

Apocalypse 1456

Chapter 1456: Sending battle beasts

The visitors were the Rat King and his mate.

Accompanying them was a small, level-one rat.

Looking at the massive Rat King, whose size dwarfed even an elephant, Ye Zhongming couldn't help but show a puzzled expression.

The Rat King and his primary mate had both reached level seven in their mutations and were on the verge of evolving to level eight. Ye Zhongming could even sense the immense power radiating from their bodies.

They could evolve to level eight at any moment, but they were deliberately suppressing it!

This left Ye Zhongming even more confused. Mutated lifeforms' desire for evolution and power was no less intense than evolved ones. In fact, given their harsher living conditions, these were their very means of survival. Humans had all sorts of desires, but for mutated lifeforms, life's meaning boiled down to evolution and reproduction. Their daily activities could be summed up as eating and mating.

So, what was making these two giant rats suppress their levels?

Earlier, while crafting equipment, Ye Zhongming had suddenly received a mental signal from the Rat King, transmitted from beneath the ground outside the mountain. He had initially thought they were having trouble with their expansion and had come to ask for help. But now, it seemed that wasn't the case at all.

The Rat King and his mate lay prostrate before Ye Zhongming, with no guards except for the small level-one rat. This was undoubtedly a gesture of goodwill. This was quite remarkable for a species as timid as rats, who usually had hundreds of thousands of followers even when going to relieve themselves.

The Rat King lay there, his tiny, almost invisible eyes occasionally glancing at Ye Zhongming's expressionless face, his entire body trembling.

Ye Zhongming found it amusing. While mutated rats inherited some of the traits of their original species, such as timidity, this was only relative. Especially for a Rat King of this level, who had fought countless battles to reach his position, Ye Zhongming believed they were cautious, but not to the point of trembling in fear. After all, whether it was him, Xia Bai, the dragon Yangos in the sky, or the earth dragon Yellow Ball on the ground, they could easily kill the Rat King and his mate if they were unprotected. But trembling to this extent? Ye Zhongming didn't buy it.

This was an act put on for his benefit.

"This... for you," a vague mental communication entered Ye Zhongming's consciousness, drawing his attention to the small rat that the Rat King had pushed forward. The little rat was looking around with its small eyes, seemingly indifferent.

"Huh?"

At first, Ye Zhongming hadn't paid much attention, thinking it was just another special offspring of the Rat King's colony. But upon closer inspection, he noticed something unusual.

He picked up the small rat, which was now only the size of his palm, and examined it carefully. What he discovered surprised him.

Ye Zhongming detected at least three distinct lifeform characteristics in this little rat.

The first was draconic. Ye Zhongming was very familiar with this, having spent so much time with Yangos, who had repeatedly evolved to level eight. He knew the aura and traits of dragons well. On this little rat, he felt the shape of dragon wings beneath the skin on its sides!

They were unmistakably dragon wings, almost identical to Yangos's!

A rat with dragon genes?

No matter how much it mutated, this was impossible. The only explanation was that this rat was either a descendant of one of Liu Zhenghong's experiments or the rats had somehow absorbed the genes of Yangos or another dragon-like creature.

Either way, Ye Zhongming couldn't help but feel a sense of respect for these rats.

Their adaptability and openness to altering their very essence were traits other lifeforms lacked.

No one wanted to become "something else."

Humans were especially resistant to this. While some people had transformed themselves into unrecognizable beings, the vast majority opposed such changes.

Besides the draconic traits, Ye Zhongming also found human characteristics in this little rat.

Its limbs.

Though they were still small, it was clear that the hind limbs were human-like legs, and the forelimbs were human-like arms. They were too thin at this stage, making them look somewhat deformed.

Rat King

Ye Zhongming glanced at the Rat King, a flicker of something unreadable in his eyes.

The Rat King immediately sent a flurry of chaotic, anxious mental signals, likely trying to explain the situation.

Ye Zhongming waved his hand.

He wasn't concerned about how the Rat King obtained these human genes. What mattered was whether they threatened Cloud Peak.

At least for now, these rats hadn't shown any signs of being a threat to Cloud Peak.

The last characteristic was something Ye Zhongming couldn't quite place. It wasn't rat-like. On both sides of its neck were three thin, scar-like white lines. These areas lacked the white fur covering the rest of its body, leaving only bare skin. Its tail was similarly bare, like the six marks on its neck, and disproportionately thick compared to its body.

Of course, what surprised Ye Zhongming even more was the energy contained within this little creature. It was far beyond what a level-one mutant lifeform should possess, almost on par with a level-three lifeform.

