

## Apocalypse 1446

### Chapter 1446: Cloud Peak system

Little Tiger's new abilities sparked heated discussions among Cloud Peak's core members. Many were already debating how to maximize their effectiveness. Some even suggested taking advantage of the fact that Little Tiger's abilities were still unknown to launch a surprise attack on Witch Palace.

The overconfident Little Tiger even demonstrated his level five Borrowed Troops ability in front of Ah Yang, Young Master Yun, Candy, and the ever-mischievous Yangos, blowing the rocks to smithereens.

When Ye Zhongming found out, he scolded Little Tiger harshly.

Fortunately, the ability was still at its initial level, and the cooldown time was within an acceptable range.

"With Little Tiger's current strength, he should rank in the top five, maybe even top three, among Cloud Peak's evolved, right?" Ye Zhongming had returned, and core members who had been away also returned. Even Little Peng, stationed at the Linhai base, made his first trip to Cloud Peak using the newly built teleportation array. This young evolved, who had once been just a rookie, was now a regional leader, controlling near-shore resources and providing Cloud Peak with many materials and demon crystals.

Of course, Ye Zhongming hadn't treated him poorly. Little Peng's evolution level was on par with the core members at seven stars, and he was equipped with top-tier blue-grade gear. He also had a ten-man guard team personally trained by Ye Zhongming, all at six stars, with well-balanced jobs and luxurious equipment.

At the same time, Lu Yi's merchant caravan had also returned. All of Cloud Peak's high-ranking members were now gathered in Ye Zhongming's villa. Even Zhao Xingmei, Bai Feng, and Sha Sha attended the meeting, accompanied by leaders from several major factions in Ying City. This was their first time attending a meeting with Cloud Peak's top brass, and while they were slightly nervous, they were also incredibly excited.

Some legendary figures they rarely saw were now right in front of them.

For example, the queen-like Xia Lei, the icy killer Xia Bai who stood silently in the corner behind Ye Zhongming, the saintly Park Xiuying, the massive Yellow Ball who loomed like a small mountain, the ever-cursing Yangos whose giant head took up a quarter of the meeting room, the famous female guards responsible for security, and, of course, the god-like figures Liu Zhenghong and Le Dayuan...

And, of course, no one could ignore the man sitting there with a calm smile, the pillar of Cloud Peak—Ye Zhongming.

To be honest, these leaders were quite nervous about being summoned. They weren't sure why the ruler of this territory had suddenly called them here. They had asked Zhao Xingmei and the others who had come with them, but no one knew.

Only those with significant status in Cloud Peak could speak up in such a meeting. Everyone turned to look at Lu Yi, who had just returned, patted Little Tiger beside him.

While Lu Yi's position in Cloud Peak might not be the highest, outside of the company, he was one of the most well-known figures after Ye Zhongming, Xia Bai, Xia Lei, Little Tiger, Liang Chuyin, and Mo Ye. In a way, Lu Yi represented Cloud Peak's specialty products.

Ye Zhongming had already informed him about the collaboration with Deacon Water regarding trade routes this time. Lu Yi was thrilled because it was clear that Ye Zhongming would entrust him with this task.

This was a huge deal.

Little Tiger laughed and shook his head. While his abilities had greatly improved, his one-on-one combat strength was still mainly boosted by his first ability, Authority's Gaze. The other two abilities—an assassin-type skill and a group skill—were difficult to use in direct combat.

So, when it came to individual combat strength, Ye Zhongming was undoubtedly number one in Cloud Peak, followed by Xia Bai. These two were indisputable. After that, opinions varied. Some said Mo Ye, and others said Xia Lei, Liang Chuyin, Shengyuan, or Guang Yao. Now, some even said Little Tiger.

But the truth was, no one really knew. Without actual fights between them, it was impossible to determine.

However, among the core members, the general consensus leaned toward Mo Ye and Shengyuan, especially after Shengyuan obtained the two purple shields.

Still, a rumor was circulating among Cloud Peak's mid-to-high-level members that Liang Chuyin was the true third strongest, at least until others evolved to eight stars.

No one knew where this rumor came from, but there was no smoke without fire. Many people glanced at the influencer sitting there with a charming smile, their expressions filled with suspicion.

Once everyone had arrived, Ye Zhongming stopped chatting with those around him and sat up straight. The room immediately fell silent, and even Yangos, who had been glaring at Yellow Ball, quieted down.

"Sorry for calling everyone here and taking up your time."

As soon as Ye Zhongming said this, a chorus of "It's no trouble" and "We're honored" erupted, mostly from the leaders of Ying City.

"Let's get straight to the point." Ye Zhongming glanced around the room and held up three fingers, lowering the first one.

The room was so quiet you could hear a pin drop.

"Starting today, Cloud Peak will begin unlimited purchases of various materials, battle beast cubs, demon crystals, metals, and rare mutated lifeform specimens. We will no longer restrict the scale of entry into the secret realms, but the return time and location must follow orders. Those who fail to return on time will not have their space gates preserved. Cloud Peak will also open up large-scale trading, allowing the sale of silver and green grade equipment and lifting restrictions on level-three gene lifeforms and Cloud Peak Type I crystal weapons."

The room erupted into chaos.

This was no small matter.

It meant that Cloud Peak's policies were about to undergo a massive change!

Previously, gene lifeforms and magic crystal firearms were not for sale!

Cloud Peak's three specialties were highly coveted, and now, for the first time, they were offering previously unavailable items. After the initial shock, everyone was ecstatic.

After Ye Zhongming had added some clarifications, everyone felt more at ease.

Cloud Peak couldn't possibly afford to purchase unlimited amounts of materials, demon crystals, and battle beast cubs, so they would exchange them for equipment of equivalent value.

Previously, Cloud Peak had also sold equipment, and sales were good. The prices offered to the factions in Ying City were slightly lower than market prices.

