

Apocalypse 1531

Chapter 1531: Mountain and Water Eternal World

"Great Leader," the Go Hall Director suddenly addressed the rotund man beside him, "Ye Zhongming is temporarily blind. This is our best chance to kill him. I've already deployed all my forces—my people, my beasts. Shouldn't Soul Merchant also contribute?"

Aside from Dr. Ziche, he had mobilized all his elite fighters. Yet Soul Merchant? Only Saint Green Serpent and Sister Bo remained on the battlefield.

The Great Leader laughed heartily. "Naturally, naturally! I don't have your vast resources, Director, and my subordinates are a bunch of useless trash, hardly worth mentioning. But I do have a way to assist everyone."

With that, he pulled out a stone-carved landscape sculpture from his robes. Miniature streams flowed across its surface, and within a fist-sized pond, tiny fish darted about.

The Director stared at it, baffled.

"Mountain and Water Eternal World," the Great Leader explained. "Nothing too impressive—just a large-scale confinement tool with a time limit. Once activated, it'll envelop this entire area, including Ye Zhongming's battlefield. For one hour, unless someone attacks it with equipment of a higher grade, the barrier won't break."

The Director's interest piqued. He almost asked why the Great Leader hadn't used it earlier, but then realized its limitations: without sufficient allied forces inside, it was useless. So he dropped the question.

"What grade is it?"

The Great Leader smirked, his stone carving glowing faintly—a soft purple light.

"Purple-grade?!" The Director couldn't hide his shock.

Equipment of this category was rare and specialized, typically low-grade. Yet this one had reached purple-grade.

"Then that means—"

"Exactly." The Great Leader's eyebrows arched triumphantly. "Only seven-colored-grade equipment can break it—and it must be a weapon! I refuse to believe Ye Zhongming possesses such a thing!"

"What's the range?"

If the Director had been 80% confident in killing Ye Zhongming before, he was now 100% certain.

The Great Leader didn't hesitate. He pulled out a map, marked their location, scaled it, and roughly outlined the affected area.

The Director mentally compared it to his own arrangements and nodded. "It doesn't cover everything, but it'll suffice!"

The Great Leader grinned, biting his finger and letting two drops of blood fall into the sculpture's tiny pond. The stone carving levitated, spinning into the air as it expanded, growing to the size of a mountain peak before vanishing without a trace.

Yet both the Director and Mei Rang, still using Earth Eye, sensed an intangible shift in their surroundings.

"Impressive!" The Director couldn't help but praise.

"A shame it only has two uses." The Great Leader sighed regretfully.

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Ye Zhongming felt it too.

It's said that when humans lose their sight, their hearing and smell sharpen. Science attributes this to heightened reliance on other senses, which, through constant use, become unnaturally acute.

Perhaps this, too, was a minor form of evolution.

Blinded, Ye Zhongming now relied solely on sound to navigate. Moments ago, he'd felt a sudden claustrophobic pressure—not suffocation, but the sensation of being locked in an inescapable prison.

He didn't know its origin, nor if his perception was accurate. His only option was to run.

The longer he fled, the more time his eyes had to recover.

For a terrifying moment, he'd truly believed he'd gone permanently blind.

But as the pain dulled, he managed to crack his eyelids open—a sliver of light seeped in.

Just a sliver, but it meant hope.

His vision wasn't entirely destroyed.

If so, there had to be a way to heal it.

He gulped down healing potions, antidotes, anything that might aid his injured eyes.

Now, he could only wait and see if they worked.

Even without sight, Ye Zhongming could effortlessly dodge obstacles as an eight-star evolved. He weaved through the forest, relying on instinct to guide him.

A sudden sidestep—a crimson sleeve pierced the air, striking a tree trunk so hard it shattered on impact.

Ah Xiu had caught up.

Though he wouldn't crash into trees, blindness slowed him significantly. Combined with Ah Xiu's agility, he'd inevitably be cornered.

Ye Zhongming dodged calmly, using the forest as cover. Even if trees were fragile against eight-star evolved, charging through them would only hinder speed. So both pursued and pursuer zigzagged, locked in a deadly chase.

Abruptly, Ye Zhongming halted. A sleeve shot past his front while another speared toward his skull from behind.

