

Apocalypse 1421

Chapter 1421: Dazzling Curses (2)

“Weakness Curse.”

Li Zhizhong’s body immediately weakened from the curse.

Due to the vast difference in mental strength between the two, the Weakness Curse succeeded and was very impactful. This curse not only nullified the physical enhancements from Li Zhizhong’s Demon Bloodline but also reduced his abilities to below his pre-transformation state.

The Weakness Curse even seemed to disable his equipment abilities.

Several zombie dogs bit into Li Zhizhong’s body, causing wounds to appear!

Li Daqian noticed his son’s predicament. He hadn’t expected that ten low-level zombie dogs would be so difficult to handle, let alone put his son in such danger.

His claws slashed rapidly.

Since the equipment was made by Cloud Peak, its functions and skills were known. Detailed instructions were provided at the time of purchase, saving buyers a lot of time in familiarizing themselves with the gear.

If multiple pieces were purchased together, the time saved could be substantial—possibly even months.

Moreover, the short adaptation period for the equipment naturally led to a quicker increase in combat power, resulting in more successful hunts and greater safety.

This back-and-forth efficiency made Cloud Peak's equipment highly cost-effective.

Aside from its excellent quality, this was one of the main reasons why Cloud Peak's equipment was so popular.

Li Daqian's ability to slash rapidly with his claws came from the equipment.

The three trolls were tough to deal with. Their attacks were similar to Li Zhizhong's post-transformation abilities, carrying strange energy that made them difficult to handle. Li Daqian had to be cautious.

Li Daqian went all out when he saw his son in danger. He stopped dodging and took the trolls' attacks while landing his own blows on them.

The Earth Troll was the first to fall with a whimper, crumbling into a pile of dirt.

It was the frontline tank that took the most damage. Once Li Daqian focused his attacks, it was quickly killed.

Next was the Decomposing Troll.

This creature had poor physical defense but the strongest attacks among the three trolls. It had been Li Daqian's primary target. With the Earth Troll gone, it quickly fell to Li Daqian's relentless assault.

The Energy Troll, however, was troublesome. Its body wasn't physical but ethereal, making Li Daqian's attacks less effective. This left the master of the Thousand Beast Villa frustrated.

The basic Bear Bloodline wasn't considered a top-tier bloodline—it was even seen as average in the post-apocalyptic world. Li Daqian had obtained it early in the apocalypse and couldn't change it later.

Like in some competitive games, there are no bad heroes, only bad players. Li Daqian believed that with proper use, this bloodline could still excel. He even felt it was fate, as his battle beast was a Spotted Giant Bear.

But now, he hated this bloodline. The Bear Bloodline reduced his speed, making it impossible to break free from the Energy Troll and rush to his son's aid.

Li Daqian assessed his injuries and the damage the Energy Troll was dealing. He decided he had to reach Li Zhizhong even if it meant taking continuous hits.

But just as he took two steps in the other direction, a wall of black souls suddenly rose from the ground before him.

“Wall of Agony!”

Alamos cackled, temporarily stopping his curses.

But the curses he had already cast were enough to give Li Daqian and his son a massive headache.

“How do you have so many job skills?!” Li Daqian roared at Alamos, stopping before the Wall of Agony.

He didn’t know what it was, but it felt dangerous, and he dared not pass through recklessly.

The wall didn’t divide the entire space, but it was long. Li Daqian was positioned right in the middle, and it would take time, no matter which side he chose to go around. Don’t forget, the Energy Troll was still harassing him from behind.

He couldn’t understand how a job could have so many skills. It didn’t make sense. Even for a support job, these many skills were unheard of!

“Heh heh, you ignorant yellow-skinned monkey!”

Alamos spread his hands, and Li Daqian noticed a short bone staff in one hand. It was dark green but emitted a golden glow, indicating its high level.

“My job is Pain Curse Master, a top-tier job with a prefix. Its skills aren’t something your shallow knowledge can comprehend. They’re divided into several major systems. One of them is called Dazzling Curses, which includes many minor curses—like the ones I cast on your son. How does it feel, Li Daqian? Are you enjoying yourself?”

Li Zhizhong’s situation grew even more dire as Alamos spoke. Although he had managed to kill several zombie dogs in his panic, for every one he killed, a new one emerged from the iron bars, keeping the number at ten.