But at this point in time, when everyone was striving to reach four stars, what were people wearing? Most had white equipment, and owning a single silver piece was a sign of status. Those like Deacon Water, Kim Jongyuan, and Jyanendra, who wielded gold or purple equipment, were the top-tier experts of their respective regions and couldn't be compared to ordinary evolved.

In other words, even though Cloud Peak's equipment was relatively cheap, the evolved around Ying City didn't have much money to spend. Many of them wore a mix of grey and white equipment. Only mid-level leaders in various factions might have a full set of white with a touch of silver, and only the leaders could afford green equipment.

In his previous life, Ye Zhongming had been an ordinary evolved. Even after ten years, his highest-tier gear was still green.

Why was equipment so expensive? Simply put, it was costly!

Chapter 1446.5- Cloud Peak system

For evolved, equipment was just one aspect. Their greatest need was still evolution potions. A single potion could drive an evolved to risk their life for a year or even several years. Where would they find extra demon crystals to buy better equipment? This didn't even account for job and skill scrolls.

So, even after more than four years in the apocalypse, the bulk of Cloud Peak's sales were still white-level equipment. Even grey equipment had a decent market share, as Cloud Peak's gear was of higher quality and came with clearer descriptions than others.

Cloud Peak previously provided limited quantities of green equipment to the leaders of affiliated factions.

Now, with Cloud Peak purchasing unlimited amounts of materials, it meant that quantity could make up for quality. By accumulating enough materials, one could exchange for better equipment.

For these leaders, there was no better news.

And as for mutated lifeform cubs and seeds, Cloud Peak had never wanted them before. They either ate or discarded what they caught. Now, these could be exchanged for goods!

These changes were aimed at ordinary evolved, but what interested the leaders were green-level equipment and above, as well as crystal weapons and gene lifeforms.

Although everyone knew that level-three gene lifeforms and the never-before-heard Cloud Peak Type I crystal weapons were likely leftovers, Cloud Peak didn't need. Even the weakest crystal weapon was slightly stronger than white-grade equipment.

Ye Zhongming also mentioned some other rules, such as green equipment requiring specific items for exchange, which everyone found reasonable.

The more valuable the item, the more it required something of equivalent value in return.

"Second." Ye Zhongming lowered his second finger.

"I've decided to expand Cloud Peak's sphere of influence."

Huh?

Many people didn't fully understand what Ye Zhongming meant by this or how it related to them.

After Ye Zhongming spoke, Xia Lei stood up and removed a black cloth from a table in the center of the room. The cloth revealed a detailed map centered on Cloud Peak.

Several areas on the map were marked in red, totaling six.

Observant people noticed that these six areas, when connected, formed a ring around Cloud Peak, each centered on a city.

"Are you saying... we should go out and occupy these cities?"

Though still based in Ying City, Zhao Xingmei and her Star Beauty Company had expanded their activities beyond Cloud Peak and Ying City. This woman had always had ambition.

It was precisely because of Star Beauty Company's expansion strategy—or, to put it bluntly, their strategy of distancing themselves from Cloud Peak—that she immediately understood Ye Zhongming's intentions.

"Yes. For example, Fengzhou. Star Beauty Company already has significant influence there. If you agree to my plan, the area centered on Fengzhou will become your jurisdiction in the future."

Zhao Xingmei's face flushed slightly, realizing that Ye Zhongming had long noticed her actions. However, it was clear that he didn't mind much. He knew that even if Star Beauty Company's efforts to minimize Cloud Peak's influence succeeded, Zhao Xingmei herself couldn't break away from Cloud Peak. After all, everything here had been a tremendous help to her, and truly going independent would be extremely difficult. 麻烦不小。

"Since you might not fully understand, let me explain. I plan to establish six jurisdictions around Cloud Peak and Ying City, selecting six regional leaders from among you to oversee all affairs in these areas.

You will receive strong support from Cloud Peak, not only enjoying lower prices when purchasing equipment, gene lifeforms, and crystal weapons but also receiving a batch of supplies free of charge."

"As for the purpose, I want to expand Cloud Peak's influence and turn these areas into material bases and hunting grounds for the Cloud Peak system."

This idea had been brewing in Ye Zhongming's mind for a long time. As time passed, the "Cloud Peak system," composed of Cloud Peak Mountain and the various organizations in Ying City, had grown larger. With the controlled area remaining the same, resource distribution had become increasingly strained, and conflicts over hunting grounds and the like had begun to arise.

Although everyone recognized Ye Zhongming as their leader and followed his orders, if this situation continued, it would inevitably lead to significant divisions, potentially resulting in chaos or even internal strife.

Especially since these factions had been following Cloud Peak and reaping greater benefits than other organizations, their development had been faster, and their "size" had begun to swell.

For example, Star Beauty Company and Bai Feng's and Sha Sha's organizations were like this. Keeping them confined to a small city like Ying City was no longer suitable.

The current Ying City was not the same as in Ye Zhongming's previous life, with millions of zombies. Now, the city was much cleaner. Aside from the rats underground, few mutated lifeforms were left on the surface.

In short, resources were no longer sufficient.

At this point, expansion became inevitable. Cloud Peak itself also needed expansion. A single small mountain could no longer accommodate Cloud Peak's growing number of members.

"I agree!"

Bai Feng was the first to voice his support. Since rejoining Cloud Peak, this man's stance had always been firm, even more so than Zhao Xingmei's. He even expressed his desire to join the Cloud Peak to Ye Zhongming.

"I agree as well." Zhao Xingmei naturally had no reason to oppose. She already controlled most of Fengzhou. With Ye Zhongming's support, taking full control of the city would be a breeze.

"Sha Sha, Guan City will be yours. It's the southern entrance to Ying City."

"Brother Tai, Zhengxiang City is yours. Will you take it?"

.....

Ye Zhongming assigned the areas one by one, and everyone realized that this wasn't a matter of volunteering. Cloud Peak already had its own candidates in mind.