"Very, promising, grow, strong, want to give, you," the Rat King sent another mental message. Then it called out to its mate, who stood up after receiving Ye Zhongming's permission. Everyone could now see that the female rat had a pouch-like structure on her lower abdomen, similar to a kangaroo's. She reached into it with her forelimbs and pulled out a bag made of animal skin, about the size of an adult human, and placed it respectfully in front of Ye Zhongming.

Many of the evolved present glanced curiously at the pouch, thinking how much it could hold. Carrying such a large bag around must be quite a hassle.

A female guard soldier cautiously opened the bag, revealing its contents.

It was filled to the brim with scrolls.

Ye Zhongming set the little rat, which had grown quite affectionate toward him, aside and approached the bag. He flipped through the scrolls and found that they were all mental-type scrolls—over a hundred!

Most were skill scrolls related to mental abilities, with a few being mental-type job scrolls. When Ye Zhongming found contract scrolls among them, he began to understand the Rat King's intentions.

"You're giving it to me as a battle pet?" Ye Zhongming pointed at the little rat and asked the Rat King.

Though highly intelligent, the Rat King wasn't human and couldn't fully grasp the nuances of scrolls meant for humans. It only knew that battle pet contract scrolls were mental-type, so it had collected these scrolls and brought them to Ye Zhongming.

Seeing that Ye Zhongming understood, the Rat King became extremely excited, forgetting itself and dancing around, even standing up on its hind legs. At over four meters long, it was a massive beast. When it noticed Ye Zhongming looking up at it, it quickly calmed down, lay back on the ground, and put on a pleading expression.

"But why?" Ye Zhongming asked, squinting his eyes.

Chapter 1457: Hopeful future

The Rat King and his mate left. Due to communication issues, they never fully explained why they were giving Ye Zhongming a battle pet.

Ye Zhongming figured it out after a moment of thought.

One thing was certain: this little rat was the biological offspring of the Rat King and his mate—not some third or fourth-generation descendant, but a true second-generation offspring!

Moreover, Ye Zhongming learned something else: the little rat's mother, the Rat King's mate, would no longer be able to reproduce. This was her last child.

As for the reason, Ye Zhongming had heard Liu Zhenghong mention it before. Essentially, even species with rapid reproduction rates had their limits. Once they reached that limit, they would lose their ability to reproduce.

For example, house mice before the apocalypse matured quickly and began reproducing soon after. The number of offspring per litter would increase over time, reaching a peak before their reproductive abilities began to decline, eventually ceasing altogether.

The Rat King would naturally have other descendants, but it was her last litter for this particular mate.

At first glance, it might seem like this little rat wasn't the Rat King's last child, but it was the crown prince!

While its mother wasn't the Rat King herself, she was the second-in-command of the entire rat colony, second only to the Rat King in status. Their levels alone spoke volumes about their power.

Because of her strength, her position was very secure, making her offspring far more significant than those of the Rat King's other mates.

Such a biological son, and the youngest at that, being given to Ye Zhongming as a battle pet, carried a strong sense of being a "hostage."

The timing of this gift was also crucial.

The Rat King and his mate were on the verge of evolution. Perhaps upon returning, they would evolve to level eight.

This was quite intriguing.

The Rat King and its colony currently worked for Cloud Peak, but the Rat King knew it wasn't truly a part of Cloud Peak—unless it willingly became Ye Zhongming's battle pet.

But was it willing? Clearly not!

It was accustomed to being a king. It could work for Ye Zhongming, but it would never become a servant.

However, the Rat King was well aware that it wasn't irreplaceable. As Cloud Peak grew stronger, the work it and its mutant rat army did could be replaced or accomplished by other lifeforms.

This feeling became especially strong when it encountered the battle rat army that Cloud Peak had cultivated.

It knew that Cloud Peak had bred more obedient rats. Even if they couldn't reproduce in large numbers yet, given time, the battle rat army's size would rapidly expand. And the Rat King's value would diminish until Cloud Peak no longer needed it.

Faced with obsolescence, the Rat King had only two options: either migrate far away with its colony, or become a target for Cloud Peak's hunters, contributing its demon crystal and materials.

But was the first option feasible? No matter how the Rat King thought about it, it couldn't see itself escaping Cloud Peak's pursuit.

In this situation, it had no choice but to consider its future.

It dared not even evolve to level eight, fearing that Ye Zhongming would kill it and use its level-eight demon crystal to spin the wheel.

Cloud Peak was currently on a rampage, hunting level-eight lifeforms! The Rat King had even participated in several of these hunts with its subordinates. Cloud Peak's two main combat teams could take down a single level-eight lifeform with almost no casualties. Adding Yangos or Yellow Ball to the mix made it an easy victory, even against group-dwelling lifeforms. If they encountered something even stronger, Red Hair would step in.

The Rat King knew Cloud Peak could kill it without even needing Red Hair to intervene.

It was during this time of anxiety and worry that its son was born, presenting a potential way out.