Also, Alamos had somehow enlarged the prison model, and the emerging zombie dogs were now larger and clearly stronger than before.

Li Daqian gritted his teeth and charged through the Wall of Agony.

He had no choice.

Li Zhizhong might not recover from the numerous negative status effects anytime soon. The wounds from the zombie dogs were adding up.

Now, with stronger zombie dogs appearing, Li Daqian was terrified that his son might suffer a fatal accident.

In this situation, he would have to charge through even if the Wall of Agony was a mountain of blades or a sea of fire.

After passing through the Wall of Agony, Li Daqian felt as though his entire being was twisted.

The pain was like being flayed alive. It wasn't just physical—his mind was also assaulted. Every negative emotion he had ever experienced surged back, amplified countless times, eroding his consciousness.

Li Daqian collapsed to his knees, howling in agony.

The wall of black vengeful spirits disappeared after he passed through, and the Energy Troll caught up, mercilessly attacking the kneeling Li Daqian.

Alamos didn't stop his assault despite his overwhelming advantage. As Li Daqian charged through the Wall of Agony, he began chanting a new curse.

The entire space started to fill with a thick, bloody scent, and the air above turned deep crimson.

A powerful curse was about to descend.

Chapter 1422: Soul Burning Embers

“Soul-Burning Embers.”

A large cluster of ghostly flames fell from the crimson sky and enveloped the father and son.

These ghostly flames drifted lightly; their trajectories swayed and wobbled.

Yet, they were incredibly fast.

Almost as soon as they appeared, the father and son from Thousand Beast Villa had no chance to dodge.

Li Daqian was an eight-star powerhouse. Even though he was affected by the energy from the Wall of Agony, his recovery speed was much faster than his son's.

He struggled to his feet, ignoring the attacks from the Energy Troll behind him. Li Daqian ended his bloodline transformation to move even faster.

He quickly ran to Li Zhizhong, who wasn't far away, and kicked away the zombie dogs while grabbing his son.

Then, an ancient-looking umbrella flew out of Li Daqian's space equipment. He opened it, and the umbrella shielded them from the falling ghostly flames.

Thud, thud, thud—the muffled sounds of the ghostly flames hitting the umbrella echoed continuously. Although the flames were light, each collision caused a significant tremor, demonstrating their power.

With every ghostly flame that landed, Li Daqian's body trembled slightly, indicating that the umbrella's defense was linked to his own energy.

Li Zhizhong was still feeling the effects of his negative status, but perhaps the touch of his father's hand gave him strength. He was noticeably calmer than before.

He was still fearful and weak, but he wasn't stupid. He knew that he and his father were in a dire situation.

But understanding the situation didn't mean he could do anything about it.

Alamos was slightly out of breath after casting this skill. While the minor skills in the Dazzling Curses system seemed effortless, they still consumed mental energy. The Wall of Agony and Soul-Burning Embers, which was on par with the Floral Curses, had taken a significant toll on him.

He had the upper hand fighting one against two—an eight-star and a seven-star—, but since he wasn't a full-fledged eight-star, and the two lacked experience dealing with curse masters, Alamos had gained the advantage. Otherwise, the outcome of the battle would have been hard to predict.

But now, Alamos felt at ease.

All his earlier preparations had been leading up to this moment—the true killing move, Soul-Burning Embers.

In truth, Alamos didn't have much offensive capability. When he fought alone, he relied mostly on his two summoning structures.

But he cleverly utilized his abilities, specifically these drifting ghostly flames.

Soul-Burning Embers was also a negative status ability designed to lower the target's mental strength and induce hallucinations.

The more flames that hit, the stronger the negative effects would become.

Typically, other curse masters would use this skill first to lower their opponent's mental strength, then follow up with other curses to increase their success rate.

But Alamos didn't do that. He had discovered that for those unfamiliar with curse masters, Soul-Burning Embers posed the greatest perceived threat, whether in terms of energy fluctuations or visual impact.

As a result, these people would do everything in their power to prevent the ghostly flames from touching them.

Once they tried to block the flames, the ghostly flames transformed into pure energy impacts upon contact with other objects. Each ghostly flame was packed with energy.

This effectively turned a support skill into an offensive one.

By the time the target realized they couldn't block the flames anymore, they would have already exhausted their defensive equipment or mental energy, giving Alamos a better chance to finish them off.