After the assignments, Bai Feng frowned at the map. His area was Thunder City, where the local forces were quite powerful.

"Boss Ye, what's our stance toward these local factions?"

This operation would undoubtedly represent Cloud Peak, and Bai Feng was worried about causing trouble for Ye Zhongming.

"It's simple. Either absorb them or eliminate them."

Chapter 1447: Level three production

After splitting their respective jurisdictions, it didn't mean that Cloud Peak would leave them unsupervised. Special supervisory and tax offices would be established within their bases. While these offices wouldn't participate in the day-to-day management of the jurisdictions, they would ensure that these areas maintained an absolute hierarchical relationship with Cloud Peak, preventing any actions that could harm them. Additionally, a certain portion of their income would be collected as taxes.

No one objected to this. After all, Cloud Peak was essentially investing in the jurisdiction plan, and it was only fair to expect returns. They also trusted Ye Zhongming, knowing he was a man of his word.

"Regarding the tax ratio..." Ye Zhongming's few words immediately caught the attention of the newly appointed jurisdiction leaders.

This was a matter that directly affected their future earnings.

"The decision will be made after you hear the third matter."

Everyone inwardly rolled their eyes, but no one dared to show it on their faces.

"Each jurisdiction will henceforth be officially known as 'Cloud Peak XX Jurisdiction.' This is non-negotiable." Ye Zhongming glanced at the six jurisdiction leaders. "What can be negotiated is the identity you will use when controlling these jurisdictions."

Everyone was confused.

What identity? Was this even a question?

Only Bai Feng, Sha Sha, and Zhao Xingmei, who had the most contact with Cloud Peak and Ye Zhongming, realized what was going on. Their expressions varied—Bai Feng and Sha Sha were slightly excited, while Zhao Xingmei looked anxious and hesitant.

"The jurisdictions will be named 'Cloud Peak XX Jurisdiction,' using either the city's name or one you choose. However, as the ruling team, you can choose to add 'Cloud Peak' before your team's name."

As expected!

Bai Feng clenched his fist and slapped his thigh.

He once betrayed Ye Zhongming for profit, believing him to be dead then. After being taught a lesson, he recognized the man's strength and had since firmly followed the King of Cloud Peak.

Bai Feng had repeatedly expressed his desire to join Cloud Peak and merge his team into it.

However, due to past events, even though Xia Lei and the others didn't hold any grudges, there was still some lingering awkwardness, which was why Ye Zhongming had never agreed.

Others might not immediately understand Ye Zhongming's words, but Bai Feng got it right away.

This was about establishing true peripheral forces.

It was like the outer disciples of ancient sects, who could carry the sect's name.

Previously, they had been, at best, outer disciples who relied on the sect for survival.

For Bai Feng, and for Sha Sha, who had always been able to join Cloud Peak but had delayed doing so due to Ye Zhongming's instructions, this wasn't an issue. They would have agreed even without any benefits.

But for Zhao Xingmei and the other factions, this was a dilemma.

They might have agreed if Ye Zhongming had directly asked them to join Cloud Peak. But now, they would be "outer disciples," at best, far less free than their own leaders, and they would inevitably be subject to Cloud Peak's management. This was somewhat uncomfortable. ¶

Ye Zhongming glanced at them, completely unfazed. "If you choose to carry the Cloud Peak name, you will naturally have to follow Cloud Peak's orders. I can say without hesitation that teams choosing this option will, to some extent, lose a portion of their control. Cloud Peak will take over your personnel and financial systems entirely and will conduct comprehensive supervision."

"I can be very clear: you will become Cloud Peak's reserve force, part of our Cloud Peak system."

The hall fell silent. Whether it was the core members who already knew or the ordinary members and leaders who were hearing this for the first time, everyone listened quietly.

The only voice in the hall was Ye Zhongming's.

"Those who choose not to carry the Cloud Peak name will not be forced. Cloudtop will only send supervisors. As long as you don't do anything to harm Cloud Peak or my interests, that's fine."

He paused, then continued, "Now, back to the tax ratio."

"If you choose to carry the Cloudtop name, Cloud Peak will take over your financial system entirely. I will deduct 50% of your trade volume."

"If you choose not to carry the Cloud Peak name, Cloud Peak will only supervise and monitor your financial earnings. Based on Cloud Peak's calculations, we will take 20% of your net profits."

After saying this, Ye Zhongming stood up. "On this map, some smaller points are also marked out. These are county-level areas that are secondary hunting grounds. Those who want to go there can also apply. But I must say, any team that goes to these places without my permission will not only receive no protection from Cloud Peak but will also be directly eliminated."

"Alright, this is a significant matter. Take some time to think about it. Give me your decision later."

With that, Ye Zhongming left with the Cloud Peak team, leaving only the leaders of the Ying City factions in the conference room.

.....

"Boss, isn't this a bit too complicated? Why not just make them submit directly? Those who don't agree can leave." Little Tiger frowned, feeling that Ye Zhongming's approach was too cumbersome and useless.

Lu Yi laughed. "Little Tige, do you think Cloud Peak is so easy to join? We were lucky to follow Zhongming when he was still starting out. Under his leadership, we worked hard for this faction, and that's how we got to where we are today."

"What about these people? They've also contributed to Cloud Peak, but Cloud Peak has never mistreated them. The relationship has been more of an exchange of benefits. It's fine for them to remain independent and live around Cloud Peak, but would they really be willing to join? Even if they were, would you be willing? Would you be okay with these people being on equal footing with you? Would our Cloud Peak warriors be okay with it?"

Hearing Lu Yi's words, Little Tiger nodded, realizing this made sense.

"Cloud Peak needs to continue developing, and expansion is inevitable. But those we absorb must be tested and trustworthy. Those outside are not quite there yet."

Xia Lei, walking beside Ye Zhongming, added to Lu Yi's words.

"That makes sense, but isn't the boss's final demand a bit harsh? Taking 50% for those willing to carry the Cloud Peak name, while those who don't only have to pay 20%? What's going on?"

