

Apocalypse 1461

Chapter 1461: Tian Bing

Liang Chuyin's Wind Dancer job was graceful, her every movement resembling a dance. However, this didn't mean the job lacked power. Especially in Cloud Peak, where resources were relatively abundant, Liang Chuyin had advanced her job to a high level.

Indeed, Wind Dancer wasn't a top-tier job with a special prefix, which meant that when it reached the advanced level, it didn't gain a new attack ability but instead acquired a passive skill.

This ability enhanced Liang Chuyin's core attribute as a Wind Dancer—agility—and increased the power of her other job skills.

In other words, Liang Chuyin's Shadow Dance and Void Strike were now enhanced versions.

The densely packed whip shadows and the countless energy tentacles made it clear that their power had increased significantly compared to before.

Before Little Tiger gained the ability to borrow troops, Liang Chuyin had always been Cloud Peak's most skilled group combatant.

Of course, Ye Zhongming was always excluded when ranking.

Group combat was Liang Chuyin's favorite fighting style.

The previous assassination attempts by the three had cost her two good companions, and this had already angered her.

Liang Chuyin held nothing back in close combat, using her full strength.

All the whip shadows and energy tentacles erupted simultaneously in the unknown light.

Three figures were sent flying, accompanied by short, sharp screams. Liang Chuyin, having used her skills, fell from the air and hit the ground, quickly standing up and scanning her surroundings warily.

"Sigh, as expected, you're impressive. Even one against three, you still emerged victorious. Cloud Peak truly lives up to its name."

Liang Chuyin was filled with doubt and unease, feeling no joy from her victory.

She forced herself to endure the dizziness, pulling out a potion and drinking it. This was a standard item for Cloud Peak's core members. She pulled out the dagger stuck in her shoulder and tossed it to the ground.

She could only recover slowly from the wound on her side and the numbness in her body. Liang Chuyin felt a pang of regret for her blue-grade armor, which had likely sustained over 70% damage and could no longer maintain most of its abilities.

She saw the person who had spoken—a young man dressed plainly. What stood out were his hands, each finger adorned with a ring of different styles and materials.

After speaking, the young man looked at the snake-tongued man and said, "Little Snake, go back. Leave the rest to Heaven Bing."

"But what about them..." the snake-tongued man began, only to be interrupted.

"Kuang Lei and Old Se are already dead. If you don't leave now, the Earth Vein faction will be wiped out."

The snake-tongued man was stunned, first in disbelief, then forced to accept the reality as he looked over and saw that his two companions, who had been inseparable for over two years, were indeed dead.

He struggled to his feet, glared fiercely at Liang Chuyin, and then staggered away while clutching his nearly shattered arm. The armor on his back was completely destroyed, exposing his spine.

Liang Chuyin moved slightly but then stopped.

She still didn't understand what had happened or why she had suddenly been transported from the wilderness to this place. She couldn't gauge the strength of the person who had spoken, but she sensed a strange and powerful aura from him, something that threatened her.

"Don't get worked up over me. I'm not your opponent," the young man said with a smile, then turned and began to walk away.

Liang Chuyin hesitated for a moment but decided to stop him. No matter what, she needed to figure out what was going on.

But the moment she stepped forward, she felt a sudden chill and leaped to the side.

A streak of light grazed her ear.

A drop of blood fell from her earlobe, the energy from the light breaking through Liang Chuyin's skin.

It was clear how powerful this light was from this alone. The skin of a seven-star evolved wasn't easily pierced, and the fact that the energy alone could cut her spoke volumes.

Liang Chuyin didn't stop and continued to dash forward. Her whip tapped the ground repeatedly to control her direction and speed, dodging the streaks of light that came one after another.

The person who had used the mysterious formation to move Liang Chuyin here glanced back at her from around a corner, smiled, shook his head, and then disappeared.

Liang Chuyin had never been in such a dire situation before.

Earlier, when facing three opponents of the same level, although she had been injured and poisoned, there had been no fatal threat. In the exchange of attacks, her Earth Armor set had given her a complete victory. Her opponents couldn't withstand her attacks, while she could defend against theirs, leading to the inevitable outcome.

But now, she had been attacked over twenty times without knowing where her enemy was or what these streaks of light were. She could only rely on her speed to dodge, but her agility, no matter how high, was affected by factors like stamina and the lingering effects of the poison and numbness.

Sometimes, two or three streaks of light would appear simultaneously, making it even harder for Liang Chuyin to defend. She had already been hit twice, and her heavily damaged armor had made its final contribution, exploding along with the second streak of light that hit her.

After enduring six or seven more attacks, another one struck her, this time piercing her abdomen. Only then did she see that it was a metal crossbow bolt about thirty centimeters long. Despite being only grey-tier, it had such power, indicating that the weapon used to shoot it was of a high level or that the attacker possessed a powerful ranged skill.

Clapping echoed as a man appeared on the roof of a building not far from the town square. After two or three leaps, he landed at the square's edge, facing Liang Chuyin directly.

"Impressive. You almost wiped out the Earth Vein faction single-handedly. Out of my entire volley, you only got hit three times. Impressive indeed."

The man had a small wooden crossbow hanging from his waist, swaying with his movements. It looked unremarkable, even a bit worn, but its energy emanating was unmistakable. The attacks had come from this crossbow, which, lacking a color indicating its level but it was at least gold-grade.

"Who are you?" Liang Chuyin pulled the crossbow bolt from her abdomen and drank another healing potion, feeling slightly better.

The man didn't answer. Instead, he tossed a red crescent-shaped emblem onto the ground.

"Everyone always asks such boring questions. Shouldn't you be thinking about how to survive instead?"

The man shook his finger and continued, "But then again, facing an eight-star evolved like me, there's no way you can survive. So I suppose it's only natural to ask who I am."

"Alright, I'll tell you. You can call me Heaven Bing. In the future... I might become Heaven Yi, or even Heaven Jia. When that happens, I'll send your man, Ye Zhongming, down to keep you company."

