nodded. "So the king of chaos does have clones situated around all the superior worlds..."

Nightdemon ignored Wilbow and continued, "The death spirit king has appeared near the world of black rain."

Zhang Lie was even more surprised. "He's attacking, then?"

The frost spirit commander said urgently, "We have to rush there now. If the death spirit king were to destroy another superior world..."

"We have to set off immediately."

There was no time to relax or recuperate. Nightdemon's urgent information meant that the allied forces immediately rushed off toward the world of black rain through the void.

Upon seeing the pitch-black world, Zhang Lie murmured, "Are we too late?"

Nightdemon replied, "No, this is just what the world of black rain looks like."

Corrosive black rain fell from the skies, making the troops uncomfortable and forcing them to shield themselves with their own strength.

The ground was filled with graveyards and bones. The smoking hulls of battleships were scattered across the ground, each bathed in purple flame. The entire world seemed on the verge of collapse, both earth and sky alike...

#### Chapter 996: The Death Spirit King At Last

The world of black rain was now little more than a smoking husk.

The moment they stepped within the domain of the world, Zhang Lie, Nightdemon, and the others could immediately sense a frightening energy, as though there were a huge black hole in front of them that was devouring everything in sight. It was a similar sensation as when Zhang Lie looked at the king of keys directly.

Zhang Lie couldn't help breaking out in a cold sweat. "Is that the death spirit king?"

Nightdemon nodded. "That's right."

"We'd better rush over. Perhaps the decaying king might still be saved..." Wilbow replied.

No one thought that the decaying king would be a match for the death spirit king—the two kings were too different in terms of power.

Zhang Lie, Nightdemon, and the others could sense that the world's energy was currently being stripped away. The world itself wailed. Auroras appeared in the sky, along with scars of blood.

Nightdemon said, "If we follow the trail of the world's energy, we should be able to find the death spirit king.

The superior world was so large that, without anything to guide their way, it might have taken a year or more to find the death spirit king.

By the time the forces arrived, they found two flagships attacking a pitch-black tree. It was large and skeletal, without a single leaf on it. The thick trunk and branches looked like demonic claws. The branches were clawing at the battleships, and the trunk was embedded with wailing human faces, as though it fed upon dead spirits.

The tree was so large that it belied the imagination. In front of it, even Zhang Lie and Nightdemon seemed like grains of sand. The trunk was so thick that it would take a hundred men holding hands to circle it.

Zhang Lie had some impression of this tree, which seemed much like a Japanese pagoda tree.

The gigantic tree's branches were clashing against the two death spirit flagships' black bandages. Smaller battleships wove around the tree, cutting off whatever branches they could find.

The tree was pitted, pockmarked, and dripping sap. The two flagships simultaneously shot out two thick lasers of violet light, obliterating the branches and striking directly at the heart of the tree. The tree screamed shrilly, a cacophony of moans and wails which echoed through the skies and struck at the soul. The allied forces immediately clutched their heads in pain.

In the end, the gigantic tree was no match for the death spirits' weaponry, and it fell to the two flagships' combined attack.

On the ground remained only a stump burning with purple flame.

Wilbow asked, "Where's the decaying king? He can't be dead, can he?"

Nightdemon replied, "If he were dead, a rain of blood would pour from the skies. There's only black rain at the moment, not blood rain—the decaying king must still be alive."

"Could that be him?" Zhang Lie pointed in front of him,

at the mass of black substance on the ground, half-dead and pinned there by nine huge pillars. Above the black mass was a figure in a black throne above it, a colossal figure as large as a mountain, draped in black robes, seated in an ornate black throne that floated in the sky, with a gold mask on his face.

His head was like that of a cobra, and beneath his robes were a mess of black bandages. Though he did nothing, his aura alone represented a tremendous pressure for the gathered crowd.

The superior world's energy gathered around the throne, fed to the king by his black bandages, which stripped the energy from the will of the world. He would wring the will of the world dry of its energy, then devour it whole.

Zhang Lie's face turned serious. "That must be the death spirit king, then."

Nightdemon's face was likewise serious. For the duration of the entire war, he had kept up a relaxed expression—until now. "That is the death spirit king. Compared to the last war, he's grown far stronger."

