

Apocalypse 1521

Chapter 1521: Air strike

From the moment Tong Lu was killed, Vice Chairman Yang began his rapid retreat. Just moments ago, he had held onto a sliver of hope—that in the face of death, Tong Lu might deliver some kind of surprise. But reality proved otherwise. There was no surprise, only a deepening fear of the Cloud Peak King's overwhelming strength.

Too strong!

Vice Chairman Yang wasn't unfamiliar with top-tier fighters in action. He had witnessed the likes of Wen Yan, the Grand Chairman, and the God Hall's director going all out in battles against level-nine lifeforms. He knew the gap between himself and them was vast.

But none of them had ever given him the same feeling as Ye Zhongming.

Yes, Ye Zhongming seemed injured, even somewhat disheveled from the combined efforts of him and Tong Lu. However, Vice Chairman Yang had a mental ledger—one that tallied all the known abilities of the Cloud Peak King.

Bloodline? Unused.

Nature's Staff? Unused.

Soul Artifact? Unused.

Elemental Spirits? Unused.

Explosive Mechanic? Unused.

Crystal Energy Gun? Unused.

Crystal Weapons? Unused...

There were too many things the Cloud Peak King hadn't even deployed yet, let alone the fact that he undoubtedly had more than one trump card up his sleeve.

So what if he was injured? The sheer number of potions he carried would likely make even large factions despair. He could recover in moments.

In other words, the current Ye Zhongming was still the Cloud Peak King at his peak. Vice Chairman Yang wasn't about to throw his life away.

Ye Zhongming remained where he was, downing two potions—one for healing, one for detoxification. Feeling slightly better, he swiftly looted anything of value from Tong Lu's corpse, along with the Nether Tiger's magic crystal and materials.

He glanced in the direction Vice Chairman Yang had fled, but chose not to pursue. Instead, he resumed his sprint toward the plains.

Though he had killed someone who was likely an important figure in the God Hall, the sense of danger in Ye Zhongming's mind hadn't lessened—if anything, it had grown heavier.

He wasn't afraid of dying. At worst, he could simply release the horde of monsters he carried. But if the terrain was unfavorable, their numerical advantage would be nullified, and their simplistic attack patterns would make them little more than walking magic crystals for the God Hall, Zero Merchants, and Pin Palace to harvest.

Millions of magic crystals—perhaps even more. In an instant, Cloud Peak's slight lead could be overtaken or even surpassed.

That was something he absolutely could not allow.

This was supposed to be a move to frustrate his enemies. It would be beyond humiliating if it accidentally turned into handing them resources on a silver platter.

But Ye Zhongming had barely run another hundred meters when a rush of wind roared above him.

He looked up.

High in the sky, a massive shadow was descending toward him.

With his sharp vision, he recognized it—a Thunderbelly Roc.

This was a terrifying mutated flying lifeform, especially for ground-based targets.

By the fifth year of the apocalypse, many creatures had completely diverged from their original Earthly forms. The Thunderbelly Roc was no exception—its differences weren't just in appearance but in behavior, abilities, and every other aspect.

Thunderbelly Rocs generally had low evolutionary levels. As aerial creatures, their combat prowess in the skies was mediocre, and their massive size, coupled with their vividly colored plumage, made them easy targets for other flying predators. As a result, their numbers in the apocalypse were few.

But once a Thunderbelly Roc surpassed level five, its fortunes changed.

At level five, this species inevitably awakened an innate ability—Summoning!

At regular intervals, it could use this skill to call upon flying lifeforms within a certain range, binding them as its companion creatures.

The strength of the summoned creatures and the summoning range depended on the Thunderbelly Roc's mental energy, as did the cooldown period.

With companion creatures, their safety was greatly assured. The longer they lived, the faster their evolution progressed.

Thus, Thunderbelly Rocs were either very weak... or very strong.

The one above Ye Zhongming was level seven—not a top-tier lifeform, but having ascended from level six, its summoning capacity was already considerable.

Sure enough, numerous flying creatures of varying sizes and evolutionary levels swarmed around its enormous body. A few even matched the Thunderbelly Roc's own rank.

"Thunderbelly" wasn't just for show.

The most striking feature of this creature was the dazzling plumage covering its underbelly—each feather crackled with powerful electric energy. More terrifyingly, these feathers could detach and strike targets, their speed adjustable. Even after separation, the residual life energy allowed the Roc to slightly alter its trajectory mid-flight.

They were essentially crude, semi-guided missiles.

Whose battle beast was this?

This wasn't an artificially created lifeform—it existed naturally. The only explanation for its appearance here was that someone had tamed it as their own.

Ye Zhongming immediately pushed his speed to the limit.

But even though Thunderbelly Rocs were weak at lower levels, their flight speed matched that of most aerial lifeforms. No matter how agile Ye Zhongming was—even as one of the most nimble evolved—he couldn't outpace it in the air.

The Roc and its entourage shadowed him relentlessly.

When Ye Zhongming crested another hill, he skidded to a halt.

In the distance, the sky was filled with something he did not want to see.

Hundreds of aircrafts.

Their designs varied—some were products of Wheel technology, others bore the hallmarks of extraterrestrial civilizations. Using their speed advantage, they had caught up to him.