With that, the man straightened his body, and his outer garment flew away in the wind, revealing a set of high-tech equipment underneath.

Chapter 1462: Comparing equipment?

The high-tech combat armor exuded an overwhelming sense of suppression just from a single glance.

When the man who called himself Heaven Bing put on his helmet, jets on the back of his elbows, knees, and back lit up, emitting blue flames.

The armor, primarily white and blue, had weapons that clearly surpassed Earth's current technology. For example, pulse cannons on his shoulders could rotate freely, laser gun barrels protruded from his arms, and numerous shooting holes were hidden beneath the dense armor plates on his black protective gloves.

There was also a spirit blade at his waist, its hilt visible but the blade concealed, a helmet screen flashing with various data, and a bizarre, intricately designed giant gun strapped to his back...

In short, this set of equipment was enough to instill a sense of dread in anyone who saw it.

"The earlier attacks were just appetizers. Now, the main event begins."

With the helmet on, the man's voice was processed into a cold, metallic tone, devoid of any warmth.

As he spoke, he raised his hands, and the holes in his arms began firing out light shards. These shards started as bright white but turned pale red as they flew through the air.

Numerous shards fired continuously, tracking Liang Chuyin's movements. They were incredibly fast, and within a second, a light curtain formed between the holes and Liang Chuyin.

"You know, beautiful lady, your combat power is indeed impressive. Earlier, it was over 3,300 points, did you know that? But now, it seems to have dropped to around 3,100. Oh, right, your armor is broken!"

The man continued to speak in his metallic voice as he attacked. Even though the processed voice lacked inflection, he was clearly in a state of excitement.

Liang Chuyin was struggling.

She relied on her agility to dodge continuously, wanting to counterattack but unable to get close. These light shards had an incredibly strong slicing ability. Even the Earth Armor would be sliced open if hit. This made Liang Chuyin hesitant to use her whip to block, fearing her weapon wouldn't hold up.

She knew all too well that constant defense would eventually fail. Reality proved this to be true. While Liang Chuyin was rapidly considering her options, she was caught off guard, and a light shard sliced her thigh. Her body immediately faltered, losing its usual agility.

"Haha, hit! Mobility impaired, combat power reduced by 99!" The man laughed, not lowering his hands as he continued his assault. The pulse cannons on his shoulders began charging, aiming at Liang Chuyin.

Despite his chatter, the man's attacks were flawlessly executed. As Liang Chuyin's mobility was impaired, the light shards and pulse cannons struck her simultaneously.

Dust and debris filled the air, and the remaining buildings behind the attack direction, which had stood firm for over four years since the apocalypse, finally collapsed.

"Dead? Let me see..." The man temporarily halted his attack, adjusting his helmet to a mode that allowed him to see through the dust. "Huh? Not dead? Combat power still over 2,600? What's going on?"

Through his high-tech equipment, he saw that his target, who should have been killed, was still alive, and her combat power had only dropped by a little over 400.

He quickly accessed the memory function, fiddled with a few settings, and then exclaimed, "She actually has reserve armor?!"

In the replay, he saw Liang Chuyin, after being injured in the leg, realizing she couldn't continue dodging, immediately pulling out another set of armor from her space equipment and putting it on. It was another set of blue-grade Earth Armor.

This increased Liang Chuyin's combat power from around 3,100 when injured to over 3,200. In other words, this armor set was decent but not as good as the previous one.

This set wasn't as good as the one that had just been destroyed.

The previous set had both offensive and defensive capabilities, while this one only had defensive abilities.

But at this moment, Liang Chuyin was immensely grateful.

As the attacks came, she activated an ability on this armor—Firmness!

This was a unique ability of the Earth Armor set, instantly doubling the armor's defense. The reserve armor's defense was already high, and after doubling, it became incredibly tough, allowing Liang Chuyin to withstand this wave of attacks.

However, the man's attacks were equally terrifying. Even with the Earth Armor's effects and unique points, Liang Chuyin's new armor was shattered after blocking the attack. The rest of her Earth Armor set was also covered in cracks, on the verge of being destroyed.

Without these pieces of equipment, Liang Chuyin's combat power, in the man's eyes, dropped to just over 2,600.

"I've heard that Cloud Peak's equipment is top-notch. I didn't believe it before, but now I do. But so what? It still couldn't withstand my Planet Armor!" Liang Chuyin's reserve armor somewhat provoked the man. He hadn't expected this woman to not only have a full set of blue-grade equipment but also a reserve set.

Liang Chuyin wiped the blood from the corner of her mouth and suddenly threw her whip to the ground.

This made the man pause.

What followed surprised him even more as he realized this woman was removing her equipment!

The shattered armor, boots, belt, and even the battle skirt were removed.

Although damaged, these pieces of equipment still had a significant impact on her combat power. Removing them not only cost her the equipment itself but also the set bonuses they provided.

In an instant, Liang Chuyin's combat power plummeted by nearly 1,000 points. On the man's device, it now showed less than 1,800.

"Woman, are you trying to please me with your body? I might consider it. After all, not everyone gets to taste the flavor of Cloud Peak King's woman."

After a moment of shock, the man thought he understood the meaning behind Liang Chuyin's actions. Like many women in the apocalypse, she might be using her body as a resource to gain some advantage.

Liang Chuyin smiled, shaking her aching body. Looking at the man, she said, "Right now, I'm particularly curious about two things."

"Are you going to ask who I am? Maybe I'll tell you after I've had a taste of you," the man said, feeling quite pleased with himself.

"First, you keep talking about combat power. So, what's your combat power?"

"I can't tell you that. It would only make you despair, haha."

Ignoring the man's excited state during combat, Liang Chuyin continued, "Second, who gave you the courage to compare equipment with Cloud Peak?"

With that, she pulled out a massive metal box from her space equipment and slammed it onto the ground in front of her.