The logical move was to dodge sideways—but Ye Zhongming merely tilted his head and slashed diagonally.

"Dammit! How'd you spot me blind?!"

Vice-Leader Yang's voice rang out. He'd been hiding beside a tree, suppressing all traces of his presence, waiting for Ye Zhongming to blunder into him. Yet somehow, the blind king had sensed him, ignoring Ah Xiu's feint to strike first. Yang barely blocked in time.

Ye Zhongming snorted but didn't linger, darting away.

Ah Xiu and Yang gave chase.

Though sightless, his instincts led him to a forest stream. If memory served, a small lake lay ahead.

Now, only sound-emitting landmarks could pinpoint his location.

He stopped abruptly. His pursuers did too.

Because Ye Zhongming sensed three presences ahead, standing by the stream.

"Brother Cheng Ou!" Ah Xiu cried, relief in her voice.

Of the Director's five core subordinates, Tong Lu and Silver were dead. Only Ah Xiu and Cheng Ou remained.

"You killed two of my brothers," Cheng Ou spat, ignoring Ah Xiu. "I'll make you die screaming."

Beside him crouched two monstrous beasts, each two meters tall. Their origins were unclear, but their aura was unmistakable—eight stars.

"I smell the stench of God Hall's stitched abominations." Ye Zhongming's lips curled coldly. Then—he attacked first.

Chapter 1532: Defender

Even relying solely on instinct, Ye Zhongming's blade strike still carried the overwhelming force of a collapsing mountain.

This wasn't just due to his strength or the grade of his equipment—it was the unshakable confidence of a man surrounded yet utterly unyielding.

Cheng Ou let out a sharp cry, thrusting his palms forward. Two green leaves shimmered on them—not tattoos, for no ink could mimic such lifelike vitality.

The leaves detached, erupting into radiant light before transforming into two-meter-long, tangible shields that interlocked tightly, shielding Cheng Ou behind them.

Ye Zhongming's blade struck with a shredding, tearing noise.

Cracks spiderwebbed across the leaves—but they held.

“Come at me again!”

Cheng Ou roared, pressing his hands against the back of the leaves. Instantly, the fractures sealed themselves.

“Brother Cheng Ou is the finest defender,” Ah Xiu declared, her face alight with admiration—and something softer. “Even if you were the King of Cloud Peak at full strength, with your eyes intact, you couldn’t breach his guard.”

She smirked, taunting further. “Isn’t there someone in Cloud Peak named Sheng Yuan, also a defensive specialist? Why don’t you test which of them is stronger?”

To her, the situation was clear. With Cheng Ou and his two mutated beasts at the front, herself and Vice-Leader Yang at the rear, and Sister Bo closing in—a blinded Ye Zhongming was already dead. Only the timing remained.

She wasn’t underestimating him. She acknowledged his strength—far surpassing any present. But escape? Impossible.

Ye Zhongming raised his blade again. This time, he activated a profession skill.

“Thousand Seal Blade Strike” couldn’t be spammed, but its cooldown was brief.

“Bring it on!” Cheng Ou trembled with excitement. He’d long craved a clash with the King of Cloud Peak, famed for his devastating offense.

A teardrop-shaped pendant flew from his neck, hovering between the leafy shields. Spinning rapidly, it released raindrops that multiplied into a shimmering curtain, enveloping Cheng Ou and his defenses.

The blade descended.

“Unfurling Leaves Thousand Waters!”

Cheng Ou unleashed his ultimate defense, synergized with his equipment.

The collision was cataclysmic.

Ah Xiu, Vice-Leader Yang, and the newly arrived Sister Bo were hurled backward by the shockwave, their skin stinging from the razor-edged gale. The sheer force was unprecedented.

“Charge!”

Sister Bo, thick-skinned and relentless, barely flinched. Shielding her face momentarily, she lunged forward—and what she saw electrified her.

Ye Zhongming hung midair, his bloodline deactivated, no Lightning Sand Demon guarding his back. Blood trickled from his lips, painting a crimson arc.

This was the moment.

Ah Xiu reacted instantly.

“Unfurling Leaves Thousand Waters” was touted as “absolute defense”—negating all attack types. Worse, it reflected 100% of unblocked damage at the attacker.