The moment they spotted the Cloud Peak King, they opened fire.

Bolts, arrows, lasers, beams, artillery shells, bullets...

A torrent of attacks rained down on the hill where Ye Zhongming stood. Simultaneously, the Thunderbelly Roc high above unleashed its own assault—electrified feathers streaked toward him like living missiles.

Ye Zhongming dodged a few strikes but soon activated Nature Staff, erecting a protective barrier.

These attacks varied in strength. Most wouldn't cause serious harm unless they struck a vital spot.

He knew exactly why they had appeared—to stall him.

But there was no avoiding it. While not lethal, the sheer volume and density of the attacks would drain his stamina, degrade his equipment, and slow his advance.

If running or staying both led to the same outcome, he might as well stand his ground and weather this aerial bombardment without compromising his condition.

Ye Zhongming was certain these aircraft had been deployed in haste. Their ammunition wouldn't last long.

As for the Thunderbelly Roc's feathers? They, too, were finite.

All he had to do was endure.

Then, he could leave at his leisure.

Chapter 1522: Boss is here

In an instant, the hill where Ye Zhongming stood was engulfed in a storm of bombardment.

Amidst this swarm of aircraft, a single person sat in the cramped space of one machine, manipulating the control stick and constantly adjusting the crosshairs on the screen.

At a certain moment, their hand pressed down hard.

A fish-shaped missile trailing flames shot out from the aircraft and struck the Water Bottle Protection moments later.

The hill erupted in thick smoke.

At this point, the numerous aircraft didn't care whether Ye Zhongming was killed or not—they were simply pouring firepower into the area.

Only the Thunderbelly Roc, while attacking, occasionally checked on the human below. After all, its feathers, charged with terrifying electricity, took a long time to regenerate and couldn't be wasted carelessly.

Soon, some of the aircraft exhausted their ammunition and hovered in the air. The barrage raining down on the hill gradually lessened.

As the smoke cleared somewhat, the faint glow of the Water Bottle Protection could still be seen, proving Ye Zhongming remained unharmed.

The person inside the aircraft frowned, thought momentarily, and pulled out a yellow slip of paper.

"The Water Bottle Protection's defensive capabilities are too strong; we can't breach it. I'll engage in ground combat. Request reinforcements ASAP."

After speaking, the person quickly folded the paper into an airplane. As they leaped out of the aircraft, they tossed it into the air, where it instantly transformed into a streak of light and vanished into the distance.

Ye Zhongming, protected by the Water Bottle Protection, saw the person jumping from the sky but paid no attention. Instead, he looked up at the Thunderbelly Roc and its symbiotic creatures.

That thing was the real nuisance.

Whether now or later, it would shadow Ye Zhongming relentlessly, harassing and attacking him, preventing him from moving or fighting at full strength.

Even though its level wasn't high, combined with its symbiotic creatures, it could still cause him significant trouble.

But how could he take it down without Yangos, Xia Bai, or Red Hair?

Suddenly, Ye Zhongming stowed away the Staff of Nature.

This action not only startled the person descending from above but also caused the mutated creatures in the air to rise higher instinctively.

Ye Zhongming flipped over the hill, taking the barrage of fire with him.

The ammunition followed Ye Zhongming to the side opposite the aircraft.

Yes, the direction Ye Zhongming flipped toward was the side he had come from earlier.

Instinctively, the aircraft surged forward, closing in on the hill to regain sight of their target.

This was a normal reaction. Even the evolved human who had jumped from the sky and safely landed after several glides didn't sense anything amiss.

Until... they saw a figure suddenly burst from the hill, leaping into the air.

How high can an evolved human jump?

How high can an eight-star evolved human jump?

Most people wouldn't bother pondering this question, and those who did rarely had the chance to learn the answer.

No eight-star evolved human would waste time determining something so trivial.

But at this moment, the witnessing evolved human learned just how high an eight-star evolved human could jump.

Like a cannonball, Ye Zhongming used his momentum to propel himself upward with a mighty leap.

Fifteen meters? No—closer to twenty meters!

The height of a seven-story building!

The evolved human was stunned.

If speed, strength, and endurance were traits evolved humans had grown accustomed to—everyone was a superhuman—then jumping ability, influenced by gravity, leg strength, core strength, and other factors, hadn't improved as dramatically.

Before the apocalypse, jumping two or three meters was a world record. Now, leaping five or six meters was already monstrous.

But for someone to jump twenty meters in one go...

What kind of physical prowess was this? Was he defying gravity?

The stunned man froze for a moment before instinctively shouting at the aircraft swarm:

"Evade!"

The swarm, having flown over the hill to track Ye Zhongming, was now hovering about fifty meters above the hilltop.

Ye Zhongming had jumped twenty meters, meaning he was now only about thirty meters from the lowest-flying aircraft!

Numerically, this might not seem significant, but in terms of altitude, thirty meters was substantial. However, it's worth noting that Ye Zhongming didn't need to reach the same height as the aircraft to attack them—he just needed to get close enough.

Sure enough, Ye Zhongming's warblade vanished, replaced by a bizarre-looking firearm.

Yet, everyone's attention was fixed on Ye Zhongming himself or the weapon in his hands, completely missing the small black sphere flying beneath him.

Just as Ye Zhongming's momentum peaked and he began to descend, the black sphere suddenly exploded.

