

Apocalypse 1471

Chapter 1471: Kill the healer first

Earth Zi swore that he truly saw it coming when Ye Zhongming charged toward him.

It was just too obvious. When Heaven Zi and Heaven Jia slightly retreated, and the King of Cloud Peak's gaze swept over him, Earth Zi knew he had been targeted.

But he didn't panic.

Ye Zhongming was indeed powerful. He could suppress two evolved of the same level while still holding the advantage and appeared to have energy to spare. During the fight, it now seemed he had been gradually moving in Earth Zi's direction.

Earth Zi hadn't been alert earlier, but he had instinctively adjusted his position, keeping a certain distance from the battlefield.

So when Ye Zhongming made his move, Earth Zi felt that although the distance between them had narrowed, it was still within a safe range.

Even if Ye Zhongming was extremely fast, Earth Zi believed he had enough time to dodge or defend. After that, his two companions would quickly close in on Ye Zhongming, preventing the enemy from getting close to him again.

But in reality, when Earth Zi was about to crush a protective barrier bead he had prepared earlier, he found that Ye Zhongming, who had been some distance away, suddenly disappeared. The next second, Ye Zhongming was right in front of him.

It was too fast. So fast that Earth Zi didn't even have time to react. Ye Zhongming had just charged toward him, and in the blink of an eye, he was standing right in front of him. The war blade in Ye Zhongming's hand had somehow vanished, replaced by a blue dagger.

Earth Zi instinctively screamed in terror, crushing the bead in his hand, hoping to block Ye Zhongming's attack before it landed.

Crack!

The protective barrier activated, shielding Earth Zi behind it. Ye Zhongming stood in front of the barrier, holding the dagger, seemingly blocked.

Heaven Zi and Heaven Jia were frantically rushing back and felt a slight relief. They knew about this barrier bead. Although the barrier's strength wasn't much for an eight-star evolved, it could definitely block one attack. As long as Earth Zi wasn't instantly killed, they would never give Ye Zhongming another chance.

Ye Zhongming stood there strangely, not attacking the barrier that was within arm's reach and could be shattered with a single strike.

Meanwhile, Earth Zi, who should have been safe, let out a gurgling sound and fell backward, stiff as a board.

It turned out that just before he crushed the bead, Ye Zhongming had already slit his throat with the dagger.

"Ah!"

Seeing this scene, Heaven Zi and Heaven Jia were filled with rage, their minds momentarily blank.

The most solid combination in the Heavenly Stems and Earth Branches was actually a five-person team.

Heaven Zi and Heaven Jia, the two leaders, were responsible for close combat. Heaven Bing handled long-range attacks. Earth Zi was in charge of healing and removing negative statuses. There was also Earth Chou, a specialist in applying various buffs.

The five of them complemented each other, forming the most powerful combat unit of the Heavenly Stems and Earthly Branches, and the foundation of their fearlessness against any force.

When Earth Chou had betrayed them earlier, they hadn't been too concerned because, although space mages were rare, they weren't irreplaceable.

Similarly, Heaven Bing and Earth Chou could also be replaced, as long-range attackers and buffers with similar functions weren't too hard to find.

Even Heaven Zi and Heaven Jia themselves could be replaced.

But Earth Zi was irreplaceable. Support Jobs that combined healing and negative status removal were far too rare, and his healing abilities far surpassed those of ordinary healers.

A job scroll like his could now be exchanged for an eight-star evolution potion.

But now, this person, the true core of the Heavenly Stems and Earth Branches, had been killed.

Regret. They regretted being so careless, knowing they were facing the King of Cloud, and still brought Earth Zi along even after Heaven Bing had been killed.

Anger. This one man might have just destroyed everything they had built and everything they had planned for the future.

Fear. With two core members gone in an instant, where would their path lead now?

These complex emotions turned into pure hatred for Ye Zhongming. The two assassins let out furious roars and charged at Ye Zhongming, who was now standing with his back to them.

"Don't rush. You're next."

Ye Zhongming's words pierced their ears, causing the two assassins, who were already within striking distance of Ye Zhongming's back, to shudder. Their minds cleared slightly, but their instincts and combat experience drove them to continue their attack.

From this position and angle, even if Ye Zhongming was fast, there was no way he could dodge.

But Ye Zhongming dodged anyway.

Their attacks slammed into the energy barrier Earth Zi had just activated.

Meanwhile, Ye Zhongming had already moved behind the barrier. The moment they shattered it, he turned around.

At the same time, Heaven Zi and Heaven Jia felt a powerful gravitational pull from the ground.

Ye Zhongming disappeared again, reappearing behind Heaven Zi. The dagger, still stained with Earth Zi's blood, thrust toward his temple.

Heaven Zi gritted his teeth and suddenly lunged forward. The sound of bones cracking echoed as several of his bones broke.

To avoid Ye Zhongming's fatal strike, he forcibly activated a job skill—Body Swap—which allowed him to instantly switch places with an object in front of him.

However, using this skill came with many restrictions. The user couldn't be under any negative status effects otherwise, the physical and mental energy consumption would increase dramatically.

Right now, both Heaven Zi and Heaven Jia were affected by the Earth Spirit's Gravity Leap skill. Forcing the Body Swap under these conditions caused Heaven Zi's body to suffer excessive damage, breaking several bones.

But he had escaped Ye Zhongming's attack range.

With his strike missing, Ye Zhongming didn't stop. He disappeared again, reappearing behind Heaven Jia. This time, instead of using the dagger, he threw a punch.