Ye Zhongming’s strike had failed to shatter it. Now, he’d bear the full recoil.

Offense often outpaced defense—a universal truth. Ah Xiu was certain Ye Zhongming was no exception.

She pursued Sister Bo, though her gaze flicked to Cheng Ou. Her beloved looked battered—the leaves fractured to near-splintering, the teardrop pendant’s spin sluggish, on the verge of stopping—but the skill held.

Relieved, she accelerated, determined to claim Ye Zhongming’s head herself.

Though she privately disagreed with the Director's decision to anoint her as successor, she owed him her life and power. His orders were absolute.

If he demanded Ye Zhongming die by her hand, so be it.

Vice-Leader Yang, scenting opportunity, slithered closer. He didn't care who landed the killing blow—only looting the top-grade craftsman's corpse.

Cheng Ou and his level-eight beasts stayed put.

"Heh, count me in."

Saint Green Serpent materialized unexpectedly, having stalked unseen to the battlefield. Like Yang, he eyed Ye Zhongming's treasure trove of gear.

Four elites attacked as one, their strikes converging on the helplessly airborne Ye Zhongming.

But Vice-Leader Yang, angled just right—and familiar with Ye Zhongming's tactics—noticed something.

On the king's face: no fear, no panic. Only... a flicker of triumph?

Instinct screamed. Yang aborted his attack, recoiling.

Ah Xiu and Saint Green Serpent faltered, baffled.

The Saint, ever cautious, mirrored Yang's retreat. If the sly fox was fleeing, there had to be a reason.

Ah Xiu hesitated—but pressed on.

Only Sister Bo struck without hesitation.

Then—

Ye Zhongming's seemingly limp body rotated midair.

An impossible maneuver. No leverage, no footing. Yet he'd harnessed the recoil to flip himself.

Now facing his attackers, what greeted them wasn't a blade—

But his fists.

Or more precisely, the gloves adorning them.

Light erupted.

“Cloud Slice—ACTIVATE!”

Chapter 1533: Run first

Ye Zhongming hadn't used this ability in a long time—not because he didn't want to, but because his equipment's limitations and ever-increasing power meant activating it now required an exorbitant amount of mental energy.

He still wouldn't have used it if he were still wearing his old gauntlets. Depleting his mental reserves while already blinded would've been suicidal.

With unknown dangers lurking ahead, recklessly exhausting his mental strength was far from wise.

But now it was different.

The gauntlets on his hands were no longer the blue-grade trash of the past.

He now wore the Dread Gauntlets—a genuine purple-grade piece of equipment.

Against these foes, Ye Zhongming poured a quarter of his mental energy into this single Cloud Slice.

A quarter of his reserves likely surpassed forty times the total mental capacity of most evolved.

The resulting death rays sliced through everything in their path.

Sister Bo was the nearest.

Her hammers had been inches from crushing Ye Zhongming's skull. She'd even roared in triumph mid-swing.

Then—light consumed her vision.

Though reckless, Sister Bo possessed savage combat instincts. She instantly realized that the Cloud Peak King had fought back and rather, and that this was a trap.

But at this point, it was too late to dodge. She could only resist.

Instead of retreating, she doubled down, slamming her hammers forward with even greater force. Black mist erupted from them as her body visibly withered—a desperate sacrificial technique.

Ah Xiu felt fortunate that she had hesitated, which gave her an instant to react.

Her crimson sleeves interwove at blinding speed, forming a scarlet cocoon around her just as the rays struck.

Saint Green Serpent was filled with regret.

He didn't kill that hell lifeform. When he saw everyone had left, he broke free. That monster was strong, but it was slow and it couldn't keep up to him. Now that Ye Zhongming's bloodline disappeared, the lifeform had despawned.

He wanted to sneak over for free loot using his special Stealth Pearl. Not only did he fail to get any loot, but he also faced such a strong attack.

Now, he faced a nightmare.

He did not have monstrous defense like Sister Bo. No divine-grade sleeves like Ah Xiu. His Molting Life skill had already been spent.

Facing an attack that caused even his soul to shake, Saint Green Snake screamed and then shoved his own battle pet before himself.

The rays then engulfed him.

Of the four people, Deputy Yang was in the best situation.