The last war that Nightdemon was talking about was when the superior worlds first banded together to barricade the death spirits away.

Zhang Lie smirked. "Do you regret not having killed the death spirit king back then?"

Nightdemon shrugged. "It doesn't make a difference to me, but I suppose that the decaying king, nailed down over there, is certainly regretting his inaction."

Wilbow was somewhat more curious. "How much stronger is the death spirit king now compared to then?"

This was the opponent they would be facing next, and Wilbow was certainly interested in knowing the death spirit king's strength.

Nightdemon sighed. "At least three times, maybe even ten."

Wilbow sucked in a deep breath. "Even back then, all the superior kings had to act together to seal the death spirit king away. What can we commanders do against such an existence?"

Nightdemon shrugged. "Back then, the death spirit king had yet to develop such frightening weaponry."

In truth, if the death spirit king had had such weaponry in his arsenal back then, the war against the death spirits might have gone very differently.

Wilbow suggested, "I think we need to consider whether or not we should retreat. We only have three people here at the level of a superior king."

Nightdemon smiled. "Isn't Zhang Lie here?"

Zhang Lie waved.

Nightdemon patted Zhang Lie's shoulder. "He counts for nine, I think."

Zhang Lie shrugged. "I'm fine staying. I'd like to see what it's like to clash with a peak existence in the third realm, but will the two of you be able to handle the two flagships?"

It had taken essentially their combined might to deal with the first flagship they had encountered, but there were two here—and they both had ample reservoirs of energy.

The stump of the Japanese pagoda tree, which had stubbornly remained alive, had burrowed into the ground to escape from the flagships. Neither the flagships nor the death spirit king gave chase, because an opponent they had to prioritize had appeared.

The death spirit king glanced toward them, his eyes as deep as the abyss, swallowing up all light. "You're here, primordial chaos?"

Nightdemon bowed. "I hope you may address this clone by his name. I'm Nightdemon."

The death spirit king asked, "Did you enjoy the welcoming ceremony I prepared for you?"

Nightdemon splayed his arms. "It was alright, not too boring. I hope you'll be more diligent in the future."

The conversation seemed like one between two friends, not two enemies.

The death spirit king was garbed in an ornate robe, his face held high. As he took off his gold mask, he revealed the appearance of a god of darkness, a fallen angel. "I know how useless that blood lord is, but I didn't expect the flagship to prove futile against you as well. As expected of you!"

#### Chapter 997: Chaos and Death

In that case, had the death spirit king organized the previous crises just for Nightdemon?

The death spirit king's voice was emotionless. "Do you think you'll be able to stop me this time?"

Nightdemon shook his head. "Your opponent this time isn't me, but rather this man by my side."

The death spirit king frowned. "Are you looking down on me?"

Nightdemon shook his head. "No. It's precisely because I know how strong you are that I'm not facing you. This clone is no match for you—I'll need my original form to take you down. Also, please address me as Nightdemon."

The death spirit king peered at Zhang Lie. "You rate his skills that highly?"

Nightdemon smiled mysteriously. "He's stronger than you can imagine."

The death spirit king frowned as Zhang Lie shrugged. "I'm fine dealing with the death spirit king. Can the two of you handle the flagships?"

Only after coming into contact with the superior worlds did Zhang Lie realize that the pinnacle of the third realm went beyond the level of a mere superior king.

Being at the level of a superior king was merely a threshold. The truly strong existences in the third realm went beyond that, and Zhang Lie was only aware of three such existences: the death spirit king, the king of keys, and the king of chaos.

Wilbow sighed. "It's a bit difficult. It took essentially our combined might to deal with the first flagship, and these two flagships here have ample reserves of energy."

"If you include me, it shouldn't be a problem to deal with the two flagships."

A thin, emaciated man, whose body was ink-black, suddenly appeared in sight.

Even his clothes were the same shade of black, as though he were darkness personified. The moment he appeared, the entire world grew dim. Only his eyes stood out. They shone with a mysterious gleam, like a pair of lustrous cat's eyes in the darkness.

The man who had appeared out of nowhere shocked Zhang Lie and Wilbow. It felt almost as though he had been there all along, though he had gone unnoticed by Zhang Lie and Wilbow until now.