Ye Zhongming smiled. "Is 50% of the trade volume necessarily more than 20% of the net profit?"

Little Tiger was confused again, not understanding what this meant. Everyone around him laughed.

"Ugh, you're so dumb! If they carry our name, how could the boss not help them? The benefits they'd get would far surpass those who don't carry the name!"

Candy pinched Little Tiger's arm, scolding her man for being too slow.

Little Tiger didn't mind, just chuckled and exchanged a knowing look with Ye Zhongming.

Chapter 1447.5- Level three production

The group didn't stay at Cloud Peak but headed to the Gene Life Laboratory instead.

Many, such as Gan Lan, Mei Na, and Little Peng, were visiting for the first time. Even other core members, rarely had the chance to come here as the laboratory's achievements became more dazzling.

Everyone was filled with curiosity about this place.

Liu Zhenghong exuded an aura of absolute authority that even Xia Lei couldn't match.

"Everything you see here must not be disclosed outside these walls, especially by those who think with their lower halves. Otherwise, I'll turn you into females."

Sister Hong's warning was as domineering as ever, and the men in the room felt a chill between their legs.

Soon, she led everyone to an underground structure.

With limited space on the mountain estate, the two laboratories couldn't expand indefinitely. For safety reasons, underground construction had begun long ago. Now, the core parts of the laboratory had been completely relocated into the mountain. To attack this place, one would have to blast through an entire mountain or fight down from Cloud Peak.

This place was nearly impregnable.

As they walked, everyone was quiet, speaking only in whispers, as if afraid of disturbing the lab technicians.

In truth, they were a bit scared.

Yes, scared.

Logically, these evolved, who had lived through over four years of the apocalypse and were all high-level evolved, had seen it all. They had taken dozens, if not hundreds, of lives and had long since shed any sense of fear—except when facing death.

But now, walking through the laboratory corridors, smelling the faint mix of medicine and blood, hearing the occasional faint roars, and seeing the lab technicians' indifferent gazes—as if they were looking at moving pieces of meat—everyone felt uneasy.

Coupled with the rumors about the Gene Life Laboratory and the appearance of those gene lifeforms, they could feel the sweat on their backs.

A massive white metal door appeared ahead. Liu Zhenghong walked over, underwent iris, fingerprint, and voice verification, and entered a password before the door opened.

Everyone entered, and what they saw left them utterly stunned.

Before them was an enormous space with four rows of massive metal platforms, each five to six meters wide and over a hundred meters long. At the end, the platforms curved upward, forming several rings.

Lab technicians were busy operating numerous machines on either side of these platforms, their eyes never leaving the platforms.

What shocked the core members wasn't the metal or the machines but the... objects on the platforms.

They could only describe them as such. Hooks and sickles hung countless dangling bodies of various types, moving along conveyor belts. They stopped at various machines, which either cut, stitched, injected, or transplanted... in short, they were modifying these bodies. After completing a full cycle on the platforms, the bodies were sent into metal chambers at the end, each filled with a light blue solution.

These chambers were then transported to the walls and placed vertically. Semi-transparent tubes ran from the chambers, connecting to the interior and periodically replenishing the fluids consumed by the lifeforms inside.

"This... this is too sci-fi!"

Being young and inexperienced in combat, Candy had the weakest mental fortitude. If Little Tiger hadn't held her earlier, she might have collapsed in the corridor.

Now, she couldn't help but exclaim seeing a scene that could only belong in pre-apocalypse sci-fi movies.

Liu Zhenghong glanced at her, though it was unclear whether it was a reprimand or just her natural expression.

"This is the production line for level-three gene lifeforms."

Liu Zhenghong pointed at the metal platforms.

Everyone collectively gasped, then suddenly realized: Could Cloud Peak now mass-produce level-three lifeforms?

Previously, Cloud Peak's gene lifeform forces had always been mysterious, directly controlled by Ye Zhongming, and rarely seen in battle. Most people had only caught glimpses of them during experiments, and no one really knew the specifics.

At the same time, everyone knew that Cloud Peak's current technology could produce relatively stable level-six gene warriors, though the numbers were likely small. In comparison, these level-three lifeforms didn't seem impressive.

However, everyone understood that individual production and mass production were entirely different concepts. With sufficient materials, Cloud Peak could amass a million level-three lifeforms quickly. At that scale, even level-nine lifeforms would have to retreat.

"Earlier, Little Ye's decisions were partly due to resource, territory, and development needs, but that's not the whole story."

Liu Zhenghong took a recording device from an assistant and carefully examined the data while speaking to the group.

Many people now noticed that this assistant was Guancheng Chun, whom Ye Zhongming had brought back from Thousand Beast Villa. He had completely transformed, not only with four legs but also four arms. He was even less human in this form, but his demeanor improved significantly. The sinister aura was gone, replaced by a passion for research and a fanatical admiration for Liu Zhenghong.

Coming here, he realized that their level of expertise was beyond his imagination. After just one meeting, he had completely submitted to Liu Zhenghong.

"The important thing is since we established the gene lifeform production line, our material supply has started to fall short."

Everyone's jaws dropped as they looked at the machines operating with some noise but not excessively loud. Their minds struggled to process this.

"I need a large number of mutated lifeforms, whether alive or dead. I need a large amount of potions, from high-end genes to low-end disinfectants. I need various gene fragments, I need many metal cabins,

I need a large-scale cold room, I need better sterilised environments, and I need more experimental equipment. I also need more research assistants!"

"In short, I need everything. You must provide it for me!"

Chapter 1448: Cloud Peak's technological improvement

Liu Zhenghong stood in front of the group like a teacher scolding children, demanding this and that, saying what she needed and what they had to do for her.

But no one objected, not even a hint of displeasure. Even Ye Zhongming listened quietly.

"Mass production of level three? No, in my opinion, it's not."