His early retreat spared him the worst. He stopped his attack and started to retreat. When the Cloud Slice attacks arrived, he was already far away.

Cloud Slice's attack range was close, and Deputy Yang's sharp senses picked up on that point. Although they were quick and instantly caught up with him, he dealt with them calmly. Two giant guns covered in gold appeared in his hands, and he fired them toward Ye Zhongming.

Though the rays were near-instantaneous, their range was limited.

These two guns weren't of a high level and were only white grade. Yang kept them purely for aesthetics. But he was firing them not because he wanted to kill him still, he was using the recoil to propel himself backwards.

This recoil wouldn't be big, but he just needed a little. He could use his "premonition" advantage to break free from Cloud Slice's range.

The full power of Cloud Slice erupted at this moment.

"Ah Xiu!"

Cheng Ou, who had noticed the sudden change from afar, roared in grief and rage as he rushed over.

Plop, plop. Thud, thud!

Four sounds rang out in succession as the four figures landed on the ground in various states.

The two plops came from Sister Bo and Ah Xiu.

Sister Bo was in terrible shape—worse than when Ye Zhongming’s earlier gunshot had blown away half her abdomen.

Now, there was almost no intact part of her body left. It wasn’t the kind of damage covered in wounds, but rather as if a layer of skin and flesh had been shaved off her entire body.

Even Ye Zhongming, who had unleashed Cloud Slice, probably wouldn’t understand how his attack had caused such an effect.

Beyond that, Sister Bo’s left arm and her twin hammers had been completely pulverized.

She lay on her back, her chest barely rising, her eyes lifelessly fixed on the sky. It was impossible to tell when she had breathed her last.

Ah Xiu was in slightly better shape than Sister Bo, but was now a bloodied mess. All her equipment had been destroyed, and even so, her body was covered in horrifying gashes.

The only reason she hadn't died instantly was thanks to the God Hall's director, who had doted on Ah Xiu and given her many high-quality treasures. These had allowed her to survive the skill attack unleashed by Ye Zhongming through a purple-grade item.

Ah Xiu's mouth hung open, silently forming the shape of a scream. Tears streamed from the corners of her eyes.

She felt despair, felt life slipping away from her. Her mind flashed images of her ecstatic joy when she first obtained the red sleeves, of her first meetings with the director and Cheng Ou.

She closed her eyes, suddenly weary of everything, feeling as though nothing was left in this world worth clinging to.

The two thuds came from Vice Chairman Yang and Saint Green Snake hitting the ground.

Saint Green Snake had used his battle pet as a shield, blocking most of the attack, but some rays had still reached him. Even after employing other methods to mitigate the damage, he was still injured—especially by a gash on his forehead that had nearly split his skull open.

As blood poured down, he pressed his hands to the wound, only to realize as his left hand passed before his eyes that four of his fingers (all except the thumb) had been severed at some point.

He didn't scream, merely clutched his wound and began backing away.

No matter the final outcome, he had already decided to withdraw from this chase.

The one in the best condition was undoubtedly Vice Chairman Yang. He had only been grazed by the aftermath, and even that had been blocked by his armor. Seeing the near-zero durability of his gear, the Soul Merchant vice chairman felt immensely grateful for his decision.

Just a little more, and I'd have lost my life again.

Vice Chairman Yang knew he had to run—otherwise, Ye Zhongming would come to finish him off.

But before he could flee, this ever-escaping Yang discovered something unexpected:

The King of Cloud Peak... was running away first!

Chapter 1534: Soul Reaper

When the Chairman and the Director of God Hall arrived, their faces were twisted with fury.

There was no helping it—their most important subordinates, even their potential successors, lay here on the brink of death.

"Did you give them potions?!"

The Chairman was usually gentle with Vice Chairman Yang and Saint Green Snake, but at this moment, he couldn't care less and directly berated his two core subordinates.

Vice Chairman Yang and Saint Green Snake hurriedly replied that they had used the best healing medicine they had on them.

The Chairman snorted coldly, then walked over to Sister Bo. His plump hand stretched out and hovered a few centimeters above her left chest.

Upon closer inspection, everyone noticed that his hand wasn't touching her—instead, tiny electric currents flickered in the space between his palm and her body, slowly shifting.

As the currents moved, Sister Bo's body began to tremble slightly, and the horrifying wounds on her surface started to change.