The relationship between a battle beast and its evolved was undoubtedly close. While the essence of their bond was master and servant, they often saw each other as partners.

If its son became Ye Zhongming's battle pet based on this relationship, Ye Zhongming would naturally leave the Rat King alone.

Coincidentally, this son was exceptionally talented. The immense energy within its body had shown remarkable potential from birth, making it the most successful "product" of genetic modification so far.

Thus, the scene today unfolded.

When the Rat King left, it had Ye Zhongming's assurance: it was safe.

"Boss, are you planning to take a rat as your battle pet?" Ah Yang scratched his head, feeling that this didn't sound very impressive.

Ye Zhongming laughed without a hint of concern.

"This isn't an ordinary rat," he said, turning the little creature over in his hands and even probing its body with his mental energy. The more he examined it, the more pleased he became.

"Once it grows up, I estimate that even that nasty dragon won't be a match for it. The only one who might stand a chance against it is Red Hair."

That powerful?!

Everyone was stunned, unsure where Ye Zhongming's confidence came from.

While Yangos was annoying, everyone acknowledged that within Cloud Peak, only Ye Zhongming, Xia Bai, and Red Hair could definitively overpower it. Yellow Ball might be able to put up a fight, but no one else or any other battle pet stood a chance.

This little rat would one day be on par with Red Hair?

Ye Zhongming was delighted and took it to Liu Zhenghong's lab. Sister Hong was also very interested and decided to keep it for further study.

After spending some time in the lab, touring the top-secret genetic lifeform project, and having a meal with Sister Hong, Ye Zhongming finally left.

After another day of crafting weapons and equipment, Ye Zhongming stepped out to rest and saw Xia Lei, Guang Yao, and Mo Ye—who had been staying behind to handle coordination and logistics—standing outside his door. They were all frowning and discussing something in low voices. It seemed they wanted to talk to Ye Zhongming but hadn't decided.

"What's wrong?" Ye Zhongming asked, knowing that these three were decisive individuals. If they were hesitating like this, something serious must be going on.

Seeing the other two look at her, Xia Lei spoke up, "It's about Chuyin."

Ye Zhongming raised an eyebrow. "What about her?"

"The territorial expansion plan isn't going well, especially in Guan City, which is under Shasha's responsibility. Not only did they suffer an ambush during their recruitment efforts, but the surrounding organizations also formed a coalition to resist Shasha's team. Both sides have been fighting almost daily, suffering heavy losses."

As Xia Lei explained, her voice grew colder. Such open and large-scale resistance against Cloud Peak had filled her with anger.

"After you gave the order for Cloud Peak to intervene, Chuyin's team was assigned to assist Shasha. But before they could reach their destination, they were attacked. The losses weren't catastrophic, but over a hundred people died. You know how long it's been since we've taken a hit like that. Chuyin was furious when she found out and went to join her team with just two others. But... we just received word that Chuyin's team has joined up with Shasha's forces, but Chuyin herself... is still missing."

Chapter 1458: Lonely Intercepting Kill (1)

Liang Chuyin is missing?!

Ye Zhongming's heart sank.

He realized that Cloud Peak had been too smooth sailing recently, and the surroundings of Ying City had been too peaceful, which had caused many people to lose their reverence for the apocalypse.

This wasn't to say that he blamed his woman for going missing, but in that moment, he recognized a problem that had been overlooked.

Even he had fallen into this mindset.

He had mistakenly believed that Cloud Peak was now on the strategic offensive, subconsciously thinking there were no fatal threats around.

Even after receiving news that surrounding forces had been infiltrated, he thought that the territorial plan would be enough to resolve the issue, and all Cloud Peak needed to do was step in to help when necessary.

But everyone had forgotten that Cloud Peak's enemies hadn't disappeared—they had just gone into hiding temporarily. Given the chance, they would bite a chunk out of Cloud Peak.

This time, Cloud Peak's aggressive cleanup operation might have been exploited by others, turning it into an attack on a specific target within Cloud Peak.

Defeating Cloud Peak as a whole was impossible now, at least not within the country. No single force had that capability, not even if the resistance zones mobilized their entire forces.

But weakening Cloud Peak was possible... for example, by killing a core member.

If this was their plan, Liang Chuyin might have been chosen as the target.

Core member, a woman of Cloud Peak's king, one of Cloud Peak's founders, not particularly strong in personal combat, separated from her team... there seemed to be no better target than Liang Chuyin. Killing her would disrupt Cloud Peak's management and strike a blow at Ye Zhongming.

Even if it wasn't certain that Liang Chuyin was being targeted, the situation was indeed suspicious.

The influencer had a bad temper, but that didn't mean she didn't know what was important. On the contrary, she was one of the most disciplined among all the core members. If she was going to reunite with her team, she wouldn't stop to do anything else along the way.