Chapter 1463: Moon Saint Armor

Through the display screen on his helmet, Heaven Bing stared at the metal box with a mix of curiosity and deep-seated resentment toward Cloud Peak.

Even if this woman was Ye Zhongming's partner, carrying a reserve armor at all times was already excessive. But now, what was this? Another full set of equipment?

Was Cloud Peak really that wealthy?

Liang Chuyin's eyes sparkled with excitement because she had never worn this set of equipment before.

She had obtained it some time ago, and whenever she was alone, she would take it out to admire it, then lie in bed and giggle foolishly.

She knew this was the most precious gift Ye Zhongming had ever given her.

Once she put on this set of equipment, it would undoubtedly cause a massive sensation across Cloud Peak and perhaps even the entire country.

She might become the envy of all women.

Originally, she had planned to wear it on a special occasion, but the dire situation now forced her to make this choice.

So, amidst her joy and anticipation, Liang Chuyin also felt regret and dissatisfaction.

She gently unlocked the metal box with a dog-tooth lock, and the crisp sound of mechanisms echoed from within immediately.

The box opened silently and smoothly, like a blooming flower, revealing a metal stand and a set of equipment.

The golden light made everything around it pale in comparison.

Inside the box was a complete set of six... golden-grade equipment!

Helmet, armor, battle skirt, boots, gloves with arm guards, and a small, mysterious rod whose purpose was still unknown.

Heaven Bing's eyes nearly popped out of his head. If he had thought Cloud Peak was excessive before, now he felt a surge of curses rising to the heavens.

He finally understood why this woman, even when being attacked so miserably, had shown no intention of fleeing.

He also understood the strange look when she heard he was an eight-star evolved—it wasn't fear, but a kind of eager anticipation.

An eagerness to defeat him, even kill him!

So, this was what gave her confidence.

As these thoughts flashed through Heaven Bing's mind, the armor seemed to come to life, floating toward Liang Chuyin. It appeared slow but incredibly fast, and it was fully equipped on her in the blink of an eye.

The armor was originally light blue, but the golden light had masked its true color. Now that Liang Chuyin had concealed the golden grade, the set returned to its original appearance. It glowed with a smooth crystal beauty, utterly stunning.

This set of equipment was none other than the Moon Saint Armor, one of the three rewards Ye Zhongming had obtained after upgrading the Gate of Sacrifice to seven-colored grade. The other two rewards were Lucy's Tears, which had already been used by Little Tiger, and the Wenjia Furnace, the production line for Taining Bricks, which were now the main building materials for Cloud Peak.

This was a complete gold-grade set.

At this moment, in Heaven Bing's eyes, Liang Chuyin had undergone an earth-shaking transformation.

Earlier, her combat power had dropped to around 1,700 in his eyes, which was already a number that had shaken him.

As an eight-star evolved, Heaven Bing's combat power, excluding his main equipment, was only over 2,000.

But a seven-star evolved was already approaching 1,800! And this was an injured seven-star evolved, meaning her numbers were affected. In other words, excluding equipment factors, Liang Chuyin was only slightly weaker than him.

Now, the changes in this woman's data made Heaven Bing consider retreating.

Her combat power had skyrocketed to 4,500!

And this was without using any skills, and while she was still injured!

If she were in perfect condition, could she exceed 5,000?

5,000 combat power—even Heaven Jia might not reach that!

But the shocks for Heaven Bing weren't over yet. Liang Chuyin tossed the mysterious short rod onto the whip on the ground, and something miraculous happened. The rod began to melt, becoming a pool of golden liquid enveloping the whip. In an instant, the blue-grade whip transformed into a golden-grade weapon!

When Liang Chuyin grasped the whip, her combat power surged by over 500 points, breaking through the 5,000 mark.

Heaven Bing genuinely began to consider retreating.

He had near-blind confidence in his own armor, and precisely because of this, he firmly believed in the combat power calculations.

He felt that he was no match for Liang Chuyin at this moment.

If that were the case, there would be no need to continue fighting.

Heaven Bing made a decision that was born out of a bit of reluctance.

How could an eight-star evolved like him be scared off by a seven-star evolved? If he returned without a fight, with two members of the Earth Vein dead and the Heaven Vein retreating, how would he explain it to his superiors?

So, he decided to fire one shot from the massive energy cannon on his back at Liang Chuyin, who was at the peak of her aura. If it killed her, great. If not, he would flee.

The cannon lit up, charging rapidly—the air around Heaven Bing distorted as the energy built up.

Liang Chuyin flicked her whip, and a pair of radiant butterfly wings made of energy appeared behind her. She shot into the air with a gentle flap, almost as if she had teleported.

At the same time, Heaven Bing's weird cannon finished charging. With the press of a button, a massive beam of light shot out from the cannon, aimed directly at Liang Chuyin.

It looked as if Liang Chuyin was rising from the sky while the energy beam traced an arc, chasing her and eventually striking her.

Heaven Bing lowered the cannon and looked up at the sky, a hint of anticipation in his heart.

Perhaps this attack had worked, and he had instantly killed someone with over 5,000 combat power!

Chapter 1463.5- Moon Saint Armor

But he was wrong.

As the light dissipated, Liang Chuyin appeared, floating in the air. Far from being dead as Heaven Bing had hoped, she was completely unharmed, not even injured.

The only evidence of the attack was a massive crater on the ground below her, large enough to be a swimming pool.

"You... this..."

Heaven Bing was so shocked that he had forgotten to flee.

He might have lost confidence in defeating Liang Chuyin, but he still had some faith in the power of his cannon. He thought that even if it didn't kill her, it would at least injure her, giving him the option to fight or retreat.

But how was this woman completely unscathed?

Heaven Bing couldn't understand.

"Cooled down, huh?" Liang Chuyin swung her whip, smiling. "Now it's my turn."

The whip in her hand seemed to come alive, straightening before she swung it down with force. A white shadow shot out from the whip, lashing toward Heaven Bing.