Her flesh was regenerating!

Vice Chairman Yang and Saint Green Snake stared wide-eyed—they had never known their leader possessed such an ability.

This continued for over ten seconds before the Chairman withdrew his hand. He looked as if he had just stepped out of a sauna, wiping sweat from his face with a rough motion before glancing at his two subordinates.

"Green Snake, take Sister Bo to Mei Rang. Make sure she's taken care of—or I'll kill you!"

Saint Green Snake nodded, lifting Sister Bo—who was twice his size—and carrying her away in another direction.

But as he turned, unmistakable resentment flashed in his eyes.

He was injured, too, yet his treatment was worlds apart.

On the other side, the Director of God Hall sprinkled a medicinal powder over Ah Xiu's wounds, which rapidly closed. But just like Sister Bo, Ah Xiu was already in a near-death state. While the powder stopped the bleeding and restored her wounds, it couldn't return the lost vitality.

Worse, Ah Xiu herself seemed to have given up on living, her condition even more dire than Sister Bo's.

The Director's mask betrayed no emotion. He half-carried Ah Xiu, calling her name softly twice before hesitating. Then, with a wave of his hand toward an empty patch of ground, a white jade coffin materialized.

Cold air seeped from the coffin as its lid automatically opened, revealing a level-eight humanoid monster sitting inside.

Its body appeared stitched together from different creatures, with only its head looking somewhat normal.

The moment the monster sat up, it awoke, its four arms (each with three sharp claws) gripping the coffin as it prepared to leap out. But with another wave of the Director's hand, its body exploded without even a scream.

Severed limbs and gore splattered around the coffin, a grotesque sight—but above the coffin, a black, soul-like entity floated in the air.

It looked like a normal human.

The Director gestured, and the soul drifted to Ah Xiu's forehead, slowly merging into her body.

"Soul Reaper?!"

The Chairman, having just finished treating Sister Bo, stood up and witnessed this scene. He couldn't help but exclaim in shock.

He had seen the Director's abilities before, but never expected his secondary job to be Soul Reaper—one of the top-grade support classes.

Considering God Hall's expertise in life creation and now this soul-manipulating job, the Chairman's wariness toward the Director deepened.

The ground trembled briefly before fresh, tender vines sprouted, weaving into a stretcher in moments. The Director placed Ah Xiu—now appearing to be in a deep sleep—onto it, and the vines continued growing, cocooning her completely.

As the Director stood, the vine-wrapped Ah Xiu slowly sank into the earth, vanishing to an unknown location.

The Grand Chairman watched, gaining a deeper understanding of the seemingly omnipresent and omnipotent Demon Vine.

"Where's Cheng Ou?"

Now that Ah Xiu's life was secured, the Director relaxed slightly—though the cost had been immense.

Outsiders only knew that the Soul Reaper job had near-resurrection abilities, but they didn't realize the heavy price the user had to pay.

The monster in the white jade coffin was a lifeform he had specifically engineered for his job, ensuring a high success rate for soul extraction. But cultivating such a creature was incredibly expensive, far beyond the cost of ordinary combat-assembled lifeforms.

Moreover, the cooldown for a Soul Reaper's skill was extremely long, meaning that if the Director himself were in danger, he wouldn't be able to save himself for a considerable time.

Most critically, after being revived by an artificial soul, Ah Xiu could no longer maintain her "purity."

Add to that the mental energy consumed, and the Director was seething with suppressed rage.

He was deeply dissatisfied with his subordinates' performance earlier. They had been too careless against the blind King of Cloud Peak, allowing him to land a devastating counterattack.

He couldn't blame Ah Xiu—she was his chosen successor. Nor could he blame Soul Merchant, as Sister Bo was also severely injured, and one of their Saints had lost a level-eight battle pet. Their losses were far from trivial.

The only one left to vent his anger on was Cheng Ou.

But now, he realized Cheng Ou wasn't even here. His displeasure deepened—then his expression suddenly changed.

"He went after Ye Zhongming," Vice Chairman Yang confirmed the Director's suspicion.

"That idiot!"

The Director roared and immediately sprinted in the direction Ye Zhongming had fled, with the Chairman close behind.