Li Daqian had fallen into this trap.

It was too late when he realised.

Alamos began to feel a pang of regret regarding the ancient, extraordinary-looking umbrella.

The ghostly flames, initially falling one by one, now came from all directions, simultaneously crashing into the umbrella. A massive energy shockwave radiated outward from the impact.

The Energy Troll, being an energy-based entity, was most vulnerable to such impacts. It was dispersed without even a chance to cry out. However, the thick-skinned zombie dogs weren't affected much. After they were sent rolling across the ground, they wobbled back to their feet.

On the ground, Li Daqian and Li Zhizhong clutched their heads and wailed in agony. The younger man's cries suddenly stopped as he collapsed; his condition was unknown.

The ghostly flames caused mental shocks and continuously drained their mental energy. Li Zhizhong's mental energy was completely depleted, causing him to lose consciousness.

This wasn't the same as voluntarily exhausting one's mental energy, which would, at most, lead to fainting. Having one's mental energy forcibly drained was far worse—it could cause severe harm to the evolved individual. Even if Li Zhizhong woke up, it was uncertain whether he would regain his sanity.

Alamos laughed heartily, knowing he had won. He hadn't expected that he could suppress the leader of Thousand Beast Villa relying solely on his own skills. After this, his reputation would undoubtedly soar, and few could rival him.

But the space shifted again just as he was about to deliver the final blow.

This time, the change was significant.

Because Li Daqian and Li Zhizhong didn't disappear, instead, many more people appeared.

Alamos looked around. Wen Yan, Gyanendra, Guancheng Chun, Palmerk, David, and others were on his side. Ye Zhongming, Li Daqian, Deacon Water, Ruan Xiao, and others were on the opposing side.

Compared to before, Alamos's side was missing Kim Jongyuan, while Li Daqian's side was missing Qin Ru.

Both sides had lost a high-level combatant during the space shift, but it seemed like a draw—one death each.

However, neither side looked pleased.

Li Daqian's side was unhappy because both the Water Deacon and Ruan Xiao had faced formidable challenges. Deacon Water had ended up fighting Wen Yan, while Ruan Xiao battled Palmerk. Both fights had been grueling, and if not for their substantial resources, they might have already been defeated. Deacon Water, in particular, was on the verge of collapse. Ruan Xiao was in slightly better shape because Palmerk had been severely injured earlier, giving him the upper hand.

Li Daqian was relieved by the space shift, as it had saved him from certain defeat. But he was also deeply saddened by his son's unconsciousness and the inevitable destruction of Thousand Beast Villa after this.

On the other hand, Alamos and his group were displeased when they noticed that Wen Yan and Palmerk were in rough shape. The latter was severely injured and unable to fight.

Guancheng Chun, who appeared unharmed, looked utterly defeated, clearly having suffered some kind of setback.

The only one still in perfect condition was Gyanendra.

Chapter 1423: Three crowns

How did a battle that was supposed to be "pick and choose" turn into this?

Alamos fell silent, unsure of what to do next.

The others also remained silent.

Only Gyanendra looked at Ye Zhongming with excitement. He was brimming with fighting spirit.

The Holy One was eager to challenge Ye Zhongming.

"Fess, perhaps we should leave."

Fess was Alamos's real name, known only to those close to him. Palmerk, as his partner, called him by this name.

Before coming here, Palmerk had never imagined that the country could have so many powerful individuals. But now he knew—whether it was Ye Zhongming, who had nearly killed him, or the warrior Xia Bai, both could defeat him.

And people like Wen Yan, the Water Deacon, and Ruan Xiao were all on his level.

He had lost confidence and no longer wanted to fight.

His body couldn't handle it anymore.

“What are you saying?”

Gyanendra immediately turned his head and glared at Palmerk with undisguised killing intent. He found the words of this fellow West Asian evolved irritating and was considering killing him.

“Holy One, your chances of defeating Ye Zhongming are at most 30%.”

Palmerk shook his head, pushing aside Alamos, who had moved to block him.

“He has obtained the Star Spirit—the complete form.”

This statement calmed Gyanendra, who had been on the verge of losing control.

Star Sand was a specialty of West Asia, and they discovered the Star Spirit first. However, a powerhouse from the Chinese region ultimately obtained it.