The force propelled Ye Zhongming upward another ten meters!

At this height, two black cables shot from Ye Zhongming's shoulders, embedding themselves into the underside of an aircraft. Using them like ropes, he swung his body and scrambled onto the aircraft quickly.

The entire aircraft swarm descended into chaos.

Even the evolved human who had just landed below was dumbfounded.

He had jumped down... while Ye Zhongming had jumped up?

But what he couldn't understand was why Ye Zhongming hadn't attacked the aircraft directly. Instead, he had climbed onto them. Was he planning to destroy them one by one from above? Or was he trying to hijack one to escape?

But... most of these aircraft were automated, with only a few piloted manually. Even if he hijacked one, he'd become a sitting duck in the air, easily shot down by the remaining aircraft or the Thunderbelly Roc.

Wait... the Thunderbelly Roc?!

The man suddenly realized something and opened his mouth to shout a warning—but it was too late.

He watched as the Cloud Peak King, like a monster, leaped between several aircraft, grabbed one of the smaller ones, and hurled it toward the Thunderbelly Roc. Then, with a powerful jump, he launched himself after the metal hulk, the force of his takeoff crushing the aircraft beneath him. At the same time, the black cables from his shoulders reappeared, tethering him to the thrown aircraft.

Like swinging on a pendulum, Ye Zhongming arced through the air. When the cables released, he was already within a few dozen meters of the Thunderbelly Roc's underbelly!

The strange gun in his hands roared like thunder.

It was a true roar, deafening.

The man on the ground instinctively covered his ears.

Before he could lower his hands, he saw a rain of feathers, blood, and dismembered limbs falling from the sky.

A massive shadow plummeted at terrifying speed.

Chapter 1522.5- Boss is here

The Thunderbelly Roc was the creature they had pinned their hopes on.

The evolved human, who had just arrived, turned and sprinted back the way he came.

There was no other choice—if he didn't run, he'd be crushed. This aerial behemoth weighed at least eighty, if not a hundred, tons!

As he ran, one question burned in his mind: What kind of firearm was Ye Zhongming holding? How could it produce such a deafening sound? How could it possess such devastating power?

He had clearly seen that single shot reduce an entire flying creature area to shreds!

With a thunderous crash, the earth trembled. The Roc's corpse now flattened the hill that had withstood the bombardment.

Then, like rain, the remains of the other flying creatures began to fall.

Before it could unleash its full potential, this level-seven creature had been killed in a single strike.

With its master gone, the surviving flying creatures summoned by the "Call" skill broke free of their bonds and scattered in all directions.

The man watched as Ye Zhongming calmly extracted the magic crystal, harvested materials, and collected feathers, acting as if he had nothing to fear.

For a full five minutes, Ye Zhongming gathered everything of value before finally approaching the man.

"You..." The man managed a single word before his eyes flickered. "Can you tell me what that shot was just now?"

Ye Zhongming smiled. "Of course."

"It's a skill called Sky Cannon. Short range, but wide area of effect and immense power."

The man's face lit up with surprise that Ye Zhongming would actually answer him.

Ye Zhongming wasn't lying. The skill was indeed called Sky Cannon, one of the abilities of the purple-grade equipment he had recently crafted—the Reaper Mimicry Shooter.

This weapon, forged by merging the Crystal Energy Gun and the Earth Sniper Rifle, hadn't actually increased in grade. In fact, from a pure grade perspective, it was a downgrade—the Crystal Energy Gun was already purple-grade, while the Earth Sniper Rifle was gold-grade. Merging them into a single purple-grade weapon seemed like a waste of a gold-grade item.

However, after examining the weapon's attributes, Ye Zhongming not only considered it a fair trade but also counted it among his newest prized possessions.

The Reaper Mimicry Shooter had three forms: Sniper, Scatter, and Burst Mode.

Each form had three skills.

A single weapon with nine abilities—this was a feature typically reserved for seven-colored-grade equipment.

Ye Zhongming used one of Scatter Mode's skills earlier: Sky Cannon.

This skill allowed Ye Zhongming to channel his physical strength into the shot's power, creating a short-range attack with a maximum effective range of a few dozen meters. At its maximum range, the attack covered the largest area—so large that when Ye Zhongming aimed at the Roc's head, the shot obliterated its head and neck and all the flying creatures nearby!

Ye Zhongming's strength was matched only by Sheng Yuan's. Combined with the purple-grade weapon's inherent firepower and the skill's potency, the result was a devastating triple-layered attack.

No fancy effects—just raw, overwhelming force. This made Sky Cannon one of Ye Zhongming's most powerful area-of-effect attacks.

"You... you must know people are chasing you, right? You've been running all this time. Why are you so calm now? Even collecting materials? Aren't you afraid of being surrounded?"

The man asked again, his face full of curiosity.

Ye Zhongming glanced at him. "I know you're chasing me. Your goal is to delay me. But what I was doing earlier wasn't running—it was a tactical retreat."

The man blinked. He was starting to think something was off about the Cloud Peak King. Was he... mentally unwell?

He couldn't help but wonder: Did reaching the pinnacle in the apocalypse require a touch of insanity?

"But... aren't you afraid of the pursuers?"