Now was the time they had to intervene. The duration of the Mountain and Water Eternal World was limited, and they couldn't risk the King of Cloud Peak dragging out the fight until the effect expired.

But a deafening gunshot echoed from the distance before they had run more than a few seconds.

Everyone froze.

Then the Director let out a distorted scream, charging forward like a madman.

Moments later, they found half of Cheng Ou's corpse beneath a large tree.

A massive wound at his waist had completely severed his lower body, and the sheer force had pulverized all his internal organs. The man who had once been their strongest defender now lay lifeless on the ground, beyond even a god's power to save.

Beside the body lay a severed tendon from some unknown creature. Vice Chairman Yang picked it up and gave it a light tug—it emitted a strange, quiet sound that carried far into the distance.

"I'LL KILL YOU!"

The Director of God Hall was consumed by fury. Today felt like the end of God Hall—his elite subordinates, all dead, save for Ah Xiu.

As his roar tore through the air, the entire forest shook.

Countless roars answered in unison.

From multiple directions, a tide of beasts charged forth.

Chapter 1535: Final Battle

Ye Zhongming was breathing heavily, his chest heaving violently. He could feel that his proud physical recovery rate could no longer keep up with his consumption.

Earlier, he had used the "Chase" ability of the Reaper Mimic Shooter's sniper mode to kill Cheng Ou, who had pursued him with hatred.

Just as Ah Xiu said, Cheng Ou was an outstanding defender. Despite having inferior equipment and physical attributes compared to Sheng Yuan, his defensive capabilities were no less impressive, making him one of the strongest defenders on this planet.

But that didn't mean he had no weaknesses—nor did it mean he couldn't die.

Especially when facing a top-tier attacker like Ye Zhongming.

Ye Zhongming had used himself as bait, delivering a devastating blow to his pursuers with Cloud Slice. But by then, his body was already severely injured, and continuing to fight in such a state would only worsen his condition. He also sensed that Vice Chairman Yang and Saint Green Snake were still in decent shape—if he didn't retreat now, there was an 80% chance he'd be pinned down.

Of course, he had no way of knowing that "Yang the Flee-er" had actually been about to run or that Saint Green Snake had already decided to withdraw from this chase.

Another reason he retreated immediately was that he couldn't confirm the condition of Sister Bo and Ah Xiu—if even one of them still had some hidden means to fight, Ye Zhongming wouldn't just be unable to escape; he might even suffer a humiliating defeat.

But the biggest concern, the one he feared most, was still the Demon Vine and its master.

However, Ye Zhongming was still Ye Zhongming. Even while fleeing, even with his vision gone, he wouldn't just run without retaliating. He wanted these people to know that chasing him came at a price.

So as he fled, he tied a tendon from a dimensional jumping toad in a certain spot. Once stretched taut, this tendon would emit a clear sound when touched and had a slight mind-disrupting effect.

Then, he ran some distance away and crouched under a tree, listening.

Cheng Ou, consumed by hatred over Ah Xiu's uncertain fate, chased after him and triggered the tendon. Relying on his hearing, Ye Zhongming fired a single shot.

To ensure lethality, he used a micro-carved bullet.

In terms of accuracy, this shot wasn't particularly impressive. In peacetime, any professionally trained sniper could have easily scored a headshot with such a high-quality firearm at this distance.

But Ye Zhongming couldn't see. He fired purely on instinct.

The bullet struck Cheng Ou in the lower abdomen.

Without his active defensive skills, the God Hall defender's natural resilience was only slightly better than an average evolved.

So his body was bisected on the spot, his internal organs shredded by the elemental force of the micro-carved bullet, eliminating any chance of survival.

After firing the shot, Ye Zhongming continued moving. He quickly dashed out of the forest—just a few more minutes of full-speed sprinting, and he would reach the edge of the plains.

But then, he was blocked.

An invisible barrier stood in his way. Over five seconds, Ye Zhongming tested it with fists, blades, firearms, skills, and even corrosive liquids—nothing made it disappear. He immediately understood: this was another "gift" prepared for him.

Restraining equipment like this, once activated, wouldn't be broken in a short time.

Ye Zhongming turned and retreated back into the forest.

If he couldn't leave, the woods were the safer option.

Not only could they conceal his form and scent, but they were also ideal for ambushes and counterattacks.