Cloud Slice activated, and dozens of energy beams shot toward Heaven Jia, who was doing his best to dodge.

Heaven Jia didn't have a skill like Heaven Zi's, but his agility was exceptional. The moment he noticed Ye Zhongming's bizarre teleportation, he didn't hesitate—he dropped to the ground.

Most of the beams missed him, but a few struck his body.

"Explode!"

Heaven Jia knew this was a life-or-death moment. He didn't have time to worry about his equipment. With a shout, he activated some ability on his armor, causing it to explode. The fragments transformed into a massive shield, clinging to his body. Not only did it neutralize the Cloud Slice attack, but it also blocked Ye Zhongming's follow-up dagger strike.

They might not be as strong as Ye Zhongming, but they were still eight-star evolved who had killed and looted countless times. They always had some good items or life-saving tricks up their sleeves.

For now, the two assassins had narrowly escaped death and gained a moment to catch their breath.

Chapter 1472: Mysterious Entry Ticket

But how could Ye Zhongming let them go?

His body flickered repeatedly, moving quickly before teleporting again. In the blink of an eye, he caught up to Heaven Jia, who was now without his armor and thrust the dagger downward.

Earlier, Ye Zhongming had used the Phase Shift ability from his spatial ring to teleport nearly the maximum distance of 20 meters, killing Earth Zi. After that, he used the Unhindered Sand Dust Pendant's ability, which allowed for short-range teleportation.

However, this ability was limited initially: a 10-second cooldown between each use.

Ye Zhongming felt this restriction hindered his combat effectiveness, so he performed Strengthen on it, even sacrificing two small space storage items in the process.

Finally, he achieved his goal, altering the ability.

The original limitation remained: each teleportation could move him one meter, with a 10-second cooldown, and after ten consecutive uses, the ability would enter a five-day cooldown. However, it now had an added feature: the ability to store items.

If Ye Zhongming chose to sacrifice items stored within the spatial storage, the quality of the sacrificed items would determine the enhancement of the ability. At its best, the ability could allow him to teleport two meters at a time, with no cooldown between uses, for up to three consecutive teleportations. After three uses, the cooldown between consecutive teleportations would reduce to one second, allowing for seven more uses. After that, the ability would enter a ten-day cooldown.

Ye Zhongming experimented and determined the energy level of items required to maximize the ability's potential. He had prepared a set of sacrificial items specifically for this purpose.

After killing Earth Zi, he sacrificed these items, gaining the ability to teleport consecutively. This allowed him to chase down and overwhelm his two opponents of the same level.

Although the three consecutive teleportations had been used up, and he was limited to seven teleportations with a one-second cooldown, Ye Zhongming still moved like a ghost. Using his speed and gravity control, he entangled the two assassins and then used teleportation to find opportunities for quick kills.

Heaven Zi and Heaven Jia were terrified out of their wits.

As eight star evolved, they had been among the top-tier evolved in the nation. They rarely faced life-threatening situations; usually, they were the ones others feared as harbingers of death.

But today, they tasted death themselves, feeling the shadow of the grim reaper looming over them.

They frantically used various items: glowing beads, liquid fire oil, dark cards, and summoning dolls.

They hoped these would buy them a chance to escape.

But Ye Zhongming was faster than both under the effects of Radiant Land and Moonlight Field. He would suddenly appear in unexpected places at critical moments, delivering fatal strikes. This made it impossible for the two assassins to escape his pursuit.

And let's not forget that the Earth Spirit's Gravity Leap was constantly active beneath their feet.

Thud!

Heaven Jia finally exhausted all his life-saving measures. He could no longer block Ye Zhongming's attacks. The dagger pierced through his eye socket, then slashed horizontally, splitting half his skull open. Blood and brain matter spilled out.

This top-tier assassin, who had taken countless lives, died without even a sound, collapsing to the ground.

Seeing this, Heaven Zi seemed to age instantly. All his vigor and spirit vanished, and he fell to his knees with a thud.

"I... I'll trade my life!"

Ye Zhongming appeared behind him, the dagger already piercing the skin at the back of Heaven Zi's neck. Hearing these words, he paused.

"With what?"

"The location of a Soul Merchant branch, information on the leader of the Glory Army, and... a mysterious entry ticket."

Ye Zhongming narrowed his eyes. "Speak."

Heaven Zi opened his mouth but said, "I won't say anything until I'm free."

"Then you can die. What you're offering means nothing to me."

With that, the dagger pressed deeper. Heaven Zi screamed in terror, already feeling numbness in part of his body. The dagger had damaged a nerve.

"I'll talk, I'll talk! You must keep your promise, or I'll haunt you even in death!"

Heaven Zi shouted, quickly spilling everything he knew and handing over a golden, intricately designed metal ticket.

Heaven Zi relaxed slightly, feeling the dagger leave the back of his neck.

But the next second, he looked down and saw the Undead Sand Moon Blade tip protruding from his chest.

His final moments weren't about questioning why Ye Zhongming hadn't kept his promise. Instead, he cursed the weapon for adding a Stiffness debuff at such a critical moment...

Elsewhere, the battle had already turned into a rout.

In truth, this collapse had begun the moment Earth Zi died.

The three eight-star evolved had been the backbone of these people. In their minds, no matter how strong Ye Zhongming was, he couldn't possibly defeat three opponents of the same level.

But the harsh reality delivered a brutal blow.

One eight-star evolved had been killed.

These people weren't fools. They knew what this meant. If one of the three had been killed, the defeat of the other two was only a matter of time.