Ye Zhongming shook his head. "Do you think pretending to be curious and chatting with me to waste my time is some kind of achievement? Or do you think I'm stupid enough not to recognize a stalling tactic?"

"N-no, of course not," the man replied awkwardly.

"Truth is, I'm not staying because I want to. I can't leave. Someone arrived while I was attacking the Roc. I'm trapped here. Isn't that right, Mr. Wen..."

As Ye Zhongming spoke, he turned to look at an unremarkable patch of ground about a hundred meters from the battlefield.

The moment the words left his mouth, the earth erupted as a colossal figure burst forth—a massive, grass-green tortoise!

"Thousand Year?!"

The man screamed and instinctively stepped back. But after only one step, his arm suddenly jerked up, flinging a handful of golden powder at Ye Zhongming.

He had chosen this moment to strike.

But as the powder scattered, his face paled, and he threw himself backward.

Because as he threw the powder, he glanced at Ye Zhongming—only to see the Cloud Peak King already aiming that strange gun at him. He could even see Ye Zhongming's finger tightening on the trigger.

His body hit the ground with a thud, and he rolled frantically to the side before scrambling to his feet.

He knew that in this brief time, Thousand Years' master—Wen Yan, Mr. Wen—would have intervened to save him.

But to his confusion, the two most famous figures in the region weren't fighting each other. Instead, they were both staring at him.

He looked around but saw nothing unusual. Then, following their gazes, he looked down at his own body...

"Ah!"

A scream tore from his throat—the kind born of absolute terror.

His flesh was gone. Only a pristine skeleton remained, its organs and veins still connected, held in place by an evolved human's resilient physiology.

The scream was cut short as the man swayed, his bones unable to support his weight. He collapsed, his skull detaching from his spine and rolling away. His unblinking eyes conveyed a single truth:

He had no idea how he'd died.

Chapter 1523: Mist Blossom

Scatter Mode's Second Ability: Bone-Stripping Bullet!

A flesh-dissolving projectile skill. Like Sky Cannon, it was a pure energy attack requiring no ammunition.

Upon impact, it completely eroded all flesh attached to the target's bones. Its power scaled with the user's expended mental energy, evolution level, and physical strength—as well as the target's mental resistance.

Ye Zhongming's mental energy reserves were oceanic. Expending just 0.1%—amplified by purple-grade gear and skills—would yield a formidable force. Yet he'd channeled far more than a mere fraction for this kill shot.

"Do you know who he was?"

Wen Yan remained seated atop his tortoise instead of attacking.

"Does it matter?" Ye Zhongming lowered his gun, studying the man he'd last seen at Beast Villa.
"Everyone here is my enemy. Kill them, and be done with it."

As he spoke, he retreated two steps, his expression flickering before he chugged another antidote vial.

The gunshot victim had reflexively dodged, causing his thrown golden sand to miss—landing just short of Ye Zhongming.

At the same time, he felt terrified. Fortunately, he had decided to attack and ignore that person's identity. If not, the golden sand might have caused him huge damage.

But what toxin could be this potent?

"He is not an alliance member. A proxy."

Wen Yan continued when Ye Zhongming showed no reaction: "Saint Sangru's spokesperson."

The name caused Ye Zhongming to pause. At Bright Water Feast, that universe faction had tried recruiting him. Their envoy—"Conqueror of Saint Mountain"—had promised "a King's Blessing" and "Blood of War God." That war god was called Mendis.

"He volunteered to test the Cloud Peak King and died by your hand."

Wen Yan's tone was flat, but malice bled through. Knowing Ye Zhongming saw his true nature, he didn't bother masking his ruthlessness.

As a Taros Red Dwarves' spokesperson, Ye Zhongming knew the consequences of killing another spokesperson: endless bounty hunters sent by the universe races to avenge spokesperson deaths.

But he feared nothing. The races couldn't descend to Earth due to wheel restrictions—only hire human spokespeople. And his reputation alone would deter most. The handful daring enough? They'd never breach Cloud Peak's defenses.

Wen Yan had deliberately let the proxy die—a transparent ploy.

"Smug because you've saddled me with trouble?"

Ye Zhongming's gaze lingered on the eight-star battle beast beneath Wen Yan—Thousand Year, as renowned as Yellow Ball.

"Isn't it trouble?" Wen Yan chuckled. "You know I'm stalling, yet can't break Thousand Years' defenses. Trapped here, you'll be overwhelmed by arriving elites. Even if you escape, Saint Sangru's bounty hunters await you."

He smirked. "Forgot to mention—Saint Sangru ranks high among universe races. Their warriors are elites, led by War God Mendis, cosmos-renowned for combat prowess."

Ye Zhongming shifted. His gun suddenly emitted a purple glow—purple-grade.

Simultaneously, his gauntlets and bracelet ignited with identical radiance.

Wen Yan's pupils contracted violently.

Three purple-grade items!

Plus the Undead Sand Moon Blade and Crystal Energy Gun... Five purple-grade gears!

As a top faction leader, Wen Yan had poured resources into himself. His purple-grade equipment count?

One.

Even counting Thousand Years' beast gear: two.

Yet the Cloud Peak King casually displayed five. Were there more?

(Unbeknownst to Wen Yan, the gun was the modified Crystal Energy Gun—technically, he was overcounting. But Ye Zhongming did possess one additional...)