Zhang Lie and Wilbow were immediately wary of the strange existence. Given their strength, it was almost impossible for anyone to creep up on them, so who could this ink-black man be?

Nightdemon waved a hand. "There's no need to worry. This is another clone of the king of chaos, a companion of ours."

"I am your companion," the ink-black man asserted, revealing pearly white teeth and a smile that wasn't particularly friendly.

Nightdemon reminded them, "Do you remember when I said that I had a clone around each superior world?"

Wilbow nodded. "I remember: you're spying on us all, aren't you?"

"This is the clone that was situated around the world of black rain," Nightdemon explained.

Zhang Lie nodded. "As long as he's no enemy."

As the two flagships flew over, Nightdemon and Wilbow rushed forward to stop them. Zhang Lie turned and commanded, "Gold Comet, help Nightdemon and Wilbow!"

The flagships released a huge flood of black spirits, which surged toward them like the tide. Hong Xi and Zhang Hanxiang supported the two commanders from behind as Zhang Lie flew beyond the flagships. He clenched his fists tightly as blue genetic energy gathered around him. Ripples of genetic energy emanated from his arms.

With a twist of his wrist, a frightening aura descended on the world. The skies began to darken, and a fish the size of a whale materialized in the air. A howling gale swept over the battlefield. 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 toward the sky.

Ripples of energy spread out from Zhang Lie, warping the space around him. The towering waves looked like enraged black dragons, flooding the battlefield.

The death spirit king spread his arms wide, manipulating the energy of the superior world to form a barrier against the flood.

A huge rumble shook the heavens, and the entire battlefield quaked. The explosion shattered space and sent waves of force rippling all around it.

The rain clouds in the sky burst, one after another. The explosion of energy was like a ravenous beast that swallowed up all life in its vicinity. Huge boulders were sent flying, and large quantities of the death spirits with them.

The pale blue waves dissipated to reveal the death spirit king still seated coolly on his throne. The sleeve of his ornate robes had been torn off, but the death spirit king wasn't angry. Instead, he was smiling. "Interesting, very interesting. To think that there was an existence like you in the third realm... If I hadn't started this war, I'd never have known."

"[The Boundless Blade: Yawning Wave]!" Zhang Lie extended his pointer finger like a sword, and water-attuned genetic energy gathered around it. As he waved his finger, sword energy erupted like a wave, accompanied by a giant shark.

Sword energy flew toward the death spirit king, who tried to defend with a flurry of black bandages. However, the sword energy cut them all apart.

The superior world's energy that had condensed into a near-solid form over the death spirit king's body activated. He reached out and grabbed the sword energy with his bare hands as a ferocious shark flew toward him. With his other hand, the death spirit king punched the shark and caused it to dematerialize in an explosion of pale blue energy.

He tossed the sword energy back at Zhang Lie, who dodged the attack as black genetic energy surged around him.

"[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.

Dense superior world's energy gathered over the death spirit king's palms. Under his control, the energy grew corrupted and developed the power of annihilation.

The radiant, multicolored energy turned a dull grayish-black. Space crumbled around the death spirit king. He shot the ball of energy forward, destroying all space in its trajectory.

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

The black serpent, which had been able to corrode anything Zhang Lie sent it at, was incapable of handling the corrupted superior world's energy. It was crushed in an instant, obliterated by the might of the death spirit king.

Zhang Lie activated his blood ant and dragonwolf soulshards. A hurricane of blood spawned around him.

The next moment, Zhang Lie vanished from the spot. He dodged the energy of annihilation and appeared behind the death spirit king's back.

The imprint of bloody claws filled the sky. A flurry of claws rained down on the death spirit king, who countered with bandages in equal density. From start to finish, the death spirit king had his back to Zhang Lie...

Chapter 998: I Underestimated You

The death spirit king murmured, "Primordial chaos, is this the fighter you were so eager to show me? He doesn't seem very strong at all."

Nightdemon had already brought out the Shining Trapezohedron as he tried to counter one of the flagships. He smiled and called back, "You're in too much of a rush! Just wait for the surprise!"

"[Fists of the Silent Sea: Fade]!" As Zhang Lie punched forward, the blood dragon roared in outrage and shot forward.