Both Gyanendra and Palmerk had once coveted the Star Spirit. They knew what kind of existence it was and how arduous the journey to obtain it would be—requiring prolonged, high-intensity battles.

At the time, they couldn't complete this challenge, so they couldn't obtain the Star Spirit.

But Ye Zhongming had succeeded. This meant he had completed the task in that bizarre space, challenging nearly all the stars. Even at their current levels, Gyanendra and Palmerk wouldn't easily take such a risk.

It wasn't just a test of combat power but also endurance, mental resilience, overall equipment, and the quality of one's job.

If any of these fell short, it would be impossible to gain the recognition of the elemental spirit.

Ye Zhongming had succeeded. What did that mean?

For the first time, Gyanendra calmed down from the excitement of his newfound power and began to consider the danger Ye Zhongming posed seriously.

“I used all my trump cards against him and couldn’t even last two minutes. And he... only used about half his strength.”

Palmerk’s words drew everyone’s attention to Ye Zhongming.

This was the first time those from foreign countries had heard such things, and they were naturally shocked. Alamos, who was very familiar with Palmerk’s strength, finally realized just how formidable Ye Zhongming was.

As for those from the country, they were even more shaken. They knew Ye Zhongming was strong but hadn’t realized he was this strong.

How could he defeat an opponent of the same level in under two minutes without using his full strength? That was almost unbelievable.

“He also has the Ocean King Crown!”

This voice came from Guancheng Chun, who had been looking dejected earlier.

The four-legged man walked forward, stopping before Ye Zhongming. He bowed apologetically and then stood behind him.

“Guancheng Chun, what do you mean by this?”

Wen Yan shouted angrily.

Ye Zhongming was indeed strong, but Alamos's side wasn't weak either. Gyanendra and Alamos were still in full fighting condition. Wen Yan was injured but could still fight.

Palmerk was out of the question, but David and the others could still contribute. While Guancheng Chun wasn't a top-tier fighter, his abilities were strange and useful. Now, had he switched sides?

"Isn't my meaning clear?" Guancheng Chun showed no guilt for his betrayal. In fact, he seemed proud.

"I've joined Cloud Peak. I've already reached an agreement with Boss Ye."

"Traitor!"

Wen Yan shouted angrily and pointed at him. After all, the two of them were the country's representatives.

"Thank you."

Guancheng Chun remained unfazed, nodding in acknowledgment.

“The Ocean King Crown...”

Wen Yan and the others from the country clearly didn't know what the Ocean King Crown was, but Alamos's expression changed dramatically. He even began muttering to himself.

“Mr. Ye, how about we call a truce?”

Alamos suddenly spoke.

Ye Zhongming tilted his head and was amused.

He hadn't even said anything yet, and these people had already made him the center of their discussion. The Star Spirit, the Ocean King Crown... these people knew quite a lot.

“What if I say no?” Ye Zhongming smiled calmly. “No offense, but I don't think you can beat me.”

Alamos didn't hesitate and quickly replied, “Anything can happen in battle. Luck is also part of strength. Can you guarantee that your luck today is better than ours? If you refuse, then I'm sorry, but when we fight, we'll focus all our attacks on you.”

As he spoke, he glanced at Li Daqian and the others. “They won’t be of much help to you.”

“Even if you can defeat us, what good will it do you? As far as I know, Li Daqian isn’t your friend.”

Seeing that the master of Thousand Beast Villa wanted to speak, Alamos didn’t give him a chance. His rapid speech ensured Ye Zhongming heard his thoughts first.

“The Spatitu Space is mine. I can choose to end it, allowing us to leave safely. But if we engage in a fierce battle, this space will collapse prematurely. I can’t guarantee what will happen then.”

After this, even Li Daqian decided not to speak. Alamos’s words affected everyone.

“Of course, this is ultimately a request to Mr. Ye. As compensation, I will offer something that will surely satisfy you.”

Ye Zhongming’s smile didn’t fade as he looked at Alamos. “Go ahead. Let’s see if it piques my interest.”

Alamos and Palmerk both breathed a sigh of relief. They realized that the leader of Cloud Peak truly didn’t want to get involved in the affairs of Thousand Beast Villa and was also concerned about the space collapsing.