"All this chatter can't mask your fear—you lack the confidence to even delay me! Else, why sacrifice a spokesperson instead of teaming up to kill me?"

Wen Yan's face darkened. His psychological warfare had backfired spectacularly.

After a pause, he admitted: "True, I'm uncertain. But that doesn't mean you'll leave these hills alive today."

"Ye Zhongming, I've never denied your brilliance. Surviving this, you'll likely remain China's top evolved indefinitely. But youth's flaws plague you—stubbornness, arrogance, recklessness."

"You walked into this trap knowingly. Overvaluing rewards, underestimating risks. From my arrival, escape was impossible. The others... are almost here."

With that, he patted Thousand Year. The tortoise raised its stubby neck and spat out a... bubble.

A colossal sphere enveloped everything within 100 meters of Ye Zhongming.

"Try leaving after shattering Thousand Years—Mist Blossom."

Most knew Thousand Year for peerless defense. Few realized its defensive skills were offensive.

Chapter 1523.5- Mist Blossom

Mist Blossom's traits:

Self-cast: Outer-layer defense, near-impenetrable as long as the attack didn't exceed its strength.

Enemy-cast: Inner-layer defense, nullifying all enemy attacks until broken.

The Mist Blossom also had a special trade, which was its permeability: Attacks could bypass the side without defense. Which meant that when Thousand Year used it on its Master, Wen Yan could continue to attack, and it wouldn't affect his attacks. But if he used it on his enemy, before the Mist Blossom was broken, the enemy would only be able to suffer from attacks.

After deploying it, Wen Yan summoned a metal compass. Tapping it generated eight light pillars encircling Ye Zhongming.

He tossed the compass upward toward a pillar. Expanding midair, it formed a pavilion roof over the pillars.

The structure hummed as purple light dots condensed along the pillars.

Ye Zhongming recognized it—the Omni-Element Plunder Disk from regional gear rankings.

This equipment wasn't purple grade and was only gold, but it was ranked ahead of many purple pieces of equipment. Many people were confused, but as Five Ring Money didn't give any explanation, people could only guess the reason.

Ye Zhongming did pay attention, but he didn't care much. He had bumped into many things today that wrapped him up. First was the Human Refining Furnace, then the Mist Blossom, and the compass.

His response? Adjust his Reaper Mimicry Shooter to Sniper Mode and fire.

"Break!"

Sniper Mode had three abilities. Each skill name was only one word, which perfectly described its function.

Chase: Extreme-range penetration. It far exceeded all the sniper rifles pre-apocalypse.

This ability focused on long-range attacks. Its strength was decent. Apart from the gun's own ability, there was also the basic ability of the skill itself and the level of the bullet that was used.

Break: Armor-shattering mid-range. The focus was penetration. It could deal huge damage to high-level defences and equipment. Its strength was calculated similarly to Chase.

Burst: Close-range AoE explosions. This ability was mainly used in close-range battles. This ability didn't need aim; you just had to cover a range. The bullet will explode and deal high damage.

If you could hit the target, the damage would be the highest and would basically destroy the target immediately.

Against Mist Blossom, he chose Pierce with a blue-grade micro-engraved round.

BOOM!

The bubble trembled violently like when Water Bottle Protection was attacked, turning translucent—nearly fracturing.

Thousand Years' defenses live up to their reputation, Ye Zhongming mused, withstanding a purple-grade weapon's full strike.

Holstering the gun, he drew Wind and Thunder and slashed at the bubble.

Meanwhile, Wen Yan was terrified.

He knew exactly how strong Mist Blossom's defense was. He dared to be the first of the three faction bosses to arrive, apart from having a view of the big picture, he relied on Thousand Years' defence.

Even if Ye Zhongming was at the country's top, Wen Yan was confident he could trip him up.

That single shot had almost shattered Mist Blossom—a defense he'd considered impregnable.

What monstrous firepower! Without the bubble, that'd have 50% chance to cripple him even if he used everything he had to defend!

This Cloud Peak King had such a strong gun? Fortunately, such attacks had cooldowns. If not... Cloud Peak King would be unchallengeable.

Though intact, the bubble's defenses were critically weakened. And now Ye Zhongming wielded another weapon. It didn't glow, but since Ye Zhongming didn't use Undead Sand Moon Blade and used it, this meant it was another purple-grade equipment!

For the first time, Wen Yan felt genuine fear. With such an enemy, he felt that it would be hard for him to fall asleep. The only way to have a good life was to kill the enemy now.

His eyes reddened as he activated the Omni-Element Plunder Disk and unleashed his trump card.

The purple dots detached from the pillar, transforming into lightning serpents that streaked through the bubble.

Electric-element attack—inescapable. They were too quick, and as they were an AOE attack, he would be covered no matter how he dodged.

Countless bolts struck Ye Zhongming.

Yet some purple dots remained suspended inside.

Then, black dots condensed along the pillars, covering the light of the pillars. When they broke away, they morphed into dark spheres.

Darkness-element attack—activated!

Again, residual black dots lingered alongside the purple ones... ominously coalescing.

Chapter 1524: Chaos God Box

The storm-like barrage of attacks drowned Ye Zhongming. If not for the sound of Wind and Thunder striking the mist blossom bubble, one might truly think the King of Cloud Peak was already dead.