So, one person decisively chose to flee.

Once the Guan City evolved, who were already at a disadvantage, began to collapse, the outcome was inevitable.

The remaining evolved, still holding on, overwhelmed by a sudden onslaught.

Perhaps just moments ago, they hadn't believed that one person's summoned creatures could defeat over a hundred elite Guan City evolved. But now they were convinced.

Facing someone who could single-handedly take on three opponents of the same level and over a hundred six-star helpers, all while remaining calm and even killing an eight-star evolved, what else could they do but flee? Wait for him to kill the other two eight-star evolved?

These people acted quickly, a testament to the "pragmatism" honed in the apocalypse. But they underestimated the speed at which Ye Zhongming could kill two opponents of the same level.

Before they could run far, the battle over there had already ended.

Ye Zhongming had no intention of letting these people go. In his fully powered state, he began a massacre.

By this time, Chameleon had arrived nearby. Due to certain rules, they hadn't been able to reveal themselves earlier, nor had they noticed their boss was in danger, so they had stayed hidden.

Now, facing these fleeing soldiers, they began to act, completely cutting off any hope of survival for the Guan City evolved.

When everything was over, only a field of corpses remained, each in a different state of death.

"Take them all back to Cloud Peak. Our battle beasts will enjoy these nutrient-rich meals," Ye Zhongming coldly ordered.

At times like this, he truly was a demon who cared only for his own and not for the world.

But as Ye Zhongming picked up the golden ticket, feeling the cold metal and the constant pull of its summoning power, he was filled with awe.

What... is this?

Chapter 1473: Five eight star potions

Within two days, the chaotic surroundings of Ying City suddenly fell silent. The teams that had been resisting either surrendered or fled.

This was because Cloud Peak's main combat teams had fully intervened in the battle. With the accurate intelligence and frequent assassinations carried out by Chameleon, these small forces quickly crumbled.

Of course, the most important reason was a piece of news that spread rapidly throughout the region.

The King of Cloud Peak personally took action, annihilating the major forces of Guan City and killing three eight-star evolved.

This news was so explosive that even without verifying its authenticity, the psychological impact alone caused these forces to collapse.

The major powers closely watching this battle had initially estimated that it would take at least a month for Cloud Peak to complete this wave of expansion. However, no one expected it to end in such a manner.

Cloud Peak began stabilizing its jurisdiction with its territory expanded and control strengthened. Soon after, the exploration boom of the Secret Realm began.

The increase in Cloud Peak's income also became evident around this time.

This was a complex process. On the surface, Cloud Peak's accounts were consistently in a state of outflow, but this wasn't a loss. Resources such as demon crystals, materials, potions, scrolls, and battle beasts were being stored in their warehouses. Meanwhile, equipment, vitamin supplements, ammunition, gene lifeforms, crystal weapons, and delicacies were being transported in large quantities and sold through various channels. Most of these were supplied to Deacon Water, but Cloud Peak's merchant teams were also active, though Lu Yi no longer personally managed them. Instead, he handed them over to others, filling in the gaps left by the two commercial giants, Five Ring Money and Cannibal Chain.

This was part of a commercial restructuring plan that someone had proposed.

Influenced by the pre-apocalypse concept of "channels being king," this former corporate executive believed that relying solely on others' channels in the post-apocalyptic world was unreliable.

While cooperation with Water Deacon was possible now, it might not be in the future. The same logic applied to Cannibal Chain and Five Ring Money. What would happen if cooperation ceased?

Thus, this person wrote a proposal and submitted it to Xia Lei, who was relatively easier to approach. Cloud Peak's big sister was very satisfied with the plan and discussed it with Ye Zhongming. After making a few modifications, they began to implement it.

Of course, this implementation wasn't done on a large scale to not affect their cooperation with Deacon Water, Five Ring Money, Thousand Beast Villa, and Cannibal Chain. However, it did mark the beginning of Cloud Peak establishing its own commercial network.

For example, they began opening markets in remote areas surrounded by dungeons or mutated lifeforms using low-end equipment, low-level evolution potions, and by-products from manufacturing jobs. They also introduced a series of items with different models to avoid direct competition with

Deacon Water and others. Additionally, they established an agent system, allowing these agents to maintain their own trade routes and obtain regional distribution rights for Cloud Peak's specialty products.

Ye Zhongming and the higher-ups listened to this person's enthusiastic presentation for two hours and realized he had valuable insights. Having been with Cloud Peak for several years, he was considered a veteran and could be trusted. Thus, they handed over this aspect of the business to him, making him the deputy head of Cloud Peak's newly renamed Commerce Department, which had evolved from the former merchant team. This change signified a more professional approach, with commercial operations gradually separating from the main combat teams, transitioning from the previous merchant team model to a dedicated commercial team.

This didn't mean that those involved in the plan would abandon evolution. Rather, after more than four years of surviving the apocalypse, it had become clear that some evolved, whether due to temperament, physical limitations, or mental resilience, were simply not suited for combat. Some people were naturally timid and couldn't be trained to overcome their fear, making them hesitant in battle. They could work in internal support roles if they were lucky enough to join Cloud Peak. Others had been disabled in combat and could no longer fight, so they had to stay within the mountain villa and contribute however they could. There were also those who, due to certain experiences, had developed an extreme aversion to combat, and forcing them to fight would drive them insane...

Many special circumstances made some people unsuitable for combat missions.

Many of these individuals had relatives who were serving Cloud Peak or had contributed to Cloud Peak in the past, so Cloud Peak felt a responsibility toward them.