Liu Zhenghong walked between the metal platforms. For her safety, Ye Zhongming had made her a seven-star evolved and crafted her excellent protective gear. He didn't hesitate to give her job and skills that would aid her.

Though Liu Zhenghong had little combat experience, killing her was no easy task. Even Ye Zhongming, going all out, would need at least a minute to do it. And Ye Zhongming was one of the strongest in the region, if not the world.

A minute was enough for Cloud Peak's defenses to arrive.

In fact, breaking through the guards to attack Liu Zhenghong was nearly impossible.

No one except Liu Zhenghong could wear equipment or carry weapons within the lab.

"This production line has only been running for a few days. Each line produces just ninety units a day. And that's with the large amount of materials and suitable genes I prepared in advance. If we maintain this output, we'll have to shut down the day after tomorrow."

Liu Zhenghong looked at everyone and said, "What kind of mass production is this? It's nothing. Only by keeping the production line running at full capacity for at least three hundred days a year can it be called mass production!"

"And this is my demand."

Many people secretly sighed.

Sister Hong made it sound easy, but achieving this was incredibly difficult. They didn't understand how mass production of these level-three gene lifeforms worked, but the materials required must be astronomical.

Just think about it—they could only sustain a few days of full production with Cloud Peak's resources. It was still terrifying even if producing these lifeforms didn't account for a large portion of the estate's overall operations.

"This isn't my fault. Blame your good boss for suddenly opening up the sale of gene lifeforms at this level."

Ye Zhongming coughed twice and had a bitter smile on his face. This Sister Hong—she was the one who said that with Cloud Peak's technological advancements, if financial pressure was high, they could open up the sale of level-three mutated lifeforms to other factions. Now, she was pinning it all on him.

But he didn't argue. It was good to keep his subordinates on their toes.

"In a few days, new equipment will arrive, and we'll expand this place. My idea is to build ten production lines first, so you all need to step up."

The group groaned in unison.

Ye Zhongming explained a bit, and everyone felt more at ease.

It turned out that mass-producing level-three lifeforms wasn't that difficult. The materials Sister Hong referred to were mostly corpses. These corpses had very low requirements; they just needed to be level-one or level-two mutated lifeforms, dead or alive. Alive was best, but if dead, they couldn't be more than 24 hours old in summer or 48 hours in winter. Those stored using special methods were exceptions.

With the strength of Cloud Peak's various teams, hunting these low-level lifeforms would be a breeze. They wouldn't need to lift a finger. Once Ye Zhongming established these jurisdictions, there would be a surge in hunting low-level lifeforms. Many factions would be more than willing to trade these low-level corpses for good stuff at Cloud Peak.

The main task of Cloud Peak's teams would still be hunting high-level lifeforms to provide experimental materials and gene samples for Ye Zhongming.

Also, hunting level-eight lifeforms was a top priority. Many super factions were now fully immersed in the eight-star evolution wave. Cloud Peak had taken the lead earlier and couldn't afford to fall behind now.

"Once this batch of gene lifeforms is produced and cultivated for a few days, they'll be ready for combat. The reason I called you here is to inform you that in the next month, you'll need to take turns practicing combat coordination with mutated lifeforms. Before we launch the attack on the Witch Palace, you must be accustomed to and familiar with this combat style."

Ye Zhongming's words made everyone straighten up. So that's what this was about. No wonder the boss and Sister Hong brought everyone here—it was a live demonstration.

"Alright, now that you have a basic understanding, I'll compile the specifics—what types of gene lifeforms there are, their abilities, how many there are currently, and how you should coordinate with them—into a manual and distribute it. Familiarize yourselves with it quickly, but remember one thing: confidentiality!"

After Sister Hong finished, she shoed everyone away like flies, telling only Ye Zhongming to return later. She didn't even spare her own husband, Le Dayuan, any attention.

Since Ye Zhongming brought back those precious materials, Sister Hong hadn't been home.

Of course, Le Dayuan wasn't much better. This master's reputation outside surpassed even Liu Zhenghong's led everyone to his laboratory.

"Sister Hong didn't show you the good stuff, but I will." Le Dayuan smiled warmly, treating everyone kindly.

But if anyone thought he was easy to bully, they'd be in for a lesson.

In Cloud Peak, when it came to strength, Ye Zhongming was the strongest, followed by Shengyuan. The two were almost equal.

So, who was third? Outsiders might think it was Tong Hu or Tang Tian, but everyone knew it wasn't them—it was Le Dayuan.

Due to the nature of his work, which often required moving heavy objects, Ye Zhongming had not only made this kind middle-aged man a seven-star evolved but also gave him the most support in terms of strength.

Ye Zhongming had even specially found two skill scrolls perfect for Le Dayuan. One allowed him to convert his strength into defense when needed, increasing his survivability. The other was an attack scroll, with damage tied to his strength and a high multiplier.

Like Liu Zhenghong, Le Dayuan was well-protected and had strong self-defense capabilities. Ordinary core members wouldn't find it easy to defeat this master in a fight.

"Here, take a look at these first."

The Crystal Weapon Laboratory felt more chaotic and casual than the Gene Life Laboratory, which had a sci-fi and cold atmosphere. However, they shared one similarity: size. This place was even bigger, much bigger.

Because the smith's laboratories were all concentrated here, spaced a hundred or even several hundred meters apart. They usually worked independently, but there were times when everyone suddenly gathered together.

Le Dayuan's workbench was naturally at the center of this vast space. When he spoke, he pointed to a mechanical platform about the size of a truck.

"Remember those micro-engraved bullets?"

Everyone nodded. The power of those things still gave them chills. During Cloud Peak's defense battle, the scene of Ye Zhongming killing level-eight lifeforms with just a few bullets left many in awe.

"Now, we can replicate them." Le Dayuan's eyes sparkled as he spoke.