The crisp sound and the nearly 100-meter-long light trail perfectly captured the aura of this strike.

The six jets on Heaven Bing's armor spewed out large amounts of gas, propelling his body to move rapidly.

The whip strike missed.

Heaven Bing sighed in relief, thinking that at least this attack was normal.

But the second strike followed immediately.

Crack! Heaven Bing barely dodged, the whip's shadow grazing his body and leaving a deep mark on the ground.

Before he could catch his breath, the third strike came.

Liang Chuyin floated in the air, lashing out strike after strike while Heaven Bing dodged frantically below. This scene was almost a replay of their earlier situation, but their roles reversed.

Thanks to the movement power provided by his armor, Heaven Bing managed to dodge dozens of attacks by Liang Chuyin. This was nothing short of a miracle, and even he felt lucky.

When Liang Chuyin finally stopped attacking, Heaven Bing even thought this woman wasn't so impressive. Even with a full set of golden-grade equipment, her evolution level was still too low.

But Liang Chuyin shattered his confidence with another smile.

Around him, —countless lines of light, straight and curved, began to appear. Their thickness... was about the same as Liang Chuyin's whip.

These were the shadows left by the whip strikes earlier!

"Light and Shadow Prison, hope you like it." At this moment, Liang Chuyin looked like a little devil with horns.

Heaven Bing didn't have time to care about Liang Chuyin's sarcasm. Looking around, he realized there was no space for him to escape. These lines of light had truly formed a prison, trapping him inside.

He decided to act decisively. Knowing he couldn't just wait for death, and unsure what other weird abilities this woman's equipment might have, Heaven Bing charged forward, ignoring the lines of light.

Crack! The moment he touched one of the lines, it lashed out, striking and sending him flying.

This flight was disastrous, as it inevitably led to him hitting other lines. A chain reaction began.

Every time he touched a line, he was struck with immense force and sent flying again, hitting yet another line. In this uncontrollable state, Heaven Bing was like a ping-pong ball, being struck back and forth by the lines, his body spinning and tumbling in mid-air.

His once-excellent mechanized armor began to crack under the relentless attacks.

Dizzy and disoriented, Heaven Bing was jolted awake by the warning sounds from his armor. Realizing that he would die if this continued, he gathered all his ranged attacks and unleashed them outward, not caring what they were.

Light shards, pulse cannons, laser beams... various attacks erupted from his body, colliding with the lines of light and causing violent explosions.

Heaven Bing fell to the ground in just a few seconds with a thud. The lines of light—the so-called Light and Shadow Prison—were gone, leaving only a struggling Heaven Bing on the ground.

"Equipment... can equipment really bridge the gap between levels?"

Heaven Bing stuttered. The data on his heavily cracked helmet told him that his condition was dire. His body had suffered massive impacts, and while his armor had absorbed most of it, he was still severely injured. His combat power had plummeted.

What pained him even more was that his mechanized armor had sustained irreparable damage. Even if he survived today, it would never function at 100% again.

"How much combat power do you have left? And how much do I have?"

The Moon Saint Armor consisted of six pieces, with the gloves and boots being pairs, technically making it eight pieces. Liang Chuyin was especially curious to know her combat power with these eight golden-grade pieces equipped.

At the same time, she gained a deeper understanding of this golden set.

Ye Zhongming once gave Liang Chuyin a liquid called New Face.

It was an equipment cleanser that could allow equipment to have the potential to "evolve" to the next level, and it randomly added an extra skill slot to the treated equipment, which could be filled with skill scrolls.

At the time, Ye Zhongming had intended for Liang Chuyin to use it on her Earth Armor set. With his smith level at the time, he could have added skill slots to at least three or four pieces of equipment. Once skills were added, these pieces might have become golden-grade, potentially allowing Liang Chuyin's equipment to surpass even Mo Ye's Holy Army Coat, which had been the second-best set in Cloud Peak after Ye Zhongming's.

But Liang Chuyin had refused to use New Face immediately.

Later, when she obtained the Moon Saint Armor and Ye Zhongming upgraded to top-grade smith, New Face was used on this set.

Every piece gained an extra skill slot.

However, she hadn't yet added skills to them, as this required careful consideration to ensure they complemented the existing skills of the armor or her job.

This anticipation had even led Liang Chuyin to fantasize that, once all the skills were added, the Moon Saint Armor might become seven-colored grade.

Even though she knew this was wishful thinking, Liang Chuyin never gave up. She truly wanted to know what her combat power was and what it would become after adding the skills.

Heaven Bing quickly checked his status and sent a signal with a thought. His heart calmed down as he realized that all he needed to do was hold on. Reinforcements would arrive soon.

It was probably Heaven Yi, whom he disliked the most, but at this point, who cared?

Seeing his opponent draw a laser blade, Liang Chuyin decided not to ask anymore. She would kill him and find out for herself.

Only someone from Cloud Peak could be so confident in killing someone of a higher level.

"Moon Attraction."

Liang Chuyin tilted her head slightly, and the princess-crown-like helmet erupted with a burst of light, darkening the sky. This light seeped into her body.

As she raised her whip again, a bright crescent moon appeared behind her. Against its backdrop, Liang Chuyin looked like a moon goddess.

Then, the whip came down—not at Heaven Bing, but above his head.

A starry sky appeared with the whip's shadow, filled with countless stars.

Chapter 1464: Double attack

"Boss, it should be just ahead, but our people can't get in."

A few figures appeared on a hill not far from the small town where Liang Chuyin was fighting. Ye Zhongming stood in the center with three people standing a step behind him.

One of the three wore a camouflage cloak, blending almost perfectly with the surroundings. The middle figure was clad in black leather armor, wearing a mask, and had a slender build. The one speaking to Ye Zhongming had long hair that covered his face, with only a pair of cold eyes visible through the strands.

"For some reason, the area is shielded by something. We missed it twice, and after discovering it, we were blocked by some mysterious force. We can't confirm the situation inside yet. This is our intelligence department's fault. I'm sorry, boss."