The onslaught unleashed by the Omni-Element Plunder Disk, a golden-grade equipment, was nothing short of astonishing.

Ye Zhongming had faced opponents of similar rank before—such as the assassin organization that had snatched an entry ticket—but while they were considered top-tier experts in the entire region, they were far from formidable at the Eight-Star level. Against a true pinnacle expert like Ye Zhongming, they were utterly outmatched.

But today, Ye Zhongming was facing elites. And the top figures among them, like Wen Yan, were on his level—if not slightly weaker, they were at least close.

Especially when a powerhouse like Wen Yan went all out, he could cause Ye Zhongming significant trouble.

Ye Zhongming wasn't sure how long the cooldown for an offensive equipment like the Omni-Element Plunder Disk was, but he could imagine it was extremely long—perhaps even requiring some additional cost. Even if it wasn't a purple-grade item, it was still a formidable piece of gear.

Against such equipment, most Eight-Star evolved would already be severely wounded.

But Ye Zhongming wasn't unscathed either.

His current defenses consisted of multiple layers: the Amplification Field, Black Halo Shield, Black Soil Armor, and his innate resilience.

The Amplification Field provided the weakest defense, as its primary function was to enhance Ye Zhongming's abilities while applying debuffs to enemies. Its defensive properties mainly manifested in neutralizing incoming attacks and slowing them down.

The Black Halo Shield specialized in reflecting damage. Now upgraded to its highest grade, it could rebound 50% of any attack—except those of the darkness element.

Next was the Black Soil Armor, conjured by the earth elemental spirit, along with his own equipped armor.

With so many layers of protection, Ye Zhongming could afford to ignore many attacks.

But the Omni-Element Plunder Disk, especially its darkness-element attacks—unaffected by the Black Halo Shield’s reflection—dealt him the most severe injuries he’d suffered since the battle began.

Dark energy was insidious, attacking the target in multiple ways. Each time those black orbs struck Ye Zhongming, his body trembled slightly as the energy corroded him from within. Even though most of the attack’s force was mitigated by his defenses, the residual damage still wounded him.

And the sheer number of attacks from the Omni-Element Plunder Disk was overwhelming.

Ye Zhongming tried summoning the Staff of Nature, but whether due to the mist blossom’s interference or the disk’s power, the equipment refused to activate.

After the darkness-element assault came ice-element attacks—countless icicles rained down, filling the mist blossom bubble completely.

Then came wind, fire, and even light-element strikes.

Each element had its own characteristics, and each affected Ye Zhongming somehow. But aside from the darkness-element attacks, the Black Halo Shield reflected half the damage, and with the constantly regenerating Black Earth Armor and his custom armor, these attacks didn't harm him much.

Still, the sheer volume and intensity of the assault left Ye Zhongming coughing up blood by the time the barrage ended.

But he hadn't been idle during this time. He shattered the mist blossom bubble, removing the last barrier between him and Wen Yan.

Without hesitation, the moment the bubble broke, Ye Zhongming closed the distance.

A dazzling arc of blade light descended upon the high-ranking figure of Pin Palace.

What greeted him, however, was another attack.

From the moment Ye Zhongming was trapped to his escape, roughly two minutes had passed—and Wen Yan had spent every second preparing this ability.

"Raging Tides of Fury!"

Wen Yan had risen from his mount, Thousand Years. Behind him towered a colossal wall of water, a hundred meters high.

Ye Zhongming saw it—but he didn't care.

At this point, pure defense was meaningless. The only way to resolve this quickly was through sheer offense.

From Wen Yan alone, Ye Zhongming had realized one thing: he might truly be unable to handle the combined forces of Pin Palace, Soul Merchant, and God Hall's leaders.

His risky plan—using himself as bait—had been a gamble. And as Wen Yan had pointed out, Ye Zhongming had underestimated the danger. Or perhaps he had grown overconfident after his rapid rise in power, looking down on the world, believing he could pull off this scheme flawlessly.

Now, he faced two possible outcomes:

First, he could proceed as planned, entering the plains to release the demonic creatures and complete his mission.

Second, if he couldn't reach the plains, he'd have to release them wherever he was at a predetermined time.

The first scenario was straightforward. But in the second, he had to act if he didn't want to "gift" the three factions a horde of demon crystals.

For example: Wait until he was surrounded by their forces before releasing the demons, forcing them into chaotic combat to maximize their losses. Kill as many of their elites as possible—even if they gained demon crystals, their strength wouldn't leap dramatically. Or... simply eliminate one of the leaders, collapsing an entire faction.

With the Soul Merchant's Great Leader and God Hall's Director absent, Ye Zhongming chose the last option—kill Wen Yan.

Even if the sky collapsed, Ye Zhongming would cleave through it.

As he swung Wind and Thunder, something extraordinary happened.

Two energies—pale yellow and pale purple—coalesced around the blades, merging into the slashing light.

And in his other hand, he also held the Undead Sand Moon Blade. Now, this purple-grade weapon moved in perfect sync with its counterpart.

Chapter 1524.5- Chaos God Box

Between the two weapons, hovering before Ye Zhongming, was a small, azure cube.