Unfortunately, when Ye Zhongming re-entered the forest, he was met with relentless attacks.

These assaults came from mutated creatures of various levels.

The lower-level ones—Level 5 and 6—had special abilities, such as emitting peculiar scents to mark his location or disrupt his sense of smell.

Others produced all sorts of noises, throwing off his auditory perception. Even a fist-sized, toad-like creature shot out sticky, foul-smelling threads between the trees. Once they stuck to Ye Zhongming, they were nearly impossible to tear off. Even when he managed to break them, half would remain glued to his body, adhering to anything he touched. He had to rip them away with force constantly.

These lower-level creatures were just support. The real offensive threats were the Level 7 and 8 mutated lifeforms.

Undoubtedly, these were the stitched monstrosities cultivated by God Hall. Individually, they weren't as strong as naturally evolved creatures of the same level, but they made up for it in numbers. From sound alone, Ye Zhongming detected at least twenty Level 7+ creatures surrounding him, with even more approaching from afar. God Hall had truly gone all out to kill him.

Thus, Ye Zhongming was plunged into endless combat. Without sight and with his hearing and smell disrupted, his stamina and mental energy were rapidly depleting. If not for the Soul Refining Technique, which sharpened his perception, his current state wouldn't just be about exhaustion—his injuries would have worsened, and his combat effectiveness would have plummeted.

For the first time, Ye Zhongming felt a flicker of doubt about his plan.

Perhaps... this was too reckless.

But even if he was reconsidering, no one else was—especially not Dr. Ziche and the researchers currently controlling these monsters. Their faces were twitching uncontrollably.

God Hall deployed all their reserves to encircle and kill Ye Zhongming: 32 Level 8 creatures, 75 Level 7 creatures, and over 300 Level 5-6 support mutants.

These weren't the second-rate goods sold to Soul Merchant and Pin Palace—these were top-tier specimens, the pinnacle of God Hall's splicing technology in terms of fusion stability, lifespan, combat power, and functionality.

Faced with such numbers, Dr. Ziche believed that even the Director himself, armed with the Demon Vine, would be doomed to fail. This was his confidence in God Hall's scientific prowess.

But now?

A blind man, his other senses severely impaired, was cutting through them like a scythe. So far, at least five Level 8 creatures, seven Level 7 creatures, and dozens of lower-level mutants had been slaughtered.

And the cost?

Nothing but some sticky threads and lingering odors on his body...

To Dr. Ziche, this was impossible.

If he could, he would order an immediate retreat of all these mutants.

Just as frustration, rage, and unwillingness consumed him, Dr. Ziche suddenly calmed down, his body relaxing. The researchers beside him glanced at him in confusion.

"The final battle is here. This fight... is over."

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Ye Zhongming also sensed the arrival of the final confrontation.

Two overwhelmingly powerful auras, strong enough to make even him feel awe, appeared a few hundred meters away.

There was no need to guess—these were the Soul Merchant's Chairman and the God Hall's Director.

Two old enemies who had been his adversaries since the early days of the apocalypse, yet whom he had never met face-to-face.

In the past, Ye Zhongming had always suppressed them—destroying their bases, slaughtering their people, while they could do nothing to Cloud Peak.

Now, he had delivered himself to them, and these two titans were finally taking matters into their own hands.

Chapter 1535.5- Final Battle

Ye Zhongming adjusted his stance and fired a Tranquil Finger, piercing through a Level 8 creature's body and creating an opening. He dashed through it.

On the surface, it looked like he was trying to break out.

Soon, Ye Zhongming reached the mysterious barrier that had trapped him earlier.

Behind him, a horde of mutants followed.

And behind them—now only 200 meters away—were the two leaders.

From his spatial storage, Ye Zhongming released over a hundred crystal grenades.

These were Cloud Peak's latest models, which he always kept on hand.

Their explosive power was immense. Concentrated in such numbers, they could threaten even level eight mutated lifeforms.

Within the small blast radius, magic energy ran rampant.

Unlike the earlier battle in the dimensional rift, where thousands of grenades had sealed off an area, making it impassable even for ghosts and gods, Ye Zhongming's hundred-plus grenades couldn't achieve that effect.

The God Hall Director's eyes flashed with cold amusement.