But Palmerk had no idea what his friend planned to offer. Few things could tempt someone like Ye Zhongming.

However, Alamos seemed very confident. He looked at Ye Zhongming seriously and said, "Can I confirm that Mr. Ye indeed possesses the Ocean King Crown?"

Ye Zhongming hesitated for a moment before nodding.

Alamos smiled.

"Then I can tell Mr. Ye what the three King Crowns are and where the Earth King Crown is!"

Chapter 1424: Ruler equipment

Evolved who have survived until now weren't fools.

Perhaps greed can blind them, but they weigh the pros and cons when it comes to life and death.

This was true for Ye Zhongming, who had lived two lives.

No one knew that he had almost decided to attack.

If it weren't for Gyanendra being present...

Since the Holy One from West Asia was here, it meant he had a way to deal with Ye Zhongming.

At least, Gyanendra himself believed so.

Gyanendra had previously been defeated by Ye Zhongming in West Asia. His Burial Crystal Ball shattered, and he suffered severe injuries. Although the Holy One had nearly been killed, it hadn't been an exceptionally difficult battle from Ye Zhongming's perspective.

At the time, Gyanendra might have been overly confident in his Burial Barrier, which led to his crushing defeat when Ye Zhongming broke through it in one strike.

If it were Ye Zhongming, he would never actively seek out someone who had defeated him before for another challenge without absolute certainty.

Now that Gyanendra was here, it meant he was confident in himself.

Ye Zhongming had to be cautious when facing this former powerhouse without the Cloud Peak warriors.

In his hesitation, Alamos brought up the matter of the three King Crowns, completely dispelling Ye Zhongming's thoughts of attacking.

Ye Zhongming was slightly taken aback. Although Alamos's description of the three King Crowns differed somewhat from his own understanding of the Ocean King Wheel, the curse master's confident demeanor made him decide to listen.

“Mr. Ye, do you want everyone to hear this?”

“Let’s all hear it.”

Ye Zhongming was also wary of any tricks, so he decided not to split from his own group.

Alamos didn’t mind. He said, “As far as I know, aside from appearing on a few level-nine wheels, seven-colored equipment must be cultivated or crafted by evolved.”

“Are you saying the Ocean King Crown is seven-colored grade equipment?” Ruan Xiao interjected, unable to resist the allure of the highest-known grade of equipment.

It was like two evolved of the same level fighting—the one with better equipment would have a higher chance of winning. If the equipment was vastly superior, it might even allow for defeating opponents of a higher level.

Evolution level, job, bloodline, skills, and equipment were the three standards for measuring an evolved’s strength.

Alamos glanced at Ruan Xiao but didn’t answer, only shaking his head slightly.

“Of course, crafting or cultivating seven-colored grade equipment is extremely difficult. Aside from a few exceptional jobs or those with great fortune, the chances for others are slim.”

“In addition, there are some special sealed equipment. They are inherently seven-colored grade but have had their abilities restricted for some reason. Once unsealed, they will return to their original state.”

“The Ocean King Crown is such an item.”

Hearing this, everyone looked at Ye Zhongming with renewed awe.

This guy not only had elemental spirits but also future seven-colored equipment!

“These pieces of equipment are extremely unique. For example, the Ocean King Crown, Mountain King Crown, and Sky King Crown are collectively known as the three King Crowns, belonging to the category of Ruler Equipment.”

This was another term no one had heard before, not even Ye Zhongming in his two lifetimes.

“As for what Ruler Equipment is, I can’t say for certain. I only learned this term when I received information about the Mountain King Crown.”

As Alamos spoke, he glanced at Ye Zhongming again, noticing that the man remained unmoved. He realized Ye Zhongming was determined to maintain the status quo and hear the rest of the information.

“At the summit of Denali Mountain in Alaska, someone once saw a very special and peculiar wheel. The faction this person belonged to went through great hardships to reach it and spin the wheel. But they failed the challenge. Only a few escaped, and one later joined my laboratory, becoming my assistant—David.”

Alamos finished and looked at the assistant who had turned the space into its current state.

“Yes, I saw it with my own eyes. The final reward on that wheel was the Mountain King Crown. At the time, the team leader kept saying before his death, ‘What a pity, such a great piece of Ruler Equipment, and I missed it.’”

Hearing David’s words, everyone exchanged glances. Ruan Xiao asked, “Where is this Denali Mountain?”