"How many teams do we have left at home?" Ye Zhongming asked.

"Seven, but Shengyuan's team can't be moved. The security of the two labs relies on him. Sister Rong's team also can't be moved, as she's responsible for the villa's defense. That leaves only five teams available."

Guang Yao answered immediately. During this period, Mo Ye and he had been in charge of coordinating the teams.

"Young Master Yun, Tang Tian, Ah Yang, Mo Ye, and Sister Lei's teams."

Ye Zhongming nodded, but his brow furrowed.

If this was a trap set by someone, the timing was impeccable.

With multiple territories in crisis, five or six Cloud Peak teams had been dispatched to assist, and with teams already out hunting in other areas, the number of available teams at Cloud Peak was limited.

"Send Ah Yang and Young Master Yun. They are main combat teams, and the two teams combined should be enough to handle any sudden situations. This way, the defensive strength within Cloud Peak will still be sufficient, and we won't leave any gaps for others to exploit."

Xia Lei thought for a moment and suggested.

She was afraid this was a series of traps. Attacking Liang Chuyin might just be a diversion, with the real target being Cloud Peak, the two labs, or even Ye Zhongming himself.

Ye Zhongming thought momentarily, sensing Yangos and Yellow Ball's locations. The two restless creatures had already followed the teams out and were now quite far away. It would take them a lot of time to return, and traveling alone would also be risky.

"Alright, Red Hair will go with them," Ye Zhongming quickly decided. "Send someone to Puxing Town to gather the Posthumous People people and the Saint Light Hall forces. Order them to take over the security of the trading market temporarily. Young Master Yun and Ah Yang's teams will take the Nether Bone Demon Platform with them, maintaining a certain distance between them and using the communication range of the Battle Contribution Badge to stay in contact. If they encounter any situation, they must immediately send someone to notify the villa. I will head over if needed."

"Send a message to the teams assisting in other territories, telling them to be cautious and guard against sneak attacks. If necessary, Bai Feng and Zhao Xingmei can temporarily halt their attacks and adopt a defensive stance, waiting until things settle here before resuming."

"Raise the villa's defense level to wartime status. Notify Sister Hong and Master Le to stay underground and not come out. If I leave later, Xia Bai will be responsible for their personal protection."

"Activate the defense formation."

Ye Zhongming issued orders one by one, plunging Cloud Peak into a tense atmosphere.

Guang Yao and Mo Ye had already instructed people on what to do, while Xia Lei stayed behind, her face filled with worry.

As fellow women of Ye Zhongming, Xia Lei, Liang Chuyin, and Miya had a good relationship. Such a situation would have been unimaginable in peacetime, but it was quite normal in the apocalypse. The pressure of survival had completely changed people's mindsets and perspectives. It was no longer shocking for one man to have several women or one woman to have several men.

Thus, for those who still retained human emotions, the concept of family had expanded.

Ye Zhongming, Xia Lei, Liang Chuyin, and Miya—or the relationships among the three women—increasingly transformed into familial bonds. For Xia Lei, Liang Chuyin wasn't just her man's woman; she was also her sister. She was deeply worried.

Seeing Xia Lei's expression, Ye Zhongming put an arm around her shoulders. "Don't worry, Chuyin will be fine. If these people planned to kill her to strike at me and Cloud Peak, then they're going to be disappointed this time."

Xia Lei looked at Ye Zhongming in confusion, not understanding what her man meant.

"Heh, you'll know when the results come out."

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Liang Chuyin laid down the body of her second companion, her eyes sharpening.

She had been followed shortly after leaving Cloud Peak. At first, Liang Chuyin didn't pay much attention. It was wartime, and almost all the forces in Ying City were busy mobilizing their troops to their respective territories. It wasn't unusual if someone saw her leaving the city and followed her for safety or out of curiosity. After all, she was a well-known figure in Ying City, and this had happened before.

But soon, Liang Chuyin sensed something was wrong. The person following her had never lost track.

Although Liang Chuyin had to accommodate her two six-star subordinates and wasn't moving at full speed, they were certainly not slow. Anyone who could keep up with them must be quite strong. In these times, when every force was fighting for their future, it was unlikely that such a skilled person would be lingering here, let alone following her in such a sneaky manner.

To confirm her suspicions, Liang Chuyin discussed with her two subordinates, and they split up at a certain point to see how the followers would react.

This was the decision Liang Chuyin regretted the most, as it directly led to the deaths of her two subordinates. When the three of them separated, the followers continued to chase Liang Chuyin, but just two minutes later, she saw signal flares from her subordinates in different directions—a sign that they were under attack and outmatched.

She quickly chose a direction and arrived to find her subordinate's still-warm body. When she gritted her teeth and rushed to where the second subordinate had sent the signal, she found another body stripped of its equipment waiting for her.