Zhang Lie shot back the moment he launched his attack.

The blood dragon tore apart the death spirit king's black bandages as he sneered, "Is that all you've got?"

The death spirit king punched at the dragon, a layer of superior world's energy having solidified around his fists, and burst its head open with one punch.

The next moment, the frightening energy that lay dormant within the blood dragon's body surged out.

A wave of annihilation exploded around the dragon, shredding the black bandages. Pitch-black energy swallowed everything in the vicinity like a storm at sea, causing the death spirit king's throne to explode and covering up the sky.

The explosion was like a black hole that consumed everything in sight—boulders and bones, the black rain and the graveyards that filled the ground. The death spirit king himself was sucked into the explosion.

This was the first time that the death spirit king panicked and lost his composure in the battle. At the instant of the explosion, the death spirit king realized that he had underestimated Zhang Lie.

Zhang Lie's energy of annihilation was far stronger than he had anticipated. The death spirit king tried to block it with another barrier of superior world's energy, only to find that Zhang Lie's energy had the unusual attribute of being able to devour the superior world's energy and convert it into more energy of annihilation. The more he tried to resist, the stronger the energy would become.

"What an interesting strength. In that case, let's see who among the two of us is stronger!" The death spirit king corrupted the superior world's energy and countered with his own version of annihilation.

Zhang Lie's energy was of higher quality, but the death spirit king had more of his energy to spare. In the end, the death spirit king was able to forcibly dispel the attack.

The death spirit king praised, "What a pity that I didn't know of you sooner. If I had known that this realm possessed such strength, I would have studied it carefully. It would have given me another trump card up my sleeve."

"I know you," Zhang Lie replied, stunning the death spirit king for a few moments. He was certain that he would never have forgotten such a strong and interesting fighter. "You simply don't know me," Zhang Lie finished.

"It looks like you're still able to fight, aren't you?" The death spirit king sneered.

"Your death is predestined." Both in my last life, and in this one.

The death spirit king sneered again. "Zhang Lie, is it? A confident fellow. You're strong enough to make me remember your name."

"Unfortunately, you won't be able to remember it for long!" Black genetic energy burst forth from Zhang Lie, as though there were hundreds, thousands of dragons surging throughout his body. "[Fists of the Silent Sea: Hundred Dragons Soaring]!"

A horde of over a hundred black dragons launched out of Zhang Lie's left arm as he expended half his genetic energy in one supercharged attack.

Howling with the force of thunder, the hundred dragons soared through the air. They were fierce and domineering, and all hundred of them boasted the power of annihilation.

"Ignorant fool! Only the primordial chaos is my match in the third realm. You might have some semblance of strength, but it's nothing impressive. Let me show you why all the superior worlds fear me."

Violet flames flared up around the death spirit king. The flames gradually turned multicolored, like a superior world's energy.

Zhang Lie had previously thought that the death spirit king was burning up his own soul, but he was instead burning fragments of wills of the world. Although these wills operated like computer programs, they still needed to be managed by administrators or moderators of some sort. The kings of the realm served as these administrators.

Despite this restriction, the wills of the world's soul fragments were of a far higher quality than ordinary lifeforms. The wills of the three thousand worlds were, in some sense or another, soul fragments of the third realm.

The death spirit king was burning up one of these fragments and deriving strength from it. The quality of the souls captured therein was directly correlated with the boon in strength he would receive—and the soul fragments of the realm were potent indeed.

Black smoke swirled around the death spirit king. As he reached out, it curled up around his arm. Zhang Lie could keenly sense that this black smoke was the corrupted energy of annihilation that the death spirit king had already produced multiple times.

Zhang Lie finally understood how the death spirit king had developed this technique—it had to have been through experimentation with these soul fragments.

With his body protected by the spiritual flames of the realm, and with a source of annihilation at his disposal, the death spirit king was in a near-invulnerable state.

The death spirit king sent a flurry of punches toward Zhang Lie, destroying the black dragons that he had summoned. Energy of annihilation was produced whenever a dragon exploded, but the death spirit king was able to counter it with his own energy and the spiritual flames burning around him.

The multicolored flame condensed into an armor that shielded him from attacks as he charged forward against the horde of dragons, striding toward Zhang Lie slowly but inevitably.