“It’s the highest peak in North America, located in the central part of the Alaska Range, with an elevation of over 6,000 meters. It used to be called Mount McKinley but was renamed a few years before the apocalypse.”

Mount McKinley. Deacon Water nodded. She had heard of the place, though she had never been there. A friend had mentioned it before.

The mountain was located in a national park almost at the center of Alaska. She remembered it because of the large caribou, a distinctive animal in the area.

“Is that all?” Ye Zhongming frowned.

Alamos smiled. “If it were just the location, I would indeed be wasting Mr. Ye’s time. Let David explain the rest. Since you and I appeared together, me and David can’t have prearranged this, so please trust us.”

He then gestured to his assistant.

David hesitated before saying, “I roughly know the challenge method of this wheel and what we would face. I also have a plausible theory: Ruler Equipment, with immense power, is unique to the wheels on Earth. They come in sets... seven-colored equipment, likely three sets.”

He then explained the challenge method of the Earth King Wheel and the opponents they would face.

Having challenged the Ocean King Wheel himself, Ye Zhongming felt that David’s account was likely true. The two special wheels had similarities.

For the first time, the concept of three sets of seven-colored equipment, or RulerEquipment, was revealed to everyone.

“You never coveted it?”

Li Daqian sneered coldly.

If what these people said was true, even a fool would know how powerful Ruler Equipment was. Alamos and his group had even targeted Thousand Beast Villa. How could they pass up a piece of seven-colored grade equipment?

“Of course, we coveted it and even tried, but we failed. We eventually concluded that the Earth King Wheel isn’t always accessible. If you go at the wrong time, while facing the treacherous environment and numerous mutated lifeforms along the way, you’ll only see a wheel and nothing else.”

“I’m sharing this information not to give up on the Earth King Crown but to use it as a bargaining chip for us to leave peacefully. As for who ultimately obtains this equipment, we’ll each rely on our own abilities.”

“How do we know the timing you’re giving us is accurate?” Ruan Xiao asked again.

“I’ll swear a Heart Oath.” Alamos pulled out a scroll. Many recognized it as a Promise Scroll. After swearing on it, the scroll would change color if the oath were false. If true, it would remain unchanged—a kind of lie detector.

“David and I will each write down the date, and you should believe us with this scroll.”

Chapter 1425: Selling corpses

Li Daqian couldn’t suppress his hatred as he watched the retreating figures of Alamos and his group.

Evolved in the post-apocalyptic world were not so naive. When everyone emerged from the Spatitu Space, many wanted to test whether they could kill their opponents.

However, the strengths of both sides were somewhat balanced. After a moment of mutual observation, they decided against fighting.

As for the equipment Wen Yan had taken to control battle beasts, it had been returned. However, the large beast pool of Thousand Beast Villa had been temporarily sealed by some method, and it would take half a day to unseal. Even Li Daqian, who most wanted to kill these people, had no choice but to remain silent.

The sudden attack had left Thousand Beast Villa severely damaged. A significant number of traitors had left the place nearly defenseless. Alamos and his team had destroyed most of the villa. While the top-tier fighters battled in the space, the outside was also in chaos. Many areas were destroyed by the uncontrollable abilities of the evolved during the fight. If it hadn't been for Xia Bai and the female guards stepping in early to stabilize the situation, the entire villa might have been wiped out.

Therefore, Li Daqian's attitude toward Ye Zhongming was very good.

Although the villa was in ruins, the core area remained relatively intact. With no further interference from external enemies, the survivors quickly stabilized the situation and began efforts to salvage and repair the place.

Li Daqian handed his son over to several of the villa's leaders and then brought Ye Zhongming, Deacon Water, Ruan Xiao, Guancheng Chun, and other faction leaders to a mysterious location within a mountain.

Following a wide passage, they descended hundreds of meters underground into the mountain. They found a stone hall at the lowest level, empty except for a stone coffin in the center.

Several blood relatives accompanied Li Daqian, all seven-star evolved. No one underestimated them, as together with Li Daqian, they could summon the top-ranked battle beast in the country—Chisel Tooth. The Spotted Giant Bear also followed, its eight-star strength drawing attention.

This was the only way Li Daqian felt secure.

“This is the place.”