Two six-star evolved, Liang Chuyin's personal guards, fully equipped with green-grade gear, had been killed in such a short time. Clearly, the attackers were highly skilled, at least at the seven-star level, and among the top-tier of seven-star evolved. Moreover, the attacks had happened simultaneously, meaning there were at least two such experts.

At least two.

"So this is Liang Chuyin? Ye Zhongming's woman? A core member of Cloud Peak? Seems a bit dumb," a voice chuckled, sounding eerie in the desolate wilderness.

Chapter 1459: Lonely Intercepting Kill (2)

Liang Chuyin stood up and looked in the direction of the voice. A young man was leaning against a tree, a blade of grass dangling from his mouth, and he looked at her with a frivolous expression.

Unfazed by the obvious, suggestive smile, Liang Chuyin glanced at his face before shifting her gaze to the strange weapon he was toying with in his hand.

It was a weapon resembling a spiked club, but it was conical in shape, with a sharp hook at the tip. The body of the club was also covered in similar protrusions, though smaller than the one at the tip.

Liang Chuyin noticed this weapon not because of its peculiarity but because she recognized it. The fatal wound on her first companion's body matched the shape of this weapon.

This man had killed her first guard and had now caught up to her.

Then...

Sure enough, another figure emerged from the weeds to her side.

This was a burly middle-aged man, much more robust than the young man. His weapon matched his style—two massive swords crossed on his back. As he walked out with his arms crossed, the blades

swayed with his movements. The swords had cloth strips tied to them, though it was unclear whether they were originally that color or had been stained dark purple from wiping blood.

"There's one more, right? Stop hiding," Liang Chuyin said, looking in a certain direction. There, a pile of rubble hidden by weeds suddenly shifted, and a figure emerged as if by magic. His clothing blended perfectly with the rubble and weeds, like a chameleon with protective coloring. It would have been hard to spot him if not for Liang Chuyin's sharp senses.

Liang Chuyin recognized this person's aura. He was the one who had been following her all along—a somewhat frail-looking old man.

"Not bad, you can still spot me," the old man chuckled, revealing a toothless grin that was somewhat repulsive.

Three seven-star evolved!

Liang Chuyin sensed their auras, which were at the same level as hers. Ye Zhongming had taught her this method of discernment.

Perhaps because they were confident of their victory, the three didn't rush to attack. Instead, they looked at Liang Chuyin with greedy eyes.

However, their greed was different. The young man's lustful gaze was directed at Liang Chuyin's appearance and body, a lecherous desire to possess her. The burly man, on the other hand, kept eyeing her equipment—her full set of blue-grade gear was undoubtedly valuable. The most peculiar was the old man, whose attention was focused on Liang Chuyin's neck, for reasons unknown.

"Who are you?" Liang Chuyin drew her whip, adopting a defensive stance. She knew a fight was inevitable today, but at the very least, she wanted to know who was targeting her and Cloud Peak.

"Ask the Ox-Head and Horse-Face when you get to the underworld," the burly man growled, pulling the two massive swords from his back and charging at Liang Chuyin.

There were nearly twenty meters between them, but as the man swung his swords, the distance seemed to vanish. The blade's light reached Liang Chuyin instantly, accompanied by crackling lightning.

"Thunder's Fury!" The young man whistled, standing up straight. Though he didn't attack, his appearance changed. Intricate patterns appeared on his face, and his mouth split slightly, revealing a snake-like forked tongue. He brought his weapon to his mouth and began licking it meticulously. With each lick, a trail of saliva coated the weapon, glinting with a sinister green light under the sun.

The saliva was poisonous.

The small old man said nothing, but his body moved swiftly to the side, blending into the environment and disappearing from sight.

Liang Chuyin's mind entered a state of calm. Her long journey of improvement had taught her the right mindset to adopt in such situations.

This was the most perilous situation she had faced since the apocalypse began.

Three opponents of the same level, and she was alone.

Her whip lashed out as she moved to the side. With agility second only to Xia Bai, her speed was astonishing. Despite being surrounded by three enemies, her movement almost allowed her to break free from the encirclement.

The whip clashed with the dual swords, producing a loud clang.

Liang Chuyin was currently wearing a full set of blue-grade Earth Armor. Ye Zhongming never skimped on equipment for his women. The set included armor, a battle skirt, boots, earrings, a ring, a bracelet, a whip, a dagger, and a pistol. **ᑦᑦᑦᑦᑦᑦ**

Three attack items, three defense items, and three accessories.

The Earth Armor set had a unique property: every three pieces of different types would grant an additional attribute, up to a maximum of three. This setup maximized the number of attributes.

With the Earth Armor set enhancing her and her own formidable strength, Liang Chuyin faced the three without fear.