Rather than run, Zhang Lie stepped forward. He brandished Guicang as he dashed toward the death spirit king.

Each of the death spirit king's punches was imbued with annihilation, as was Zhang Lie's sword. Sword and fist clashed with each other in mid-air, gleaming brightly in the darkness. A storm of annihilation spawned around the two combatants as the dark clouds in the sky were torn apart. The ground, already having cracked, was smashed into powder.

Within the multicolored flaming armor, Zhang Lie could see the crying, keening faces of endless wills of the world. The death spirit king's strength shook space and distorted natural law.

Zhang Lie raised the blade in his hand high into the air, encircled by black genetic energy. The temperature of the battlefield dropped to sub-zero values, and a strong wind buffeted all combatants present. Blood-colored frost appeared around them all.

"[The Boundless Blade: the River Lethe]!" An underworld river materialized in the sky. As though the doors to hell had just been thrown open, tens of thousands of serpents rushed out in a flood.

Multicolored flame flared and black smoke swirled as the death spirit king destroyed thousands of such serpents in one fell swoop.

The smoke launched forward like a spear, but Zhang Lie evaded the attack. The next moment, as the smoke exploded, pitch-black energy swirled around Zhang Lie as though a devil were descending on the world...

#### Chapter 999: Self-Sealed

"[The Boundless Blade: the River Lethe]!" Pitch-black energy immediately spread outward and suppressed the exploding smoke. The huge sea of genetic energy covered up the skies of the world of black rain, the dark clouds, the rain itself.

The allied forces participating in the battle all looked up at the sky, whereupon they found it wholly replaced by a pitch-black ocean.

Waves surged forward, sounding like peals of thunder, like stampeding hooves. The surface of the sea frothed with angry waves, like dragons emerging with the tide. The entire sea roiled, and lightning crackled amidst the void.

Countless serpents swam across the raging sea as lightning flashed ominously overhead, a scene right out of an apocalypse.

As Zhang Lie struck, an underworld river hurtled into existence, roaring into the sea. The sword energy roiled like black waves.

The sea had morphed into a boundless battlefield. The sea breeze was as a horn to action, and the serpents, thousands of courageous soldiers heeding its call.

The death spirit king rose into the air, his fist wrapped in a layer of dense black smoke. The punch struck the sea and caused it to quake as huge numbers of serpents were instantly obliterated.

However, the serpents that perished immediately reformed. The death spirit king's face grew serious. "He's as disgusting as the king of evil..."

The black smoke, infused with the energy of annihilation, continuously sapped away at the genetic energy that formed Zhang Lie's netherworld sea, but to no avail. The rate at which the death spirit king produced his black smoke couldn't compete with the rate at which the sea replenished.

"Please don't insult me by comparing me to that monstrosity!" At some point, Zhang Lie had appeared behind the death spirit king's back once more. In his hand, Guicang trembled and keened like a dragon. Blood-red genetic energy emerged from him, manifesting in the phantasmal figure of a blood dragon.

"I'm not a wretched monstrosity like him!" The blood dragon's phantasmal figure soared into the air. Zhang Lie thrust forward with Guicang, the gleam of the blade so bright that the world of black rain welcomed a new dawn. The blood dragon melted into the blade.

"[The Boundless Blade: Dragon's Wrath]!" Zhang Lie thrust forward with Guicang, unleashing the blood dragon anew.

The blood dragon's howls shook heaven and earth, and Zhang Lie's thrust landed squarely in the death spirit king's chest.

The blood dragon caused the netherworld sea to froth, turning the pitch-black genetic energy a garish blood-red color. With the might of the sea, the dragon shot toward the death spirit king.

The death spirit king fell to the ground like a meteor. The land quaked and split apart as the whole world rumbled as though it were about to fracture. The allied forces beat a hasty retreat—given their current strength, they would die just from the aftermath of the battle.

The damage dealt by Zhang Lie's skills had been almost entirely absorbed by the will of the world's spiritflame armor, but the damage was so immense that the death spirit king nevertheless suffered a serious injury himself. The multicolored spiritual flames turned dim and dull.

If not for the armor, the death spirit king would long since have perished.