Knowing who the woman trapped inside was, the head of the intelligence department felt deeply ashamed for taking so long to locate her.

Ye Zhongming sent the intelligence department to Ying City and its surrounding areas early on to monitor every movement. But this time, not only did they fail to detect the alliance of various forces in the area, but it also took them a considerable amount of time to locate Liang Chuyin after the order was given. This was almost a series of mistakes.

Ye Zhongming and Cloud Peak had invested heavily in the intelligence department. They were given access to some of the best resources, which even core members couldn't. Funding was abundant, and they had a high degree of autonomy. They were free to act independently as long as they completed their tasks and didn't harm Cloud Peak.

Their development was guaranteed, and they could use their free time to strengthen themselves through various means. Despite the intelligence department's strict rules and survival style, they had an easier path to becoming stronger than ordinary evolved.

But all of this was based on their usefulness to Cloud Peak.

They would be eliminated if they failed to meet Ye Zhongming's expectations.

For the intelligence department, which held many secrets, Ye Zhongming would never allow them to defect to others. Being eliminated meant being wiped out.

They were afraid because Ye Zhongming controlled their physical coordinates, and oath scrolls bound key members. Anyone who betrayed Cloud Peak would not escape its pursuit.

"Have you figured out who these people are?"

Ye Zhongming ignored their apologies and instead asked this question.

"We just captured someone but haven't had time to interrogate him yet. Another person escaped."

The head of Ying City's intelligence department felt his face burn with shame. His eyes, hidden beneath his long hair, could only look at the ground.

"Boss, the main responsibility lies with us. Capturing targets is our operation team's job," the masked man and the man in camouflage admitted their fault to Ye Zhongming.

"We'll discuss this later. Bring the captive here first."

Upon Ye Zhongming's order, the two Ying City's operation team members immediately sent a signal. Soon, someone brought forward a man.

It was the snake-tongued man who had left earlier.

He was in even worse shape than before. Already severely injured by Liang Chuyin, he had resisted fiercely when captured. The captain and vice-captain of Ying City's operation team—the man in camouflage and the masked man—had left deep, bone-exposing cuts on his limbs, rendering him completely unable to resist.

"Tell me who you are, who your people are, and who is inside that town. If you do, I won't kill you."

Ye Zhongming looked down at the man, who was slumped on the ground.

"Heh." The snake-tongued man chuckled, his eyes staring forward as if waiting for death.

"Sometimes, death isn't the scariest thing. The real despair comes when you're waiting for or even anticipating death. I have countless ways to make you wish you were dead. You'll believe me when I say this because you probably have many such methods yourself, right?"

Ye Zhongming crouched down, gripping the man's chin with one hand. "The person you tried to kill is my woman. Revenge can wait. Right now, I just want to make sure she's safe. Tell me everything you know, and then get as far away as possible. I'll act as if nothing happened today. If you don't answer, enjoy the last moments of your life. I guarantee it won't be less than a year."

"The fact that you didn't kill yourself the moment we captured you shows you don't dare to commit suicide. So don't act tough... tough guys suffer."

The snake-tongued man listened to Ye Zhongming's words, swallowing hard. He knew Ye Zhongming wasn't lying. In the apocalypse, there were too many ways to torture someone. If Liang Chuyin were really in danger, Ye Zhongming wouldn't let him go regardless of whether the real culprit was found. He would use every method to torment him.

After all, he had been captured.

"Heavenly Stem and Earth Branches," the snake-tongued man finally spoke. "We are the Heavenly Stems and Earth Branches, an assassin organisation. We existed before the apocalypse and continue to exist now. I am Earth Jia of the Heavenly Stems. This time, someone paid a huge sum to have us kill Liang Chuyin. If possible, we were also to kill anyone who came to rescue her. We receive a seven-star evolution potion for every core member of Cloud Peak we kill."

"Earth Yi, Earth Bing, and I were defeated by Liang Chuyin. Now, she's been moved to this town by Heaven Chou of the Earthly Branches—the space mage who escaped earlier. Inside, Heaven Bing of the Heavenly Stems is waiting for her. Heaven Bing is an eight-star evolved."

Although his explanation was a bit convoluted, Ye Zhongming understood. This was an assassin organization from the apocalypse, divided into the Heavenly Stems and Earthly Branches. Each branch had two series: the Heaven series and the Earth series, corresponding to the ten Heavenly Stems and twelve Earthly Branches. This meant twenty members were in the Heavenly Stems and twenty-four in the Earthly Branches.

"How strong is Heaven Bing?" Ye Zhongming stood up, looking toward the distant town.

"In our Heavenly Stems, he ranks third. He's a ranged attacker with a powerful mechanized armor. I'm unsure about his ranking in the Earth Branches, but he's probably around fifth. The Earth Branches are

stronger overall. Their Heaven Son and Earth Son, along with our Heaven Jia and Heaven Yi, are the organization's leaders."

Since he had already started talking, the snake-tongued man decided to spill everything. As for whether Ye Zhongming would keep his promise and let him go, he wasn't sure. But the worst that could happen was being killed; at least, it would be a quick death.

"Boss!"

The operation team members grew anxious upon hearing that Heaven Bing was an eight-star evolved. They requested permission from Ye Zhongming to take their people and head over.

After hearing Heaven Bing's brief introduction, Ye Zhongming seemed in no hurry and even started asking about the internal situation of the Heavenly Stems and Earth Branches.

"You have so many eight-star evolved? How did you manage that?"

The snake-tongued man chuckled. "We're assassins. We don't follow rules. We ambush teams, rob caravans, or simply guard wheels, attacking anyone who comes near. That's how we get most of our level eight demon crystals."

Ye Zhongming nodded. No wonder.

"Who have you robbed?"

"Heh, we've robbed Resistance Zone, Glory Army, and others."

Hearing this, Ye Zhongming's face showed a hint of a smile.

This Heavenly Stems and Earth Branches group was quite interesting.