Chapter 1449: Cloud Peak's technological improvement (2)

Le Dayuan personally demonstrated the process, from inserting the metal to loading the gunpowder. The entire process took less than half a minute. After inserting the demon crystal to power the machine, it began to rumble into action. Lights flickered here and there, and the sharp engraving sound filled the air, leaving everyone dazzled.

"This is the key part of the entire device," Le Dayuan pointed to a metal engraving pen about twenty centimeters long, standing upright at the back of the metal platform.

Everyone looked over, observing carefully. They noticed that the pen was intricate and precise, reaching an almost unbelievable level of sophistication. The engraving pen, only two millimeters in diameter, contained more than six colored wires inside. The tip was so fine that it was only a fraction of a hair's width. If not for the enhanced vision of evolved, they wouldn't have been able to see it clearly.

Yet, such a fine tip could easily carve patterns onto the metal of the bullet. No one knew how Le Dayuan had achieved this.

"This thing isn't that complicated. It mainly consists of three parts. The first part is the focus of your attention—the pen body. It comprises an element conduit, a gold wire tip, and a magic crystal wire. The second part is the micro-engraving control box. This is where various elemental gemstones are inserted, and it also controls the operation of the pen body. It's the most complex part. Finally, there's the crystal energy supply system. These lines you see here, here, and here all supply energy to this micro-engraving pen— crystal energy."

"Master Le has made a breakthrough with this platform," Ye Zhongming suddenly interjected.

Le Dayuan waved his hand, smiling, signaling it wasn't a big deal.

But Ye Zhongming continued, "Previously, the basic principle of our crystal weapons was to use demon crystals as the energy hub, converting and firing them to create massive threats."

"But Master Le took a different approach in this design. The energy used for the micro-engraving on the bullets actually comes from the energy stones, not the demon crystals. The crystal energy acts as a stabilizer, balancing these elemental energies, enhancing the metal's adhesion, and maintaining the overall integrity of the bullet to ensure the weapon's durability."

"As for what 'integrity' means, I don't really understand either. I just heard it from Master Le."

After hearing Ye Zhongming's explanation, everyone chuckled, but their admiration for Le Dayuan was unmistakable.

This middle-aged man was truly astonishing. From what they had just heard, it was clear that Le Dayuan had not only mastered the technology of extracting energy from demon crystals but had also developed the ability to extract energy from nature gems and energy stones, and this technology was now mature.

This was undoubtedly another significant leap forward. Whether it could be called groundbreaking would depend on future creations. If products comparable to crystal weapons were developed, then Le Dayuan would no longer just be a master—he would be a god.

"It's not that exaggerated. A lot of things are interconnected. The more you know, the more ideas naturally come to you."

Hearing Le Dayuan's modest words, many people in the room looked at him with a mix of admiration and frustration, thinking, "Master Le, you're really downplaying this. You know more and understand other things, too, but why don't we get it? How many laps around the equator does our IQ differ by?"

Click.

The first bullet dropped into the box beneath the metal platform. Le Dayuan picked it up and placed it in front of everyone.

"This one has no elemental gemstones inserted, so it's a pure crystal energy bullet. When this bullet hits someone, besides causing significant penetration damage, it also inflicts cutting damage."

Le Dayuan gestured to Ye Zhongming, who took out a blue-grade rifle from his space. Le Dayuan loaded the bullet.

Since most of the crystal weapon lab members were gathered to watch the demonstration, they looked on with pride as Le Dayuan showed off the micro-engraving platform, which also contained their hard work.

"Firing now." Since no one was conducting experiments, Le Dayuan called out a warning before firing the gun upward.

Everyone looked up and saw that the ceiling of the hundred-meter-high metal hall was covered with a white, foam-like substance. After the bullet entered, a massive screen on the left side of the hall exploded with graphics and data, leaving everyone bewildered.

"I thought you were just hammering away with a hammer, Old Le. I didn't realize it was this advanced."

Faced with Little Tiger's feigned ignorance, everyone couldn't help but laugh. Le Dayuan pointed at the kid, shaking his head with a smile.

"Let me explain. What you see on the ceiling is our simulated evolved skin strength system. The strength setting just now was... six stars."

Le Dayuan glanced at a nearby display screen.

"These data tell us that when the bullet penetrates the simulated six-star evolved's skin, it begins to generate cutting force. After 0.32 seconds, when it passes through the body, its kinetic energy decreases by 72%. In other words, the bullet penetrates the body, creating a continuous cutting wound—essentially blowing a hole in the body with a diameter of 26.7 centimeters."

Many people's expressions changed.

Although they were all seven-star evolved, facing such a bullet, even if it didn't almost sever their bodies, it would still create a hole the size of a bowl. The more fragile internal organs would likely be shredded. With their strengths, as long as the bullet didn't hit their hearts or similar vital areas, they probably wouldn't die immediately, but severe injury was inevitable.

"What's wrong? Scared?"

Le Dayuan noticed the uneasy looks on the young faces and chuckled.

"Uncle, this is terrifying."

Liang Chuyin grabbed Le Dayuan's arm, her face filled with displeasure.

This thing was a massive threat to evolved.

"Haha, silly child, this is just theory." Le Dayuan patted the influencer's head and pointed at the screen. "I set a 'clean' six-star evolved—no defensive equipment, no skills or bloodlines, and no improved evolution potions. In other words, the weakest six-star evolved."

"In actual combat, evolved wear defensive equipment, learn skills and jobs, and may have enhanced their physical attributes through various methods. So, the damage won't be this severe. This doesn't even account for factors like shooting distance, the level of the firearm used, or the shooter's skill."

"With all these factors considered, the actual effect of this bullet will vary depending on the person and the environment."

After saying this, Le Dayuan's tone shifted. "However, one thing is certain: on the battlefield, when fired by someone with a shooting-related job or skill using at least a blue-grade firearm, this bullet can directly kill a fully armed four-star evolved even at maximum range. It poses a lethal threat to five-star evolved within optimal range, and even six-star evolved would need to tread carefully, possibly even retreating!"