Ye Zhongming naturally wouldn't abandon them. As Cloud Peak continued to grow, the number of such people also increased.

The basic construction of the mountain villa had been completed, and Ye Zhongming planned to send these people to Ying City to work.

The limited area of the mountain villa had begun to restrict the team's development. It was inevitable that some organizations would have to relocate to Ying City, where a large-scale construction project was about to begin. These individuals would be needed there.

The Commerce Department was also planned to be based in Ying City.

In the future, Cloud Peak Mountain Villa will gradually become the true core, while Ying City will serve as an extension of the base, guarding the mountain villa.

The person who proposed the commercial plan could select suitable candidates from these individuals to form the department.

In addition to the commercial plan, while crafting equipment, Ye Zhongming also visited various high-level wheel locations to spin for valuable items or exchange with other forces, focusing on obtaining level-eight demon crystals.

Aside from the superpowers, some second-tier major forces had already begun hunting level-eight mutated lifeforms, but it was a strenuous task with heavy casualties. After killing one level-eight monster, they might need several months of rest before attempting a second hunt.

Gathering enough magic crystals to spin a level-eight wheel once could take a long time for these forces.

Ye Zhongming targeted these forces, offering to exchange high-quality equipment for their level-eight demon crystals.

Cloud Peak's approach was flexible. They could exchange for a large quantity of lower-level equipment to upgrade the entire team, or for a smaller number of higher-level elite equipment, or even a single high-level extraordinary piece of equipment.

Given Cloud Peak's reputation for quality equipment, accurate targeting, and the mutually beneficial nature of the exchanges, these teams, though losing their hard-earned demon crystals, gained equipment that would make their next hunt easier and more efficient. Cloud Peak also got what it wanted, rapidly advancing in evolution. Thus, the transactions were easily concluded.

Meanwhile, Cloud Peak's own teams were not idle, launching frenzied attacks to hunt high-level mutated lifeforms.

This state of affairs continued for a month. After a month, all the Cloud Peak teams that had been dispatched returned to the base as ordered. They would rest for a while.

The return of these teams brought back many resources. Combined with the frequent transactions of the past month, Ye Zhongming spun the eight-star wheel several times, obtaining three eight-star evolution potions, fifteen seven-star evolution potions, and over a hundred six-star potions.

In addition, Ye Zhongming exchanged a set of Earth equipment and Star equipment, along with two seven-star evolution potions, for one eight-star evolution potion from Cannibal Chain.

He also traded a piece of golden-tier equipment obtained from the wheel and a seven-star evolution potion for another eight-star potion from Five Ring Money.

Whether it was the two sets of equipment that required a large number of excellent materials and had a non-trivial failure rate or the gold-grade equipment obtained from spinning the eight-star wheel plus the seven-star potion, the price for an eight-star potion was undoubtedly high.

But there was no other way. Currently, eight-star was the pinnacle of human evolution, and potions of this level were bound to carry a high premium. This premium would only gradually disappear once someone became a nine-star evolved.

Park Xiuying, Liang Chuyin, Mo Ye, Xia Lei, and Little Tiger received the potions and began their journey toward becoming eight-star evolved.

Ye Zhongming personally ensured their safety. Once they awakened, Cloud Peak, after a period of silence, would embark on another major operation.

Chapter 1474: Helpers are here

"Lately, the mountain villa has been unusually quiet. What's going on?"

At a construction site in Ying City, several two-star evolved sat on the edge of a half-dug pit, smoking cigarettes one of them had just spun from a wheel. They chatted while gazing in the direction of Cloud Peak.

Construction sites like this were everywhere now. The entire Ying City had become a massive construction zone, and the distant city walls were growing taller by the day.

Rumor had it that once Ying City was completed according to plan, it would resemble an ancient, majestic city capable of housing over five million evolved.

This was an astonishing number, considering that evolved were not like ordinary people from the past. Their daily lives and training required much more space, and the city would need to establish large areas for various facilities, such as training grounds, trading markets, barracks, battle beast camps, and more.

In short, once completed, this city might become the largest evolved habitat in the entire nation—or even the world.

Building such a grand city naturally required a massive workforce, which Cloud Peak recruited through various channels.

Ye Zhongming adopted an active invitation method to prevent infiltration by hostile forces. Preparations had begun long ago, with Cloud Peak inviting small-scale teams or low-level evolved to live in Ying City. Under a certain degree of protection, these people lived relatively comfortable lives. Previously, many forces in Ying City believed this was Cloud Peak's way of solidifying its foundation. After all, with people, everything else could follow.

The arrival of these people did bring benefits to Cloud Peak. They needed low-level equipment and potions, which Cloud Peak had in abundance. Due to their low strength, they were willing to do tasks that other forces wouldn't touch. They also brought in a certain amount of tax revenue for Cloud Peak.

But now it seemed that Cloud Peak had brought these people here to ensure an adequate labor force for the reconstruction of Ying City.

Cloud Peak, or the original forces of Ying City, naturally handled core areas and projects. However, basic construction and less critical areas could be delegated to these laborers. Cloud Peak provided some compensation based on the amount of work done, and these people were more than willing to take on the tasks.

Take this group of two-star evolved, for example. They had already fallen far behind in terms of evolution level. In a sense, they had been eliminated. In the post-apocalyptic world, they couldn't hunt many mutated lifeforms, making further evolution extremely difficult.