"Boss!?" The members of the intelligence department grew anxious, wondering why Ye Zhongming wasn't worried.

Ye Zhongming looked at the town, which was shrouded by something, and smiled. "If that Heaven Bing is really as this person says—an eight-star evolved with a ranged job relying on some mechanized armor—then... I think they'll pay the price for underestimating Liang Chuyin."

The others didn't understand what Ye Zhongming meant, but they figured that since the boss was so confident, there shouldn't be a problem.

Chapter 1464.5- Double attack

They wondered if Liang Chuyin had also evolved to eight stars, which was why Ye Zhongming was so calm.

"Then what should we..."

The long-haired intelligence officer asked.

Ye Zhongming's gaze shifted from the town to the surrounding area.

"You said there's a reward for killing a core member of Cloud Peak, so there should be more of your people around, right?"

The snake-tongued man was stunned but nodded.

"Then we'll help Liang Chuyin clean them up so she can focus on killing that Heaven Bing inside."

Everyone was taken aback.

"Are our people nearby?"

"Yes, they are."

The heads of Ying City's intelligence and operation teams answered together. Their people had been deployed to this area to search for Liang Chuyin.

"Find everyone who isn't one of us. Order our teams to converge here. Anyone who isn't from Cloud Peak is to be eliminated."

"Send a message to Cloud Peak to deploy the Exquisite Floating Ball and monitor this area thoroughly."

Those around Ye Zhongming knew that he was angry despite his smile and apparent lack of concern for Liang Chuyin.

Soon, just a minute later, news came in that someone was rapidly approaching the town from just five kilometers away.

"Look, someone can't hold back anymore." Ye Zhongming smiled and dashed off in the direction of the approaching figure.

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In the starry sky, the stars began to fall.

Heaven Bing desperately tried to escape, but the sky seemed to move with him, making it impossible to avoid. Watching the shimmering points of light falling toward him, a sense of despair rose in his heart.

Would he not live to see reinforcements arrive? They should be nearby.

In this life-or-death moment, Heaven Bing also gave it his all. He forgot about reinforcements and Heaven Chou, who had left earlier. His only thought was to survive.

Something fell at his feet and exploded, releasing countless purplish black insects with smooth bodies. They began to borrow into the gaps in his mechanized armor the moment they emerged.

The insects latched onto his body inside his armor. His originally fair skin began to turn black and then purple.

At the same time, the falling star-like clusters continued to strike Heaven Bing's body, shaking him violently with each hit.

The stars weren't dense, hitting Heaven Bing one by one. But each carried immense force, forcing the assassin to crouch lower and lower, his feet sinking deep into the ground. He had to cover his head and bend over to protect his helmet.

Soon, Heaven Bing was completely pounded into the ground.

When Liang Chuyin's whip lashed out again, the sky disappeared, and Heaven Bing was embedded in the ground.

But he wasn't dead.

The black insects beneath him had all been shaken to death by the attacks. Their bodily fluids and blood flowed out from the gaps. Heaven Bing's skin, which had turned black and purple, began to recover.

Heaven Bing struggled to crawl out of the ground. Although his armor was mostly destroyed, it retained some basic functions. However, the giant cannon was clearly unusable; its barrel was deformed.

"Heh, heh, how about that? You didn't kill me. That ability of yours must have also taken a toll on you."

Heaven Bing saw that Liang Chuyin continuously expended energy—both stamina and mental energy—while using this ability.

Otherwise, she would have killed him while he was being attacked.

And now, the woman was breathing heavily, a sign of excessive consumption.

"Not bad, you've got some skills."

Liang Chuyin stepped back, tilting her head to drink a bottle of mental energy potion.

The fact that this Heaven Bing had survived her Moon Attraction ability was indeed beyond her expectations.

Moon Attraction was the most powerful attack of the Moon Saint Armor, requiring large amounts of mental energy. It was a burden for someone like Liang Chuyin, who wasn't particularly strong in mental energy.

She had to replenish her mental energy to handle the upcoming battle.

Heaven Bing also needed to recover. From his armor, sharp tubes extended at the neck, waist, and feet, piercing his body and injecting some liquid. This allowed his severely damaged body to recover quickly.

However, the liquid was also the armor's energy source. Using them now would make future repairs difficult.

But Heaven Bing couldn't care less. Survival was his priority.

"Do you know what that was? Reverse Blood Insects. They feed energy back to me. Using that energy to defend against your attacks—how about that?"

"Not bad."

Both of them quietly recovered, then moved simultaneously.

Liang Chuyin threw her whip above her head, and the butterfly wings tightly wrapped around the weapon. The next moment, the wings disappeared, and the whip spread into over a thousand strands.

Not energy bodies, but real whips.

Such a scene would make anyone feel like they were in a dream.

Meanwhile, Heaven Bing retreated rapidly. He wanted to escape while his armor could still provide decent speed.

But just as he retreated a dozen meters, intense pain shot through his body. Thudding sounds kept coming, each one making the pain worse.

"I forgot to tell you, all the abilities of this Moon Saint Armor have dual attacks." Liang Chuyin raised her voice, and the whips came crashing down.

"Including this one!"

Chapter 1465: Quick kill

The sky was filled with whips, lashing down and covering a vast area, with the center point being Heaven Bing's location.

The sound of so many whips striking a single target was in unison.

Then, the whips all lifted again, like a blooming flower, and the next second, they came crashing down again.

After the whip's cracking, everything fell silent.

Heaven Bing knelt motionless on the ground.

Faced with an unavoidable attack, he could only kneel, curl up, and use his back, which carried the strang cannon, to endure the countless lashes.

This way, his defense would be slightly higher.

Heaven Bing had no other solutions. Not everyone was like the people of Cloud Peak, with their space equipment filled with valuable items. Most evolved, while ensuring their evolution level was high enough, considered it a success just to have a complete set of equipment.

The butterfly wings reappeared behind Liang Chuyin, and the whip returned to a single strand, which she held firmly in her hand.