From it extended faint blue energy threads, linking the two weapons together.

As Ye Zhongming unleashed Thousand Seal Blade Slash, all the blade shadows merged into a single, colossal slash aimed at Wen Yan and Thousand Years. The arc of light rivaled the towering tsunami in scale.

Both men had committed to their strongest attacks, eyes blazing with absolute confidence.

Wen Yan's confidence stemmed from this being his ultimate trump card—a combined skill between him and his beast, requiring extreme synchronization and rare and costly catalysts.

This ability had an excruciatingly long cooldown and came at a steep price. Only against an opponent like Ye Zhongming would he even consider using it.

Ye Zhongming's confidence, meanwhile, came not just from his own strength, but from the small azure cube between his weapons.

This was the fourth true purple-grade equipment he had crafted—Chaos God Box.

When forging equipment, Ye Zhongming had clear blueprints for the first six. But the seventh... he had no concept of it until the very end.

After multiple failed designs and frustration mounting, he emptied his space storage to reorganize his items. Among them were containers with storage properties—potion boxes, material pouches, energy

crystals—mostly useless to him now. On a whim, he incorporated a precious Nine-Star material, using a slow fusion and tempering method to attempt... not just crafting, but creation.

Miraculously, he succeeded—and the Chaos God Box was born.

This equipment had few abilities, all auxiliary—but each was extraordinary.

First was storage capacity. The box itself was a space storage device first, equipment second. Its space could preserve the properties of any stored item. Herbs that typically required special containers to maintain potency? Now, they could be tossed inside without worry.

Second was strengthen recovery ability. At first, Ye Zhongming was disappointed—his dual special physiques and ingested potions already made him highly resilient. Another recovery ability seemed redundant.

But then he read the details—and his disappointment turned to joy.

The box's recovery was unique: "Lost and Found." It could make a vanished object reappear.

For example:

If Ye Zhongming had a potent, one-time-use demon crystal grenade, he could place it in the box for marking and analysis. Once used, within a day, the box could recreate it.

Of course, this wasn't free. The rarer the item, the more energy it consumed to restore—requiring the user to feed the box energy sources like demon crystals or nature gems.

In short, it was a trade—expensive, but undeniably worth it for priceless items.

The third ability was more magical and was called soul preservation.

Recently deceased mutated lifeforms could have their souls temporarily stored in the box. If their bodies were later repaired, the soul could be returned, resurrecting them.

This was practically a heaven-defying power.

But it could only be used three times before the box shattered.

The ability genuinely stunned Ye Zhongming. While it couldn't be used on evolved (denying him an extra life), beings like Yangos, Yellow Ball, or even Red Hair—all mutated lifeforms—could be granted a second chance. No, three chances.

The final ability was Synchronizer.

This was the ability Ye Zhongming was using now.

The box could temporarily merge two items of the same broad category (e.g., weapons with weapons, armor with armor).

The merged item would possess the combined abilities of both, retaining all original properties.

They qualified since Wind and Thunder and Undead Sand Moon Blade were both weapons. Merged, they unleashed an attack combining their full might.

Ye Zhongming didn't know how close this was to the power of seven-colored-grade equipment, but he was confident it could break through any of Wen Yan's defenses.

Two supremely confident men clashed. Two ultimate skills collided.

It was no exaggeration to say the heavens and earth trembled at that moment.

The surrounding space erupted in dazzling violet-red hues from the sky to the ground, radiating outward from the epicenter in a shockwave of destruction.

Hills, trees, streams, rocks—even the massive corpse of the Roc—were sent flying like paper scraps.

At the heart of the battlefield, a mushroom cloud of energy surged upward, filled with raging storms, lightning, and thunder.

Several top-grade experts who had just arrived at the battlefield's edge were forced to retreat, hastily activating defensive skills to avoid severe injury.

On the highest hill in the area, the Great Leader of Soul Merchant and the Director of God Hall stood side by side, watching the distant cataclysm in silence.

After a long pause, the Great Leader chuckled.

"Everyone is stronger than they appear—especially these long-reigning powerhouses."

"This Wen Yan... always acting like the weakest among us three. But... Director, what do you think of that skill?"

The Director nodded. "Strong. Strong enough to make me feel powerless to resist."

"Indeed. That old fox has been hiding his true strength all along." The Great Leader smirked. "Of course, Ye Zhongming is as troublesome as ever. I wonder how the battle's going. Best case—they cripple each other."

The Director shook his head. "Both their auras are still present."

"Then we...?"

"Flank them. You take the left; I'll go right."

"Agreed."

With that, the two figures shot down the hill, streaking toward the battlefield from opposite directions.

As the dust settled, the battlefield was a wasteland of massive craters—some from lightning, others from hurricane-force winds.

Two figures emerged from the devastation.

Ye Zhongming leaned on his weapons for support, his face marred by at least five gashes, his body still partially encased in unmelting ice. His Black Soil Armor and custom armor were shattered; the earth spirit could no longer reinforce him.

He was in terrible shape, his body ravaged. The final attack had forced him to endure not just the Raging Tides of Fury, but also the Omni-Element Plunder Disk's ultimate fusion strike—all elements combined into one devastating blow.

Those unchanged elemental motes? They had been reserved for this very moment.

Ye Zhongming had been attacked from all sides.