But Cloud Peak gave them hope. As long as they completed the construction of Ying City, they would receive three-star evolution potions and, depending on their performance and efficiency, one to several pieces of good equipment.

Although they lacked many machines, the superhuman physiques of the evolved compensated for this. Each team had clear targets; on average, after working in Ying City for two months, they would receive the promised rewards.

They had food and drinks made from mutated lifeform ingredients that were extremely beneficial to their bodies. They could sleep soundly at night without worrying about being bitten in the head by zombies in their dreams. Those who performed well received additional rewards and could even join the major teams in Ying City on a priority basis. After two months, they could steadily increase their evolution level.

They had only dreamed of such good fortune, and their enthusiasm for work was extremely high. As a result, the construction of Ying City progressed rapidly.

So far, at least 20,000 evolved ranging from one-star to three-star were working at various sites in Ying City.

After being here for over a month, these people had grown accustomed to the large groups of Cloud Peak personnel passing by. They looked forward to those moments the most, as they saw hope in these Cloud Peak warriors, who were at least five-star evolved. Perhaps that was their future.

However, in recent days, Cloud Peak's combat teams had seemingly vanished, rarely appearing. Only essential staff remained in Ying City.

"Heh, I heard some news from the foreman of our section."

One of the men stubbed his cigarette on the ground with his foot, looking quite pleased with himself.

Humans always feel a sense of pride when they possess information unknown to others, which is especially true for Chinese people.

The others immediately turned to him, asking what was going on.

"Heh." The man chuckled but remained silent, his eyes fixed on someone's pocket.

"You, Old Wang, always have your eyes on my good stuff."

The person being stared at cursed under his breath but still took out a pack of cigarettes from his pocket and handed one to Old Wang.

Old Wang immediately took it, sniffed it, and, reluctant to smoke it right away, tucked it behind his ear.

"See that?"

Old Wang pointed to the distant sky, where a small black dot was moving irregularly at a slow pace.

Though far away, evolved had excellent eyesight—nearsightedness didn't exist among them. After looking, they all said it was Mr. Ye's dragon, which they had occasionally seen before. What was so special about it?

The person who had been in Ying City for the shortest time, about half a year, was protected by Cloud Peak and could go to Puxing Town daily to take on simple tasks to earn money. He was filled with gratitude toward Ye Zhongming and spoke with great respect.

Old Wang clicked his tongue. "You brainless fools, you could see it before, but can you see it every day like now?"

"Also, what did that dragon do before? It was either playing or going around looking for food. But now, it hasn't left the airspace above the mountain villa at all. It's patrolling!"

"Hey, what's going on? Stop beating around the bush," the person who had given the cigarette slapped his friend.

"I heard that Cloud Peak is on high alert because... Xia Lei and the others are about to evolve!"

Hearing this, the group was stunned momentarily before realizing what it meant. Their expressions turned to shock.

Previously, Xia Lei and the others were seven-star evolved. If they evolved again, then... wouldn't that mean...

"That's right; they're about to become eight-star evolved!"

The group sighed in amazement. While they were still stuck at the two-star level, others were about to reach eight stars, just one step away from the legendary realm.

"Mr. Ye... Xia Bai, this time, several people?"

Someone repeated the question, and after getting a confirmation, they exclaimed how incredible it was, saying that perhaps only Cloud Peak Mountain Villa in the entire nation could obtain so many eight-star evolution potions at once.

"But..." Old Wang stroked his chin, looking thoughtful. "This time, it's said that many people are also evolving to six and seven stars... Don't you think that with Cloud Peak launching attacks everywhere lately, hunting who knows how many high-level mutated lifeforms, and now such a large-scale evolution, it feels like something big is about to happen?"

The group debated fervently. Some said it was just normal evolution, while others agreed with Old Wang, believing that such a concentrated wave of evolution must have a purpose.

Just as the discussion heated up, some commotion erupted from the front, accompanied by the roars of battle beasts.

The group quickly stood up and ran to the intersection of their street to see what was happening.

Chapter 1474.5- Helpers are here

Could it be that some fool was causing trouble here?

Even if Cloud Peak was on high alert, Ying City still had the teams of Young Master Yun and Ah Yang stationed here, filled with experts. Who would dare cause trouble?

However, they didn't hear the expected sounds of battle. Instead, more and more evolved gathered by the roadside, curiously watching the direction of the noise.

Currently, the main streets of Ying City had already been paved, as they were the first part of the city's construction project. The materials used were extremely high-quality, with large 'Tai Ning Bricks' fired from the Wenjia Furnace. These bricks were extremely hard, and Cloud Peak had specifically chosen an antique blue color for them. To accommodate the massive size of battle beasts, the roads were

extremely wide—equivalent to a twelve-lane highway in peaceful times—and the foundations were solid. As a result, the roads looked exceptionally neat and beautiful.

Soon, everyone saw a large group of people walking down the road.

This road led all the way to the foot of Cloud Peak Mountain, connecting to the path leading to the mountain villa. At the end of this road, the northern barracks were located. This road was also the base for Young Master Yun and Ah Yang's teams. It was one of the first completed projects.

"It's the Black Ao Horse!"

"Young Master Yun's team?"

Old Wang and the others first saw a black, horse-like creature. But this horse was different—it towered over any horse from peaceful times, standing at 3.5 meters tall and over 5 meters long.

Its mouth was more dragon-like, filled with sharp teeth, and two curved, sharp bones protruded on either side at the junction of its neck and body.

A purple magic crystal on its forehead indicated it was a level-seven creature.