The burly man had used an attack skill—whether it was a job skill or a regular one, it was undeniably powerful. Liang Chuyin's attack, on the other hand, was a regular strike at about eighty percent of her full strength. Logically, she should have been disadvantaged, especially since her weapon was a whip. However, after the clash, she remained unscathed, continuing to drift to the side while the burly man staggered, his grip on his swords faltering.

The man, whom the young man had called Thunder's Fury, specialized in strength. Yet, in this exchange, he hadn't gained the upper hand and had even suffered a minor setback.

"Equipment!" the burly man immediately realized that his equipment was inferior!

His dual swords, though only green grade, were part of a set. He had assumed they could hold their own against Liang Chuyin's blue-grade whip, but that wasn't the case.

The Earth Armor's attack gear provided a ten percent boost to strength. Additionally, Liang Chuyin had taken two doses of enhanced potions and benefited from various auxiliary potions available at Cloud Peak, making her strength far superior to others of her level. It was just that Cloud Peak had too many monsters, making her strength less noticeable.

Seeing that Liang Chuyin was about to escape the encirclement after just one strike, the burly man grew anxious. He roared again, crossing his swords before his chest, producing a crisp clang. Then, he released one hand from the hilt, but the sword didn't fall—it stuck to the other sword. He formed a hand seal with his free hand and placed it near his mouth, chanting an incantation. The stuck sword trembled violently and, in the next moment, shot out like a bolt of lightning, aiming straight at Liang Chuyin, who had already put some distance between them. By the time it reached her, the sword was no longer visible—it had transformed into a massive lightning bolt.

At the same time, a cold glint emerged from the void in the direction Liang Chuyin was moving, aiming straight for her eye. Behind the glint was the old man who had disappeared earlier.

The old man's voice, lisping due to his missing teeth, rang out as he attacked.

"Ghost Gate Stab!"

Chapter 1460: Lonely Intercepting Kill (3)

The ability Ghost Gate Stab was similar to Jiu Long's Sky Piercing Dagger Technique, but with a key difference: the latter was more unpredictable and sudden, while Ghost Gate Stab was essentially a sneak attack launched by the user after closing in on the target.

However, this ability had more variations and follow-up attacks. Relying on the old man's incredible camouflage, this strike caught Liang Chuyin off guard.

Under normal circumstances, an evolved would be unable to withstand attacks from two opponents of the same level. This assassination attempt had been meticulously planned. Not only had Liang Chuyin's guards been killed first, but the three assassins had also surrounded her, showing just how much importance they placed on this core member of Cloud Peak.

By now, a massive sword transformed into a bolt of lightning was closing in from behind, while a dagger was mere inches away from her front. The assassins' eyes gleamed with cruelty.

This was the end. No matter how much Cloud Peak had been hyped up, its core members were still within the realm of ordinary evolved. Perhaps the only truly formidable one was Ye Zhongming, the King of Cloud Peak. As for the others, they would end up like the countless others they had killed—dead on the spot.

Only the man with the snake-like tongue was slightly disappointed. A dead woman wasn't as fun.

But just as the three assassins thought their killing blow was certain to land, Liang Chuyin flicked her wrist, causing her whip to snap against the ground. Using the recoil, she propelled herself upward by a few dozen centimeters.

This movement was so fast that it seemed as if the whip had moved the moment the attacks were launched, and by the time the attacks reached her, her body had already risen to a new height.

Thud! Clang!

Two sounds rang out almost simultaneously. The first was the sound of the lightning-wrapped sword striking Liang Chuyin's back, and the second was the dagger stabbing her chest.

Liang Chuyin grunted, her whip lashing out to the side as she used the momentum to break free from the pincer attack.

The flying sword arced through the air before reattaching itself to the other sword. The burly man, Kuang Lei, stared at Liang Chuyin in disbelief, unable to comprehend how she had withstood his attack.

The old man's hand, holding the dagger, was flung upward by the recoil. His target had already moved out of his attack range when he regained control.

"Oh?"

The snake-tongued man's eyes widened in surprise, but his expression quickly turned to excitement.

"Looks like it's still up to me!" he shouted, disappearing from his spot and reappearing right before Liang Chuyin. His strange weapon swung upward from below, aiming for her chin.

If this hit, half her face would likely be torn off.

"Damn you!" Liang Chuyin's temper flared after being attacked repeatedly.

Facing the man's vicious strike, Liang Chuyin's whip hissed softly, instantly forming a series of rings around her body, creating a cylindrical barrier. When the strange weapon collided with it, the cylindrical barrier didn't collapse or scatter. Instead, it seemed to merge with Liang Chuyin, using the force of the attack to push her backward.

This allowed her to escape the attack range once again.

The snake-tongued man was even more shocked this time.

His attack hadn't been a regular one—it was one of his proudest abilities, Positional Rush!