Glancing at the shattered disk, then at Wen Yan and Thousand Years, he grinned through bloodied teeth—and charged toward the plains.

Beyond them, his goal was within reach.

Chapter 1525: 5 men 1 plant

On the battlefield, Wen Yan stared at the shallow blade mark running from his chest down to the Thousand Years' shell, a bitter smile twisting his lips.

As he moved, fresh blood gushed from the wound—both his and his mount's. He hastily retrieved a medicine vial from his space storage, applying it to himself and the beast.

Whatever the ointment was, it worked instantly. The bleeding stopped.

Wen Yan knew Ye Zhongming was also injured—perhaps severely—but not this severely. He had lost. Utterly.

The Pin Palace leader's wounds ran deeper than they appeared. His organs had been violently shaken, and now a chaotic mix of elemental energies and corrosive darkness writhed inside him. Purging it would take... he didn't even know how long.

At least two months before he could fight again.

His battle beast had fared even worse. When Ye Zhongming's strike shattered the Raging Tides of Fury, the beast had activated a skill to absorb most of the impact, saving Wen Yan's life.

In water, the Thousand Years' defenses were absolute. On land, even at half-strength, its resilience was formidable. But Ye Zhongming's final attack had been too much. Both master and mount now teetered on the brink.

"Brother Wen, you alright?"

The Great Leader of Soul Merchant materialized before him, all smiles. Thousand Years raised its head, glaring at the rotund man with undisguised hostility.

Beasts sensed malice instinctively. And this one reeked of it.

"I'm fine." Wen Yan's voice was calm, as if nothing had happened.

He knew the only reason Ye Zhongming hadn't finished him off was this man's arrival. Yet he felt no gratitude. Because in that fleeting moment—he'd seen killing intent in the Great Leader's eyes.

Whatever the reason, the Soul Merchant's head had briefly considered killing him.

"Glad to hear it." The Great Leader chuckled, eyeing the wounded beast. "This Ye Zhongming really is a handful. Don't worry—we'll handle the rest. You... recover."

With that, he lumbered off in the direction Ye Zhongming had fled.

Wen Yan watched his retreating back with a complicated expression.

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Ye Zhongming crouched beneath a towering oak, gulping down pills and potions. He didn't leave quickly and just chose to hide under a tree.

He'd won against Wen Yan and could've killed him, too. But the arrival of another top-tier fighter had forced his retreat.

In his current state, taking on another powerhouse was too risky, and leaving was the best choice.

The Raging Tides of Fury had been devastating. Even after cleaving through it, the residual force left his body numb—there was no pain, just a feeling of not being able to control.

A bad sign.

The medicines took effect instantly, and a wave of pain returned to his body. That intense feeling made him grunt and spit out a mouthful of blood.

After which, he felt much more comfortable.

His Clear Body and Beautiful Sky Body already accelerating his recovery.

He suddenly stood up at a certain moment and lunged sideways. A spiked mace cratered the ground where he'd sat.

A mountain of a woman stood there, gnawing on a pork leg still clutched in her teeth.

"Pah!" She spat the bone aside, hefting her weapon. "Not bad." Then she charged.

For someone built like a tank, she moved fast. The confidence and aura she had were as if she weren't facing the Cloud Peak King but the pig leg that she was eating.

But Ye Zhongming wasn't about to brawl with a brute mid-recovery. He backstepped, observed her speed, and then ran.

She couldn't catch him even though she was quick.

And Ye Zhongming wasn't prideful enough to fight when fleeing was smarter. He would always choose the best solution for himself.

Yet as he neared the forest's edge—

A crackling net of electricity shot toward him. He twisted aside, only for a frost blade to slash from his blind spot. A roll saved him, revealing an eight-star camouflage viper-type thing retracting into the foliage.

The color of the crystal told him that it was an eight-star lifeform.

His Blood Stepping Boots propelled him forward—straight out of the forest.

Two streaks of light welcomed him.

He had no choice but to face it. The few attacks were a combination such that he couldn't dodge anymore.

Wind and Thunder met the strikes head-on. No skill, just raw power. The impact hurled him back to edge of the woods.

A similar feeling of danger when he faced Wen Yan and Thousand Years filled his heart. Before he could even land, the black rope on his shoulder fired toward the trees on the side. The force caused him to make a nice turn to avoid the area where he should have landed at.

A volley of spiraling, razor-leafed projectiles shredded the space he'd occupied.

He heaved a sigh of relief. But he was confused, what were those leaves? Why did they make him feel such an intense sense of danger?

The black rope retracted, and he landed on the ground. But before he could stand still, purple wooden spikes to erupt from every direction. Ye Zhongming had to raise the Staff of Nature.

An intermediate-grade nature gem shattered, and fortunately, the wooden spikes were sent flying.

This killing blow was solved by Ye Zhongming's reaction speed and the Staff of Nature's strong defense.

But five people appeared around him. A woman holding the wolf-fang club, an old man with a snake on his arm, two guys with short daggers, and a middle-aged man whose arms were like two black holes.

These people gave off the aura of eight-star experts.

But Ye Zhognmign didn't look at the people who surrounded him. He was looking at a vine no different from the other vines on the surrounding trees.

He realised what this was.

Heaven Speech Demon Vine.