At that moment, click, another micro-engraved bullet was completed and dropped into the finished product box.

"The production time for this type of bullet is ten minutes per piece."

Chapter 1450: Cloud Peak's technological improvement (3)

Many people were stunned, followed by a deep admiration for Le Dayuan.

A bullet that posed a threat to seven-star evolved could be produced in just ten minutes?! Six bullets an hour? One hundred and forty-four bullets a day?!

This was terrifying.

If they found a few sharpshooters, like Li Qiang, and had them fire at seven-star evolved from a certain distance, they could probably take them down without shedding a drop of blood in just a few hours.

No matter how luxurious your equipment, how overpowered your bloodline, or how precious your life-saving items are, it all comes down to how many bullets are needed.

"What about those..."

Guang Yao pointed to the energy bullets.

Le Dayuan signaled for them to wait. He fiddled with the control box, and the machine started up again. A bullet entered the production process.

This time, the brightness of the engraving pen was different from before. Instead of being white, it emitted a faint blue light.

This production took slightly longer, about fifteen minutes, before a pale blue bullet dropped into the finished product box.

Le Dayuan picked up the bullet with his hand, and everyone immediately felt the temperature around them drop slightly.

"Ice-type micro-engraved bullet," Le Dayuan explained briefly, then added, "I won't demonstrate this one for you. This one is quite expensive."

Everyone chuckled. No one would believe Le Dayuan if he said he was short on money. He and Liu Zhenghong were the two special figures in Cloud Peak who could get whatever they needed. But they also knew that if Le Dayuan said something was expensive, it must be incredibly valuable.

"Besides this, we can also produce fire-type, wind-type, earth-type, and poison-type bullets."

"As for their power, it's quite straightforward." Le Dayuan held up the ice-type bullet. "Compared to earlier energy bullets, the ice-type micro-engraved bullet has stronger penetration and inflicts freezing damage along its trajectory. The other types have slightly lower penetration but carry the characteristics of their respective elements. For example, the fire-type bullet causes burning damage, the wind-type increases flight speed and range, the earth-type creates explosive impacts, and the poison-type inflicts poisoning."

Everyone understood that these were the properties of nature gems or energy stones.

"Um..." Little Tiger rubbed his hands together, looking at Ye Zhongming with a pleading expression.  
"Boss, do you think we could get some of these bullets? Our team has several sharpshooters."

"When it comes to shooting, who could be better than my men?" Guang Yao might not care about battle beasts, but many of his subordinates were former professional soldiers from the resistance zone. Their shooting skills were unmatched. Some shooting-type evolved might not even be as good as his ordinary soldiers when not using shooting skills. There was no way he was going to let this opportunity slip.

The power of the micro-engraved bullets was clear to everyone. Although firearms had gradually fallen out of favor in the apocalypse and couldn't dominate the battlefield, they still had considerable power as an auxiliary attack method.

Especially in a place like Cloud Peak, where firearms were high-level and micro-engraved bullets existed, these bullets could even serve as a primary attack method in certain situations.

"You guys are always getting excited when you see something good."

Le Dayuan smiled as he led the group to another area.

"You only see the strengths of these bullets, but you're missing their weaknesses."

"Master Le, such powerful bullets have weaknesses?" Speaking to the legendary figure for the first time, Gan Lan was nervous, a far cry from her usual bold demeanor.

"Everything has its pros and cons," Le Dayuan said seriously.

"Micro-engraved bullets are fast to produce, have a high success rate, don't require mental energy, and are powerful enough. You could say they have a place in future battles, and if used well, they could achieve glorious results."

As they walked, Le Dayuan explained the pros and cons to everyone.

"But, as Sister Hong mentioned earlier, do you know what it takes to produce one of these bullets?"

"Um," Gan Lan said softly, "I think I saw you using a level-six demon crystal earlier."

"Haha, this girl is quite observant." Le Dayuan praised her, making Gan Lan beam with pride.

"Yes, I used a level-six demon crystal. Even though I've done my best to improve the energy conversion system, these bullets still consume massive energy. If we're producing energy bullets, one hundred level-six demon crystals can only produce about one hundred and ninety bullets. It could have been two hundred, but there's a failure rate."

Even Cloudtop's core members, who were considered wealthy in the apocalypse, were shocked by the 'exchange rate' of two bullets for one level-six magic crystal.

This was literally burning money.

"Producing other elemental types consumes fewer magic crystals, about one level-six demon crystal for every ten bullets. But the consumption of nature gems is much faster. Even high-level gems can't produce many bullets." Le Dayuan sighed. "The energy conversion rate in this area is still not as good as demon crystals."

"I made an ice-type bullet earlier because we currently have more ice-type gems. But I estimate that, given our mining speed and consumption rate, the gems mine in the dungeons will soon be depleted."

Even Ye Zhongming couldn't offer much comfort on this matter. He could only do his best to provide what was needed.

"And that's just the energy aspect. The engraving pen also develops issues as it's used more. Making a new one requires a lot of materials and time. The bullets may be small, but their cost is incredibly high."

Everyone nodded in agreement.

"Besides that, these bullets contain massive energy, so ordinary firearms can't withstand the firing impact. After testing, only blue-grade firearms can barely handle it. Also, when firing, there's no recoil, but the entire gun emits an energy shockwave. This issue can't be resolved for now. Only evolved at six stars or above can continuously withstand this shock. But even in a place as strong as Cloud Peak, how many people have shooting jobs and are at six stars? Zhongming's crafting job has reached the top level, but even with failure rates factored in, how much material does it take to produce a single blue-grade firearm?"

As Le Dayuan raised each issue, the core members fully understood. While micro-engraved bullets were powerful, they also had significant drawbacks. Their numbers would inevitably be limited, and they would likely be reserved for people like Ye Zhongming and Li Qiang, who had exceptional shooting skills.