It allowed him to move at nearly the speed of sound to close in on his target, using the immense momentum to deliver a devastating blow.

Countless evolved had fallen to this ability.

He was confident that even if his opponent of the same level weren't killed, they would at least be severely injured.

Yet this woman had withstood it completely unharmed. What was that whip's ability to form those looping rings?

Chain Defense!

This was the name of Liang Chuyin's skill, an innate ability of her blue-grade whip, which is known for its exceptional defensive capabilities.

The Earth Armor set was renowned for its defensive properties. Both had defensive functions, whether it was the armor Liang Chuyin wore or her weapon. Looking at the attacks from the massive sword and the dagger, they had only left two gashes on her armor, failing to penetrate it. If not for the immense force and the lightning element of the attacks causing internal vibrations, Liang Chuyin could have completely relied on her equipment to block the enemies' attacks.

By now, the other two assassins had caught up. Seeing their target in such a state, their expressions turned grim.

They had expected their target to be tough, but not this tough.

"How long do you think you can keep this up?!" Kuang Lei roared, his eyes red as he transformed another massive sword into a lightning bolt, slashing toward Liang Chuyin.

His companions immediately realized that Liang Chuyin was using her weapon to defend herself, effectively giving up on counterattacking. All they needed to do was keep attacking. No matter how tough her defenses were, they would eventually break under their relentless assault!

The two immediately followed up with their own skills, determined not to stop until their target was dead.

Bang!

Their answer came in the form of a gunshot.

The old man's body swayed, and he stumbled before collapsing to the ground.

"Old Se!" the snake-tongued man exclaimed in shock. He quickly summoned a transparent energy doll before him, blocking his body, before rushing to his companion's side.

This transparent doll moved with him, always in front of him, acting as a bulletproof shield.

Another bang rang out, and Kuang Lei grunted, unable to maintain his sword formation. He reversed his stance, plunging his swords into the ground to keep himself from falling.

"Get behind me!" the snake-tongued man shouted anxiously. He had just reached Old Se, who was still camouflaged when he realized Liang Chuyin's attack wasn't aimed at him but at his other companion. He couldn't protect both, so he had to call his companion over.

Liang Chuyin, however, wasn't about to let this opportunity slip. Standing within the ringed defense formed by her whip, she raised a blue-grade pistol. The lightning-infused sword attack was blocked, but her bullets could easily pass through.

She glared fiercely, muttering "Die!" under her breath as she fired at the burly man, who was temporarily defenseless.

However, she had no shooting-related job or skills, and her aim wasn't the best. Out of six shots fired before Kuang Lei could take cover behind the snake-tongued man, five missed and only one hit. Liang Chuyin was frustrated, realizing her first two hits had been lucky shots.

"How are you?" the snake-tongued man asked, watching as his opponent continued to fire bullets at them, even though the transparent energy doll blocked them. He sneered before turning to his panting companion behind him.

"I-I'll live," Kuang Lei gasped, clutching his chest.

He had been hit twice. The first shot had grazed his ear, likely because his massive sword had been positioned in front of his chest, forcing Liang Chuyin to aim for his head. However, she had missed, only piercing his ear and leaving a hole.

The second shot had hit his chest. His armor hadn't been able to stop it—the bullet had entered through the front and exited through the back, possibly damaging his lungs and making it difficult for him to breathe.

As for Old Se, who the snake-tongued man was cradling, his injuries were much more severe. He had been shot in the left chest, right where the heart was. Blood was gushing out, and even with the snake-tongued man trying to staunch the flow, it was clear that the bullet had either hit the heart or a major artery. If not for the fact that he was an evolved, he would have been dead already.

Seeing that Liang Chuyin only hit one out of every three or four shots, the snake-tongued man was more shocked than ever.

Chapter 1460.5- Lonely Intercepting Kill (4)

He knew his companions' strengths well. Among seven-star evolved, their overall combat power might not be the most outstanding, but few could match them when it came to ambushes and teamwork. Their past achievements spoke for themselves.

Kuang Lei's defensive equipment was average, but his lightning-based job had a body-tempering ability that made him highly resistant to attacks even without top-tier armor. This allowed him to invest his demon crystals into other areas, such as weapons and skills, making him more formidable than the snake-tongued man and Old Se. Kuang Lei was known for its destructive power, so he usually took the lead in attacks.

Yet even he couldn't withstand that bullet.

Neither could Old Se, who was wearing blue-grade armor.

Old Se was an assassin, the most orthodox assassin-type job among the three. Because he fought at close range, he prioritized defensive equipment. This blue-grade armor had cost him a lot of effort to obtain, and he cherished it deeply. Yet, it seemed fragile in the face of Liang Chuyin's bullets.