Ye Zhongming originally found this Black Ao Horse for Young Master Yun's job, the Shapeshifter. At the time, Yun Shao was a five-star evolved, and after using the job, he could transform into a level-seven Black Ao Horse. Coincidentally, someone had found this creature, so Ye Zhongming captured it and gave it to Yun Shao, telling him to kill it to activate the Life Plunder.

But Young Master Yun fell in love with the creature at first sight and couldn't bear to kill it, insisting on keeping it as a battle beast.

Due to the Shapeshifter's unique points, the user could transform into a mutated lifeform two levels higher. Ye Zhongming thought that once Yun Shao reached seven stars, he could find a similar lifeform for his ultimate transformation, so he didn't press the issue.

However, an adult level-seven mutated lifeform would never submit to an evolved two levels lower. At first, the Black Ao Horse completely ignored Young Master Yun, and whenever he got close, it would attack him. Young Master Yun was injured several times because of this, with two incidents nearly costing him his life.

But Young Master Yun couldn't bear to hurt or kill the creature. He adored this tall and majestic Black Ao Horse, taking care of it meticulously.

His efforts paid off. After becoming a seven-star evolved, he finally gained the creature's recognition, and the Black Ao Horse became his battle beast.

"Wait, look behind it. Why are there so many battle beasts? The mountain villa built a battle beast camp, but it seems they only started breeding not long ago, right?"

Sure enough, as the group got closer, everyone saw that there were only two small teams among the two hundred or so people wearing Cloud Peak Mountain Villa's unique uniform. The rest were a mix of people wearing various outfits, but they all had one thing in common—each of them was riding a giant bear!

While Cloud Peak's equipment was uniform, the other team's battle beasts were uniform!

Though not high-level, these giant bears were massive, almost as large as the Black Ao Horse. Each was clad in heavy armor, with evolved sitting on their saddles, looking extremely majestic.

There were five hundred of these bear riders!

With so many mutated lifeforms, each weighing over a ton, walking on the road, the ground trembled slightly.

Old Wang and the others stared wide-eyed, wondering if Cloud Peak had formed a new main combat team.

Just as the bear riders passed by, everyone saw another five hundred giant mutated apes following behind. Each ape had a thick iron chain around its neck, with two evolved holding either end.

The mutated ape's evolution level was similar to that of the giant bears, but they seemed more agitated, their nostrils flaring and low growls escaping their mouths. The evolved beside them had to constantly calm them, making sounds that outsiders couldn't understand.

These mutated apes seemed even more fierce and dangerous than the giant bears.

After the mutated apes passed, everyone thought that was the end of it. But then they realized that they could now see a thousand mutated dogs of various colors without the towering apes blocking their view. These were breeds that were already fierce in their original forms, but after mutation, they had become even larger, each as big as an adult bull.

The mutated dogs were the most numerous, with over a thousand of them. Their levels varied, ranging from level two to level five. The pack leader, a pure white mutated dog, had reached level six!

"Wow!"

Many people couldn't help but exclaim in awe.

But that wasn't all. Behind the dogs were all sorts of battle beasts—tall, wide, small, fast, flying, crawling—you name it, they had it.

These diverse mutated lifeforms numbered around two thousand, and it took over half an hour for them to pass through this road.

The people on both sides of the road watched as if they were at a circus.

Even though they had lived in the post-apocalyptic world for over four years, they had never seen so many mutated lifeforms gathered together, all so well-behaved.

The sounds of people identifying the various battle beasts and expressing their envy filled the air for a while. At the end of the group, the sight of a few people leading level-seven battle beasts caused a small climax of excitement.

Cloud Peak didn't even have this many battle beasts, did it?!

"Y-you, look..." Old Wang's voice suddenly trembled. Those who had been enthusiastically discussing turned to follow his gaze and saw that what they thought was the end of the 'battle beast' parade was followed by a true giant beast. Behind it was Ah Yang's entire team.

This battle beast was like the king of the land. Even as it leisurely walked down the road, it couldn't hide the powerful aura it exuded.

Its five-colored fur shimmered in the sunlight, so bright it was almost dazzling.

But what made these evolved tremble was the orange magic crystal on its forehead!

Level eight!

This was a level-eight battle beast!

Soon, someone recognized it, and a name began to spread through the crowd.

Spotted Giant Bear!

With that, the name of this team became obvious.

Thousand Beast Villa had arrived!

Chapter 1475: Terrifying

As Thousand Beast Villa's procession passed by, the entire Ying City population was excited. Crowds gathered along the streets, eagerly discussing what they had just witnessed. Whether it was the bear knights at the front or the massive pack of mutated dogs that followed, everyone was filled with envy. As for the Spotted Giant Bear, it didn't get much mention. After all, the gap between it and the average evolved was too vast, and besides, level-eight mutated lifeforms weren't exactly rare in Cloud Peak.

Think about it—encountering other lifeforms of the same level wouldn't be such a big deal if you could see a level-eight dragon every day. Dragons, after all, held a special place in the hearts of the Chinese people.

Old Wang and his friends were particularly envious of the bear knights.

"Cloud Peak has already established a cavalry unit, led by Lord Tiger. Do you think if we had a mutated bear as a battle beast, we could join, too? After all, we're old-timers here, so the background check shouldn't be a problem."

Old Wang grew more and more excited as he spoke, even gesturing animatedly. "Did you see those battle beasts in cages behind the Spotted Giant Bear? I heard they're gifts for Mr. Ye. I bet they'll be added to the new battle beast camp. Heh, Cloud Peak is about to have another powerful department."