The death spirit king called out, "I retract my previous words. I, the death spirit king, acknowledge your strength. You too have the right to stand at the peak of the third realm!"

"Are those your last words?" Bright sword energy radiated from Zhang Lie like brilliant rays of sunlight, illuminating the entirety of the world of black rain.

The death spirit king let out a long sigh. "To think there was still such a strong existence in the third realm that I didn't know anything about... I expected that no one but the primordial chaos would be able to take me on after I absorbed so many wills of the world and world's energy, but it looks like I was too arrogant."

"[First Form: Parting the River]!" A frightening force descended on the death spirit king, energy rumbling and rippling around him. As Zhang Lie swung the blade in his hand, a huge slash of sword energy shot toward the death spirit king.

"I was planning to leave this for the primordial chaos, but you've forced my hand..." Despite the blinding white light that swiftly approached him, the death spirit king didn't panic. His eyes were calmer than they had ever been as the bandages around his body loosened and fell.

"Have you ever wondered why even someone as strong as I am wraps bandages around my body?" The death spirit king extended a palm.

His action would have seemed ridiculous to anyone else. [First Form: Parting the River] was no weaker than [The Boundless Blade: Dragon's Wrath]. In the eyes of others, it was undoubtedly a suicidal act—but Zhang Lie suddenly felt a particularly strong sense of unease.

No, this was no sense of unease—it was the shock of sensing the death spirit king's unbridled strength, an explosive strength, as though he had been suppressing it until now. This was impossible—how could the death spirit king still have such untapped reservoirs of strength even at this point in the battle?

The pale white sword energy struck the death spirit king's palm. Even before the sword slash landed, the death spirit king's pitch-black bandages were quickly falling apart.

The sword energy seemed to be spurring the awakening of whatever the death spirit king had sealed. Radiant multicolored light tore apart the black bandages and split the force of Zhang Lie's slash around the palm that he held up.

Two deep furrows were left in the ground, extending indefinitely into the distance.

The death spirit king's black robe turned radiant. "I apologize for not having considered you seriously. To think I would have found someone beyond the first door..."

Upon witnessing the current state of the death spirit king's body, Zhang Lie seemed very confused. Nightdemon, who was still facing the flagships, turned serious.

The death spirit king's body swelled to an enormous extent, a dozen times its original size. Beneath the black bandages were countless multicolored, grotesque faces. "Unfortunately for you, I've also passed through the first door. Like the primordial chaos, I've stepped within."

Zhang Lie narrowed his eyes at the faces. Each face was a corrupted will of the world!

The death spirit king continued, "So, as to why I needed to wrap myself up in black bandages..."

The black bandages had appeared only on the black spirits. The battleships and flagships could likewise produce these black bandages, but ordinary death spirits didn't use them.

"...it was to seal away my strength and stabilize my form."

Multicolored radiance emanated from the death spirit king as though he were a sun. It should have been beautiful, but to Zhang Lie's eyes, there wasn't even a hint of beauty. Instead, the scene was uncommonly eerie...

Chapter 1000: The Twin Blades Ringing

Zhang Lie frowned. "There's something wrong with you..."

Nightdemon called out, "He swallowed too many wills of the world at once and can't digest them all. Of course there's something wrong with his body!"

The souls of the wills of the world were far superior in quality to ordinary souls. Although the death spirit king was once a superior king, with roughly the same status in terms of body and soul, he had consumed too many wills of the world at once.

The black spirits' plan to take over the three thousand worlds of the third realm had initially been very successful, though there was one issue that the death spirit king hadn't anticipated—the spoils that his plan afforded him.

The death spirit king had accumulated far too many wills of the world than could be handled. By the territory around the scaleman world alone, thirty medium-sized worlds and ten large-sized worlds had been conquered by the death spirits.

The death spirit king had managed to acquire at least three hundred wills of the world in all during this venture. That, along with the worlds that the black spirits had slowly invaded and conquered over time, was far more than the death spirit king could handle—and yet he swallowed them all up in one gulp anyway.

The death spirit king hadn't consumed this many worlds at once in the past, but by itself, it wouldn't have been a serious issue. The death spirit king would be able to digest the worlds with sufficient time.

The problem lay with the current situation at large.