The snake-tongued man couldn't understand why, despite both sides having blue-grade defensive equipment, theirs was so inferior.

In reality, he was overthinking it.

Who was Liang Chuyin? She wasn't just a core member of Cloud Peak—she was one of its founders, a veteran, and Ye Zhongming's woman.

This Earth Armor set wasn't exactly unique, but Ye Zhongming had crafted it with great effort for his woman.

The blue-grade pistol didn't have many abilities, but they all increased its power and range. Combined with the Lazy Man magazine and dozens of green-grade bullets crafted by a top-tier Smith, even ordinary shots were devastating.

Knowing that Liang Chuyin's marksmanship wasn't great, Ye Zhongming had made all the bullets armor-piercing with one goal: if she missed, it didn't matter, but if she hit, it would be fatal.

A potion and a packet of medicinal powder were applied to Old Se, stabilizing his condition and easing the snake-tongued man's worries. This meant Old Se was out of immediate danger.

"Here, use this on Old Se," Kuang Lei said, having recovered somewhat thanks to his lightning-tempered body. His breathing was no longer labored.

He handed the snake-tongued man a metal button.

"Emergency Button?" The snake-tongued man's eyes lit up. This was a valuable item. When applied to a wound, it could quickly seal the injury and temporarily restore it to its pre-injury state. While it didn't heal the wound, an evolved's constitution was already extraordinary. As long as the wound was sealed and didn't worsen, the injury would have healed by two or three-tenths by the time the Emergency Button's effect wore off.

In combat, this item was incredibly useful. Of course, it was also precious—a single one cost two five-star evolution potions.

"We need to work together to have a chance," Kuang Lei said, his voice smoother now. He tilted his chin upward. "She won't last much longer."

The snake-tongued man noticed that the transparent energy doll blocking their path had grown dim, clearly about to lose its effect.

Without hesitation, knowing that this core member of Cloud Peak had plenty of tricks up her sleeve, he quickly applied the Emergency Button to Old Se.

Five seconds later, Old Se, previously incapacitated, stood up and glared at Liang Chuyin with intense hatred.

The three assassins formed a vertical line, with the snake-tongued man at the front, rapidly advancing toward Liang Chuyin.

Crack!

The string of beads on the snake-tongued man's wrist shattered, and the energy doll disappeared. This excellent bulletproof equipment, having withstood over ten bullets, was finally completely destroyed.

As the distance closed, Liang Chuyin's accuracy improved significantly. In a short time, she had broken through the enemy's defenses.

The snake-tongued man didn't have time to mourn the loss of his hard-earned bead bracelet. The moment the bulletproof equipment failed, the three assassins split up, attacking from different angles.

Liang Chuyin holstered her pistol, and her whip, no longer in a defensive stance, actively lashed out into the midst of the three, launching a counterattack.

Shadow Dance! Void Strike!

Liang Chuyin unleashed two job skills in rapid succession. Countless whip shadows lashed out in all directions, engulfing her opponents. The weapons of Old Se, the snake-tongued man, and Kuang Lei clashed repeatedly with the whip, creating a cacophony of sounds. Meanwhile, energy tentacles sprouted from the ground around them, swaying and preparing to strike.

The three assassins hadn't expected Liang Chuyin, who had abandoned her terrifying pistol and solid defense, to be so aggressive, engaging them in close combat. This was a do-or-die approach.

Whichever side faltered first would likely be killed. And those energy tentacles were building up for a devastating attack. They weren't confident they could block it, so their only option was to kill Liang Chuyin before the tentacles struck.

The three assassins also went all out, pulling out their trump cards.

The snake-tongued man inhaled deeply, then exhaled a cloud of poisonous mist toward Liang Chuyin. His weapon became a secondary tool, helping him block the whip's attacks.

Old Se wiped his dagger across his wrist, staining it with his own blood. The previously silver blade turned blood-red. Seizing an opportunity, he hurled the dagger at Liang Chuyin. As it flew, it split into dozens of copies. Every time a whip shadow lashed out, a dagger would intercept it, protecting the true dagger as it flew toward its target.

Kuang Lei transformed into a thunder god incarnate. His dual swords became shields, blocking the whip, while his body turned into a human-shaped lightning bolt, surging toward Liang Chuyin.

The energy tentacles completed their charge at that moment and lashed out from all directions.

Victory or defeat should have been decided instantly, but a strange scene unfolded. Beneath the battlefield, a large patch of ground suddenly lit up with mysterious runes, followed by a brilliant flash of light. When the light faded, the four combatants had vanished, leaving only the traces of their battle behind.

About three kilometers away in a desolate town, a man in a green robe stood at the center of the town square with his eyes closed. He raised his hands and sent a light beam toward the square, where the same runes appeared. The next moment, the four combatants materialized there, their attacks landing simultaneously.