She slowly landed not far from Heaven Bing, and with a flick of her whip, she wrapped up her opponent.

At this moment, Heaven Bing's mechanized armor was severely damaged, almost destroyed.

His limbs were sprawled, and he remained unresponsive even as Liang Chuyin wrapped him up, exposing all his vital points.

The tip of the whip lightly tapped, and the helmet fell off, revealing Heaven Bing's blood-covered face.

His neck was twisted, and his breathing had stopped. This eight-star evolved had not survived the attack and was already dead.

The whip moved again, piercing through the cracks in the armor and into Heaven Bing's heart. After passing through, it turned and pierced into his throat.

Liang Chuyin would not give him a chance to counterattack.

After killing her opponent, Liang Chuyin lowered her guard, breathing heavily.

The Moon Saint Armor was indeed a good item. Its abilities were all very powerful. With six set pieces, each with four skills and three additional set stats when combined, it was a formidable set.

But as good as it was, the armor came at the cost of mental energy. With Liang Chuyin's current mental energy level, she could only use it for a short time.

Fortunately, Heaven Bing wasn't a particularly strong eight-star evolved. His attacks were one-dimensional, relying entirely on his mechanized armor for ranged attacks. This type of evolved was better suited to linger at the edges of the battlefield, providing firepower support for teammates rather than engaging in solo fights.

Today, he had chosen to face Liang Chuyin head-on, underestimating her. He thought that even as a ranged evolved, he could rely on his level advantage to kill this core member of Cloud Peak.

His plan was well thought out, but he had encountered Liang Chuyin in her current state, equipped with a full set of gold-grade equipment. Thus, his death was not surprising.

After storing the nearly destroyed armor in her space equipment, Liang Chuyin took another mental energy recovery potion and began considering whether to return to Cloud Peak immediately or continue to rendezvous with her team.

Both options were dangerous.

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While Liang Chuyin was killing Heaven Bing, Ye Zhongming had also locked onto the person who had received the signal and was rushing to provide reinforcements.

The man stopped on a pile of ruins at a certain moment, halting his previous rapid movement.

When Ye Zhongming appeared, the man showed no sign of surprise.

"Heaven Yi?"

Ye Zhongming looked at the man about thirty meters away, tilting his head as he asked.

The man frowned, not answering immediately. Instead, he stared at Ye Zhongming for a long time before slowly saying, "Ye Zhongming."

"It's me."

"It seems our operation has failed."

Seeing Ye Zhongming, Heaven Yi guessed many things.

They had been assassins before the apocalypse. Although the organization had only a dozen members at the time, these lawless individuals who lived by the blade were more adapted to this world than ordinary people.

They evolved quickly, using gory and brutal methods to plunder resources from others. Since they had no fixed base, no development concept, and barely any humanity, these people took anything they could find.

By now, the dozens of members in the organization had likely taken more human lives than some large factions with tens of thousands of members.

As Earth Jia had said, they had even robbed super factions like the Glory Army and Resistance Zone. Since they left no survivors and operated in the shadows, with the help of their space mage, they came and went like ghosts. Even now, many of the large factions they had robbed might not know who was behind it.

This time, someone had approached them, offering an astronomical sum in exchange for targeting Cloud Peak. Faced with such wealth, the Heavenly Stems and Earth Branches were tempted. Since the targets didn't include top-tier experts like Ye Zhongming, Xia Bai, or Red Hair, they had fewer concerns and agreed to take the job.

The timing was also perfect, with Cloud Peak's surroundings in chaos.

They would make a few big deals, kill a few core members of Cloud Peak, and then vanish as they always did, with no one knowing it was them.

But now, the King of Cloud Peak had appeared before him, blocking his path to reinforcements. This meant that their operation had been exposed.

What followed was simple: either compromise or fight to the death.

Heaven Yi chose the first option.

"The compensation for this job is yours. Those you killed deserved it. I'll leave."

Ye Zhongming inwardly praised the man—truly, an assassin with no humanity. Once the operation was exposed, he immediately sought to escape without attempting to rescue his comrades or kill Ye Zhongming.

Such people could be called selfish and cold-blooded, but undoubtedly, they were more suited to the apocalypse.

"That depends on what the reward is." Ye Zhongming took a step forward, his aura suddenly intensifying as he locked onto Heaven Yi

"A gold-grade equipment and a seven-star evolution potion."

Ye Zhongming sneered.

"That's not enough to buy your life."

Heaven Yi frowned.

"Plus ten level eight demon crystals. This is my personal apology on behalf of the Heavenly Stems and Earth Branches."

Ye Zhongming shook his head. "First, it's not enough to move me. Second, no one can attack Cloud Peak and then settle it with money. Third, I really want to kill someone like you."

In his naturally lowered hand, Wind and Lightning appeared.

Heaven Yi leaned back slightly, narrowing his eyes. "Mr. Ye, I respect you as the King of Cloud Peak and have made the biggest concession. If you continue to press, it will be a fight to the death. Your organization is here while we are scattered to the ends of the earth. You will never sleep well again if you reject my peace offer."

Ye Zhongming laughed, charging forward with his giant blade, using his attack to answer Heaven Yi's threat.

Cloud Peak feared no threats.

Chapter 1465.5- Quick kill

"Ah Chou?"

The three men sitting together, drinking and eating meat, were surprised to see the young man who had just emerged from the light.

"Bosses, it seems we've messed up this time."

"What happened?"

These three men were the leaders of the Heavenly Stems and Earth Branches: Heaven Jia, Heaven Zi, and Earth Zi.

For this operation against Cloud Peak, the entire assassin organisation had sent their elites.

The three of them sitting here weren't due to laziness but because they believed that an operation not involving the assassination of top-tier experts like Ye Zhongming, who were on the national rankings, could be handled by sending out Heaven Yi, Heaven Bing, Heaven Chou, and three members from the Earth Branches.