The King of Cloud Peak was running out of tricks.

And he wasn't wrong to think so. After all, he knew better than anyone what Ye Zhongming had endured in such a short time.

From Tong Lu to Vice Chairman Yang, then Wen Yan, followed by the assault from the five-man team and the plant, and now this siege—anyone subjected to such relentless, high-intensity attacks would have exhausted nearly all their means. Whatever remained would be a last-ditch survival measure.

The thought that they might actually kill Ye Zhongming today sent a thrill through the God Hall Director.

It had been too long since anything had excited him like this.

The Chairman felt the same. In his hands appeared two strange weapons, resembling the cranks of a manual juicer.

He deliberately lagged slightly, intending to let God Hall's monsters continue wearing Ye Zhongming down.

Then, at a certain moment—

Both leaders' expressions changed.

They dodged violently to either side as a thick beam of light nearly grazed them.

In that instant, they remembered a weapon rumored to be in Ye Zhongming's possession—one whose existence had never been confirmed: A powerful bone staff.

They also realized why Ye Zhongming had tried to break through here despite knowing the Mountain and Water Eternal World trapped him.

The King of Cloud Peak had been herding his pursuers into a straight line, waiting for the two leaders to enter that trajectory before unleashing his full-power strike.

As for the crystal grenades that had made them think he was desperate?

They were just a smokescreen, masking the charging aura of the Bone Staff to catch them off guard.

But to threaten two top-tier eight-star evolved, the Bone Staff needed to charge at least seven runes' worth of energy—a level of power whose fluctuations couldn't be hidden from the Chairman and Director.

So, despite Ye Zhongming's best efforts, he failed to hit them.

This was the flaw of the Bone Staff: devastating power, but easily detected and dodged by high-level opponents.

Though the two leaders escaped, over half of the God Hall's mutated lifeforms behind them were annihilated in that single strike. The loss made Dr. Ziche and the Director sick with grief.

Half of their assets, deployed to kill Ye Zhongming, had just been wiped out.

Now, facing Ye Zhongming—who stood with his back to the Mountain and Water Eternal World—both leaders felt a sense of historic inevitability, as if this moment would be remembered for ages.

The spliced mutants withdrew. For the coming battle, they were no longer useful.

If they lost any more, God Hall would be left with nothing.

"Our first meeting, under such circumstances... I find it quite dramatic."

As the Chairman spoke, his body began to glow.

First, his wide robe rippled with golden light. Then the crank-like weapons in his hands shone the same hue, followed by his shoes, belt, necklace—even his ear studs.

The ten rings on his fingers were most striking, each of different shapes and colors, yet together forming an oddly harmonious whole.

When not glowing, they made him look like a nouveau riche. But now, lit up, they radiated terrifying menace.

Even the God Hall Director couldn't help glancing at them.

Accompanying this display was a three-headed white tiger, its central head bearing an orange level-eight magic crystal.

The Chairman of Soul Merchant—decked in golden gear, accompanied by a Level 8 battle beast—was revealing his full strength against Ye Zhongming.

Ye Zhongming tilted his head, sensing the mounting pressure from this opponent.

"Aren't you bringing out your Demon Vine?"

He turned his sightless eyes toward the God Hall Director.

The Chairman's three-headed tiger was undoubtedly formidable—previously unknown, making it unpredictable—but Ye Zhongming still regarded the Demon Vine, ranked among the nation's top battle beasts, as the greater threat.

He had already witnessed the terrifying capabilities of that bizarre plant-beast.

"It will appear when the time comes."

The Director's reply was icy. Unlike the Chairman, he didn't showcase all his equipment. He deemed it unnecessary.

Ye Zhongming nodded and said no more. At their level, threats, taunts, or expressions of excitement would only demean them.

If they had anything to say, they could say it after victory.

Almost simultaneously, all three raised their weapons.

The God Hall Director wielded a ruler-like weapon no one had seen before—plain-looking, about 50 centimeters long, dull in sheen, adorned only with star patterns.

Seeing this, the Chairman smirked. The day's losses had provoked the Director. He was going all out from the start.

He began rotating the cranks in his hands, his previously amiable expression replaced by murderous intent.

A battle that would reshape the nation's power structure was about to begin.