"What does any of that have to do with you? You might pass the background check, but what about your strength? To join Lord Tiger's unit, you need to be at least five stars. You're only two stars, Old Wang. Wake up!"

The others ruthlessly crushed Old Wang's enthusiasm. This kind of opportunity was far out of their reach.

Old Wang, however, remained unfazed and instead leaned in with a mysterious tone. "Right now, I'm only two stars, but I'll be three stars once I finish this job. Then I'll go sign up at the battle beast camp to be a caretaker."

"Ah? You're going to sign up? Do you think they'll take you?" The others were skeptical.

Old Wang smirked proudly. "Why wouldn't they?"

"Do you even know how to take care of battle beasts?"

"No, but I know how to raise chickens, ducks, geese, dogs, cows, horses, pigs, and sheep. The battle beast camp is hiring, and that's the requirement! I'm not just making this up—the foreman told me."

The group fell silent, but they all took mental notes. The battle beast camp was hiring? That was worth a shot. If they got in, it would be like hitting the jackpot!

Old Wang coughed a couple of times, regretting that he had let slip the information he had worked so hard to obtain. Now, he had inadvertently created a lot of competition for himself.

Just as he was about to say something else, his ears perked up, and he turned to look at the end of the street, which should have been empty.

There, a massive shadow appeared.

"War Fortress!"

Someone who had seen Cloud Peak's War Fortress immediately recognized it.

But everyone was puzzled. Why would another War Fortress appear now? Rumor had it that only the Resistance Zone had these, and the Resistance Zone wasn't exactly on friendly terms with Cloud Peak.

"Look up in the sky!" someone shouted. About 200 meters above, a large golden sphere was flying steadily. Everyone was familiar with this—earlier that morning, someone had seen it. It was the Exquisite Floating Ball, a product of wheel technology combined with Earth's technology.

"That's not from the mountain villa. Look at the emblem on it," someone with sharp eyes pointed out. The emblem on the floating ball was distinctly different from Cloud Peak's, resembling a large red rose.

The War Fortress was a massive machine, and even in its treaded mode, it rumbled loudly as it moved down the street, causing noticeable vibrations.

Faced with such a killing machine, the crowd grew relatively quiet, lacking the excitement they had shown when seeing the battle beasts.

As the War Fortress passed, everyone saw a convoy of over 2,000 tanks, rocket launchers, and other combat vehicles, all fully armed.

Finally, a group of around 5,000 evolved marched by. They were uniformly equipped, each holding a firearm, with melee weapons strapped to their backs and wearing full sets of silver-grade equipment. Some even carried rocket launchers and other heavy weapons.

Not only were their equipment uniform, but their marching was also orderly to the point of perfection. It was clear at a glance that these were soldiers—or at least evolved who had been rigorously trained to military standards.

At the end of the procession was a small elite unit of about 500 people, mostly clad in green-grade equipment, exuding a strong aura. They escorted several exaggeratedly designed military vehicles. Through the windows, one could see a few individuals of notable status inside. At the back of the convoy, Miya and Ah Tao, along with some people from the Posthumous Tribe, were accompanying three individuals—one man and two women. They chatted while observing their surroundings, clearly intrigued.

From some of Cloud Peak's staff responsible for Ying City's construction, it was learned that this was a team from the Resistance Zone, specifically the S1 Zone. They were known as the Baptism by Fire Division, led by someone named Mu Xinfei, who was a good friend of Mr. Ye.

Everyone suddenly understood. So they were allies. Instantly, their favorable impression of this silent yet murderous team increased.

It made sense. Among Mr. Ye's three women, two were currently in the process of evolving to eight stars. The fact that the remaining lady of the manor was personally accompanying these guests indicated their extraordinary status.

Still, everyone was curious. First, the Beast Villa, an ally, arrived. This Baptism by Fire Combat Division, also an ally, had come on the same day. What was going on?

This time, even the Cloud Peak staff didn't have the answers, but everyone was certain that something big was about to happen.

The Resistance Zone's team quickly passed, but the crowd didn't disperse. They continued to look down the road, wondering if more teams would arrive.

At first, this was just wishful thinking—a hope for more excitement. No one actually expected another team to show up. But to everyone's surprise, another team did arrive.

This time, there were no massive battle beasts or man-made killing machines. Instead, it was a very special combat team.

The crowd fell silent, simply watching.

This team was different from the others. Two women riding battle beasts led the way. One of them was familiar to everyone: Xiao Min, the deputy leader of Mr. Ye's female guards.

Many people knew that because Xia Bai was extremely cold, she didn't involve herself in anything other than Mr. Ye. As a result, Xiao Min was the actual leader of the female guards. Although she wasn't a core member, her status was akin to one. She was truly one of Mr. Ye's closest confidants, holding an extremely high position. If she was personally accompanying someone, just who was this person?

Xiao Min was riding a battle beast bred by Cloud Peak itself—the Cloud Foal. It was only level three, not particularly strong in combat, but it was fast, gentle, and had excellent stamina, making it an ideal mount. More importantly, they were beautiful, so every member of the female guards had one. The 200 Cloud Foals following Xiao Min were just a fraction of their numbers.

The woman beside her, however, was riding a battle beast that left everyone in awe. It was a beautiful snow-white unicorn pegasus, strikingly similar to the one from a classic animated film. The only differences were the demon crystal on its forehead and its sapphire-like eyes.

Level eight!

Another level-eight battle beast!