They were waiting dozens of kilometers away from the action site, a habit during large-scale operations.

They didn't think there was anything wrong with targeting Cloud Peak. They had offended at least a third of the Resistance Zone, Glory Army, and the top twenty factions on the national rankings, and they were still alive and well. Cloud Peak was most famous for its equipment and gene warriors, but its notoriety paled compared to some battle squads.

With six experts—two eight-star and four seven-star evolved—targeting a few core members, wasn't that enough? Even if their eight-star level was somewhat inflated, they were still beyond seven-star. How could they have failed?

Earth Zi walked over and examined Heaven Chou's injuries. They weren't severe, but injuring a space mage wasn't something an ordinary person could do.

A faint light appeared in his hand, and Heaven Chou's wounds healed significantly, leaving only faint scars.

This Earth Zi was clearly a healer.

"The people who injured me were very strong, with strange methods similar to ours. Earth Jia was captured."

With the pain mostly gone, Heaven Chou relaxed and quickly summarized what he knew.

The three leaders of the Heavenly Stems and Earth Branches exchanged glances, knowing it was time to decide.

Cloud Peak had undoubtedly discovered their presence, and Earth Jia's capture would likely expose critical information. Attempting a rescue now would be extremely dangerous.

As far as they knew, Cloud Peak currently had more than five eight-star evolved and battle beasts.

This level of strength was beyond what they could handle.

But if they didn't rescue them, Heaven Bing and Heaven Yi would likely be lost, dealing a massive blow to their organization. Combined with the three from the Earth Branches, almost a third of their strength would vanish.

"Let's go take a look. If there's an opportunity, we won't mind killing Ye Zhongming. But if it's impossible, we'll retreat and stay far away from here."

Heaven Zi paced back and forth before making the decision. The others nodded in agreement.

"Can you still use your abilities?" Heaven Zi asked Heaven Chou. After receiving an affirmative answer, he said gravely, "Let's go!"

With a flash of light, the group disappeared.

.....

Heaven Yi hadn't expected Ye Zhongming to attack so decisively, showing no interest in gold-grade equipment, evolution potions, or even level-eight demon crystals.

Although he knew that killing him would allow Ye Zhongming to take these items, did the King of Cloud Peak really believe he could keep him here? Was he so confident in facing the endless retaliation of the Heavenly Stems and Earth Branches, an assassin organisation that thrived in the shadows?

Ye Zhongming answered him with the gleam of his blade, and Heaven Yi saw a surging will to fight in the man's eyes.

It was a kind of... desire released after too long without a worthy opponent.

Heaven Yi couldn't understand this mindset.

Things like the loneliness of being invincible only existed in novels. At least now, he didn't believe Ye Zhongming was invincible.

This sword strike seemed unremarkable, but when wielded by Ye Zhongming with Wind and Lightning, even without using a skill, it exuded immense pressure.

Heaven Yi's expression changed drastically. A moment of hesitation had left him unable to escape the attack range.

What kind of speed was this?!

Ye Zhongming had activated Quickness.

Heaven Yi's body swayed left and right, but he didn't move. Instead, five identical figures appeared around him, indistinguishable from the original.

The blade light from Wind and Lightning struck one of the figures, which flickered before returning to normal.

All six figures drew pitch-black daggers, shrouded in faint dark mist, and stabbed Ye Zhongming in unison.

Ye Zhongming was slightly surprised. He hadn't expected Heaven Yi to be a Shadow Assassin.

This assassin job was extremely strange. Its initial skill was what Heaven Yi used now: Force Shadow Clones. These six figures had no original body—they were all original bodies, each with 60% of the original's attack power but full defense, and they shared damage.

In other words, to instantly kill this person, you needed to overcome six times the defence of a single body.

However, since Ye Zhongming had recognized the skill, he also knew its strengths and weaknesses.

Although the blade light from Wind and Lightning did not seem to affect Heaven Yi, the damage had been shared among the six bodies, making it appear that nothing had happened.

Facing the six daggers, Ye Zhongming spun in place, leaping into the air. Instead of dodging, he performed a spinning kick mid-air.

The kick landed.

One of the figures flickered but quickly returned to normal.

The other five daggers struck Ye Zhongming but failed to break through his defense.

Black Halo Shield and Black Earth Armor were activated.

Ye Zhongming landed, and with a wave of his free hand, a sandstorm erupted around him, instantly enveloping the six figures.

Unhindered Dust Sand Pendant's sandstorm attack activated!

The relentless sand attacked the six figures while Ye Zhongming's Wind and Lightning slashed repeatedly, each strike hitting a shadow clone.

Then, a sand tower appeared in the air, firing solid sandballs before disappearing, only for another to appear in a random location.

Sand Tower Attack was activated.

The barrage of attacks was almost too fast to follow.

Heaven Yi was equally relentless. The six figures surrounded Ye Zhongming, their daggers stabbing repeatedly at the King of Cloud Peak. However, unless they aimed for the head or neck, Ye Zhongming didn't bother dodging.

Even the corrosive dark mist on the daggers, which even Heaven Zi and Heaven Jia feared, had no effect.

The two sides clashed, and at a certain moment, Ye Zhongming actively retreated. Then, five sand towers appeared in the sky, exploding into countless sandballs covering Heaven Yi's six clones.

Heaven Yi cried out, and the clones all vanished. His original body stumbled into view. Without even looking at Ye Zhongming, he stabbed himself four times with his dagger, and his entire body turned bright red as if drenched in dye.

Ye Zhongming initially thought Heaven Yi was using this method to attack him, but instead, after activating his potential, Heaven Yi turned and fled at incredible speed, vanishing like a wisp of smoke.

Ye Zhongming smiled, and Wind and Lightning disappeared, replaced by the Earth Sniper Rifle. He fired without even aiming.

Space Stack, Earth Armor Piercing Shot- Far Sight and Precision, Long flight, and Penetration were activated.

Heaven Yi, who thought he had escaped, had his head instantly blown apart.