The manor’s master regained some of his authoritative demeanor, suppressing his worry for his son.

Ye Zhongming and the others approached and looked into the stone coffin.

Inside laid a corpse.

At first, no one focused on what kind of lifeform it was, as they were all drawn to the silver magic crystal on its forehead.

Nine-stars!

Indeed, Thousand Beast Villa had truly killed a nine-star mutated lifeform.

“This is...” Li Daqian began, then realized his people had given the name. After a moment’s thought, he decided to use the name given by the evolved in the area where this creature had been active—Mantis Snatcher.

“I’m not entirely sure whether this is a mutated version of some Earth lifeform or one of those suddenly appearing monsters. In any case, it’s a nine-star lifeform and dead.”

Li Daqian and his subordinates felt a surge of pride as he spoke.

In terms of faction strength, they might not match Cloud Peak, Five Ring Money, or Cannibal Chains. In terms of personal combat power, Li Daqian was certain he couldn’t defeat Ye Zhongming and was, at best, on par with Deacon Water and Ruan Xiao.

But the first in the country to kill a nine-star lifeform was Thousand Beast Villa!

Of course, he didn’t know that Ye Zhongming and his team, along with the Posthumous People, had already killed the Holy Father in the secret realm. However, since the fatal blow to the Holy Father had come from infighting within Saint Light Hall, the Cloud Peak team didn’t consider it their kill and had never publicized it.

“Although we weren’t in the same space, we fought side by side. I won’t beat around the bush—I’ll be direct.”

Li Daqian looked at the nine-star lifeform's corpse, a hint of reluctance in his eyes.

"I plan to sell this corpse."

Ye Zhongming, Deacon Water, Ruan Xiao, Guancheng Chun, and even Xia Bai, who had followed them in, had a gleam in their eyes.

This was the corpse of a nine-star lifeform! Every part of it was an extremely precious material. While they might not yet know the exact uses of these materials, future research, and exploration will reveal their immense value.

Now, they understood why Li Daqian had gathered these people. Excluding Five Ring Money and Cannibal Chain, which were purely business-oriented, the others—Ye Zhongming, Guancheng Chun, Qin Ru, Wen Yan, and Alamos—had advanced laboratories or powerful battle beasts.

The corpse of a nine-star lifeform could be invaluable research material or the rarest food for battle beasts. It had significant uses, whether for research or consumption.

They were the most qualified and eager buyers.

So, Thousand Beast Villa's plan from the start had been to sell the corpse!

All that talk about jointly verifying the nine-star lifeform's corpse and exploring its secrets had been excuses and smokescreens.

"Name your price. There's nothing Cannibal Chain can't afford." Ruan Xiao was practically drooling. Although Cannibal Chain had lost one of its top executives this time, that person had been the least experienced and weakest among the regional managers. While his death was a blow to the organization, it wasn't a critical one.

If they could acquire this nine-star corpse as compensation, it would more than make up for the loss.

"Oh? Does Manager Ruan think Five Ring Money can't afford it?" Deacon Water was displeased, no longer caring about maintaining her goddess-like image. She was ready to fight for every inch.

She had made up her mind. She was determined to get her hands on this nine-star corpse even if it meant offending Ye Zhongming!

"I think we should hear what Villa Master Li has to say. What's the point of arguing now? Do you think Cloud Peak doesn't have the money?"

Since defecting to Ye Zhongming, Guancheng Chun had fully embraced the role of a loyal subordinate. He knew he had to cling tightly to the Cloud Peak King's coattails; otherwise, Li Daqian would kill him.

Deacon Water and Ruan Xiao glanced at Guancheng Chun but said nothing. After all, this four-legged man was now Ye Zhongming's subordinate.

Li Daqian snorted, expressing his dissatisfaction with Guancheng Chun, then slowly said, "If I were to sell the entire corpse, I would demand the best items in return—like Brother Ye's two purple-grade weapons, Deacon Water's Bright Water Realm, or Manager Ruan's boss's battle beast, Soaring Wind."

"Would you give them up? No."

Li Daqian shook his head. The others agreed. These items were far too important to trade away.

"Moreover, even if you were willing to make such a trade, wouldn't the others have come here for nothing? Possessing such a treasure would only invite trouble. The journey back would be anything but smooth."

"So, I've decided to sell the corpse in parts!"