Chapter 1475.5- Terrifying

Even though everyone had seen many level-eight battle beasts before, today's sightings were unusually numerous.

And the woman riding this level-eight pegasus—how could she be so... beautiful?

It was utterly captivating, especially when she smiled while talking to Xiao Min. Only the influencer and the enigmatic Red Hair could compare in Cloud Peak.

Oh, and one of the two women accompanied by Miya earlier might also be on that level.

As the woman finally passed, the team behind her caused another wave of excitement.

Just like the female guards, this was an all-female combat team!

And they were all clad in green-grade equipment! Just like the female guards! But their numbers were larger—a full 1,000 strong.

Everyone anxiously speculated about which team this was, but no one had a definitive answer. It wasn't until hours later that someone found out—this was Five Ring Money's Deacon Water and her guard team. Their name was even similar to the female guards—they were called the Beauty Guards.

A rumor began to circulate that this Deacon Water was a devoted fan of Mr. Ye.

Many people waited for a while longer, but when no more teams arrived, they gradually dispersed. However, the discussions didn't die down. The entire Ying City was abuzz with talk of these events that day.

The discussions reached a peak at midnight when yet another team arrived. This team had a distinctly Cloud Peak style, but no one had seen them before.

Since the team arrived at night, many people only caught the tail end of the procession by the time they rushed over. But even that was enough to fuel endless conversations.

The team's equipment was uniform, all bearing Ye Zhongming's personal seal. Only Cloud Peak's own teams could have such large-scale equipment crafted by the King of Cloud Peak himself—thousands of sets.

At the same time, this team exuded an even more arrogant aura than Cloud Peak's own forces.

Cloud Peak's teams were domineering, arrogant, and disdainful of everything, yet utterly ruthless. This was a unique temperament forged through their high evolution levels, excellent equipment, and unbeaten record.

But this team was truly 'wild'! Their formation was chaotic, and although they wore uniform equipment, they gave off a visually disorganized impression. However, if you put yourself in the shoes of an enemy trying to find their weaknesses, you'd realize they were like a giant beast, merely dozing. The moment you showed any hostility, this beast would pounce on you and tear you to shreds.

Even their lazy gazes carried a blood stench.

This was how many people later described the essence of this team.

Similarly, the evolved of Ying City later learned that this team was from Cloud Peak's Linhai Branch—the legendary team capable of venturing into the most dangerous seas on Earth.

That night, many people couldn't sleep. They kept glancing at the faint light on the distant mountain—the heart of this region.

And at that very moment, many important figures were gathered there.

"Is this wine also part of Cloud Peak's delicacies?" a middle-aged man asked, holding a glass of amber liquid and looking deeply moved.

This was a banquet specially hosted by Ye Zhongming to welcome them. Initially, the man hadn't thought much of it, focusing more on the discussions than the food and drink. But as the fine wine and exquisite dishes were served one after another, he quickly realized something was different.

The ingredients alone were extraordinary. Whether it was the meat, vegetables, or fruits, everything provided tangible benefits to evolved—benefits that could be felt immediately.

Of course, part of this was due to the first-time use effect, but it was still astonishing.

The middle-aged man had known about Cloud Peak's trade in such items but hadn't thought much of it. Now, he realized he had been mistaken.

"It counts as one of them. It's made from ten types of fruits and six herbs, aged for a year. We have someone here whose family used to run a vineyard and another with a family tradition of brewing baijiu. Somehow, they managed to create this. If Commander Mu likes it, I'll prepare a couple of jars for you to take back," Ye Zhongming said with a smile.

As he watched the man marvel at the wine, Ye Zhongming didn't dare underestimate him.

This man was Mu Xinfei's father, the overall commander of the S Zone—the man rumored to have died long ago.

Cloud Peak and the S Zone were allies, but even Ye Zhongming had been deceived by the mixed truths and lies of the rumors, believing the man was dead. Even his own daughter hadn't denied it. Yet here he was, suddenly appearing, fully recovered from his illness and having reached eight-star.

Such a man, who had endured hardship in silence, commanded respect.

"I want some, too!" Deacon Water raised her hand on the other side, acting like a little girl.

Ye Zhongming rolled his eyes. "I know. Of course, you and Master Li won't be left out."

Li Daqian nodded with a smile. He, too, loved the wine.

"How is Brother Zhizhong doing?" Ye Zhongming set down his glass and asked with concern.

"He's awake now. Thanks to the people and medicine you sent," Li Daqian said, raising his glass. "Using your wine, I'll toast to you."

Though he didn't express much gratitude, it was clear that Li Daqian was sincerely thankful to Ye Zhongming.

Ye Zhongming had found a special job and obtained a potion from an eight-star wheel, both of which he had sent to Li Daqian. Surprisingly, they had worked. Li Zhizhong had woken up and was recovering quickly. By the time Li Daqian left, Li Zhizhong could already leave bed.

Commander Mu and Deacon Water watched from the side, surprised by how close the two men seemed.

"Hey, why haven't you told us why you called us here yet?" Mu Xinfei, in the presence of her father, reverted to the feisty demeanor Ye Zhongming had first seen. She nitpicked at everything, though deep down, she knew why.

Beside her sat Bai Sisi, while beside Ye Zhongming sat Miya.

"It must be... to kill a level nine lifeform," Li Daqian set down his glass and looked at Ye Zhongming, who sat at the head of the table.

The room fell silent.

Level nine—those two words carried too much weight.

Ye Zhongming nodded and uttered two words that sent chills down everyone's spine: "Two of them."