"Let's take a look at this big guy instead." Le Dayuan stopped at a spot, and everyone saw a massive metal box, about four meters tall and two meters wide.

Le Dayuan pressed a button, and the huge metal box slowly opened, revealing a humanoid machine with a metallic sheen.

Chapter 1450.5- Cloud Peak's technological improvement (3)

"Whoa, a Gundam?"

Candy exclaimed.

"You've seen Gundam? Wasn't that something from our generation?" Little Tiger looked at his girlfriend in disbelief. Only he could be so out of touch at a moment like this.

Candy responded with a well-executed eye roll.

"What's a Gundam?" Le Dayuan looked confused.

"Nothing, Master Le. Please continue, don't mind them." This came from Xia Lei, who was already captivated by the mechanical warrior before her.

This was no Gundam. Its appearance was different, and in essence, it was even more so. Looking at the exposed parts with familiar wires, everyone knew this was another product powered by crystal energy.

Upon closer inspection, the massive robot exuded an intimidating presence. Its proportions were designed entirely based on the human form. This wasn't to say other forms were inferior, but humans had the deepest understanding of themselves, and principles of mechanics could be better applied to humanoid devices, making the technology relatively mature.

"This is a combat robot jointly developed by me and Sister Hong."

Le Dayuan said this, then called over a few people and gave them some technical jargon that no one else could understand. The assistants quickly brought over a lift, and soon, more people arrived. In no time, they had covered all the exposed parts with uniform armor plates and made adjustments.

Although it took a while—over half an hour—no one grew impatient. They were all discussing what this thing was and what it could do.

"You can think of it as a simplified version of a war fortress."

Le Dayuan operated a machine nearby, and the robot's interior made a series of sounds. Then, the massive body took a step forward, followed by another, and soon it walked out of the metal box.

After stopping, the assistants returned to the lift and removed the tubes connecting the robot to the metal box.

"This is a combat robot powered by life and crystal energy."

Le Dayuan looked at his creation with shining eyes.

"Its weapon system is powered by crystal energy, and I've applied the micro-engraving conversion principle to it, allowing for elemental attacks."

"Look here."

Le Dayuan pressed a few buttons, and the combat robot raised its arms. Everyone saw that the robot's hands differed from human hands—it had fifteen fingers. These fingers curled into fists, and then the front part flipped down, revealing thirty firing ports.

"You can think of these as two rotary machine guns, but instead of bullets, they fire energy beams." Le Dayuan's voice rose slightly, clearly proud of this creation. "That's not entirely accurate. The attack mode can be selected—it can fire energy spheres or energy beams of varying lengths. Naturally, the longer the beam, the more powerful it is, but there's an upper limit."

After saying this, Le Dayuan operated the controls again. The fists closed, returning to their normal state, but then the forearms folded down from the elbows, revealing two dark cannon ports on each side.

"Crystal cannons, or elemental cannons—an enhanced version of the hand attacks. They're incredibly powerful but consume a lot of energy."

"And here." Le Dayuan moved his hands, and a device rose from the left shoulder while another emerged from the back. The two parts combined in a few seconds to form a strange gun over two meters long.

The robot took the gun with both hands and assumed a shooting stance.

"This is based on Zhongming's sniper rifle. It's for long-range attacks. Naturally, it's not as powerful as when Zhongming uses it, but it can withstand the energy impact of up to twenty micro-engraved bullets. However, if it reaches the limit, it will damage the entire body and need to be brought back for repairs immediately."

After storing the gun, Le Dayuan had his assistants bring over a nearby box.

Inside were various weapons clearly designed for the robot—swords, shields, halberds, hammers, and clubs. It seemed these were prepared for different types of combat.

"Um..." Tong Hu was a bit nervous. "Master Le, this robot seems a bit slow. Is that intentional?"

Little Li quickly tugged at her husband's sleeve.

How could someone who failed middle school physics and math even think of questioning Le Dayuan? When would her husband's single-mindedness ever improve?

"It's not intentional. If I'm controlling it, this is the robot's speed."

Huh?

Everyone was dumbfounded.

This robot moved slower than the much larger war fortress. How could it be deployed for combat? And what was the point of those melee weapons? Even ordinary people could easily dodge them, let alone evolved.

Le Dayuan chuckled. "Let me finish before I answer that question."

"In the creation of this combat robot, aside from the core components, I'm most satisfied with the energy armor."

Everyone perked up their ears. This energy armor sounded impressive.

Le Dayuan didn't elaborate much. He simply activated the ability.

A light appeared at the robot's head, then, like flowing water, it instantly covered the entire body. The robot was now enveloped in a layer of energy.

"This is energy armor. It can be activated throughout combat without affecting battle." Le Dayuan was clearly proud. With the dual advancements in evolved physical and mental capabilities, he had transformed from a mechanical engineer and micro-manufacturing expert into a true master of technology in an incredibly short time.

"I've tested it. As long as there's enough energy, this layer of energy armor can provide defense equivalent to gold-grade equipment."

His words were shocking, and everyone was stunned.

Earlier, they thought mass-producing level-three gene lifeforms was terrifying. Then, they thought micro-engraved bullets were incredible. Now, this combat robot seemed the real deal—a true killing machine.

"Master Le, you said 'as long as there's enough energy'?" Xia Lei asked. She didn't interfere with the two labs, so like everyone else, this was her first time seeing this new product.

"Yes, Xia Lei, you've hit the nail on the head." Le Dayuan stopped operating the controls and pointed upward at the robot's body. "As I mentioned earlier, this robot is powered by two types of energy. The weapon system uses crystal energy because, with our current technology—or rather, with our current level of wealth—crystal energy can barely support the weapon system. Even so, it requires level-seven demon crystals as the energy source. Do you know how many energy supply hubs are inside this robot? Twelve. Each hub requires three level-seven demon crystals, totaling thirty-six. If this robot activates its energy armor and goes all out, it can only last for three minutes before running out of energy!"