The moment the death spirit king put his plan in motion, he wouldn't be able to stop until all three thousand worlds were destroyed. There was simply no time for the death spirit king to digest all those wills.

In order to counter the allied forces, the death spirit king had to make a move. If he didn't and chose to focus on digesting the wills of the world instead, he would be dead.

After the plan began in earnest, the death spirit king had no choice but to carry it out as planned. He broke through the superior worlds' barricade and consumed all the worlds nearby.

As planned, he swallowed up Blood Heaven and a series of worlds in the vicinity. The death spirit king was starting to grow stuffed.

The wills of the world, not fully digested, began to struggle within the death spirit king's body. They wanted to free themselves, so the death spirit king was forced to seal his own body with the black bandages. Now that he had unsealed his body, the wills of the world began to run rampant once more. They tried to tear apart the death spirit king's body to free themselves, causing it to become lumpy and distended.

Wilbow considered the death spirit king carefully. "His body looks a bit like my father's..."

Nightdemon shook his head. "They're quite different. The king of keys itself is formed of wills of the world; its path is unique. On the other hand, the death spirit king is a biological lifeform, with a very different status of life from the king of keys. Upon passing through the first door, imagination and willpower becomes more important than the amount of energy you possess."

The ink-black man analyzed, "Although the king of keys' condition isn't particularly robust, either—that's why it's remained stagnant for so long, and has to come up with other methods to proceed

forward along the path. In some sense, the king of keys has taken a wrong turn, but the death spirit king is doing far worse. He's on the verge of total collapse."

Zhang Lie turned to them and asked, "What are these doors that you're talking about?" And if all of you have time to talk and discuss what's happening to the death spirit king, come over and help me!

"We'll explain later. You should focus on your opponent," Nightdemon called back, pointing at the death spirit king. "He's not going to go easy on you if you get distracted."

The death spirit king charged forward with a multicolored fist.

"[Shadow and Light]!" Zhang Lie whirled around. Time suddenly sped up in the vicinity of Zhang Lie, and he blocked what would otherwise have been an unavoidable blow. The next moment, the tip of his sword was right by the death spirit king's nose.

The death spirit king had launched the attack, but Zhang Lie had somehow commandeered it.

Even so, Zhang Lie's sword found no purchase on the death spirit king's body. Silvery-white sword slashes rained down on the death spirit king like a thunderstorm, but he was protected by the world's energy. His defense was stronger and less permeable than even the will of the world's barriers, and Zhang Lie's consecutive sword strikes did nothing to wound him.

The death spirit king easily pushed aside Zhang Lie's sword and countered with a heavy punch. Zhang Lie attempted to block the punch with the blade of his sword, only to find himself completely overwhelmed. The death spirit king had grown at least an order of magnitude stronger than before.

Drawing Hanguang, Zhang Lie struck at the death spirit king's neck, but even Hanguang was incapable of penetrating his defense.

"Don't disappoint me too much!" The death spirit king punched forward again, bolstered by a thick layer of world's energy.

"[Syzygy]!" A burning black sun rose behind Zhang Lie's 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.

Struck by the bloody moonlight, the death spirit king's radiance grew dim. Under the black sun, the fluctuations in Zhang Lie's genetic energy were enhanced.

Zhang Lie crossed his twin blades. The blood moon resonated with the blade in his left hand, and the black sun with the blade in his right. He simultaneously slashed forward with both blades, forming a huge celestial web.

Even the death spirit king was forced back half a step. Even more excited, he punched forward once more. Zhang Lie responded in kind.

"[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.

As the two attacks clashed against each other, the death spirit king licked his lips. His eyes burned with killing intent. "Not bad. Again!"

The death spirit king seemed to be asking for a beating. Zhang Lie had never seen such a perverse fellow, but he would do his best to fulfill his request.

Guicang and Hanguang shone in unison. "[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. The blade Hanguang morphed into a black dragon, and the blade Guicang into a blood dragon.

The two dragons coiled together, then shot forward like a hurricane, bearing down on the death spirit king with the might of Zhang Lie's spiritual sea between them and forming a whirlpool upon impact. Tremendous suction, like that from a black hole, sucked up everything around the two combatants. Layers of earth sank into the whirlpool, obliterated in an instant...