

Apocalypse 1551

Chapter 1551: Who doesn't know him (2)

Xiao Peng quickly wiped his mouth, inwardly awestruck by this "Shuangfei sister." Forget whether Xia Lei and Liang Chuyin would accept her—did she even know Ye Zhongming? How could she claim him as her man? Did she realize Ye Zhongming was sitting right beside her?

Xiao Peng didn't look at Ye Zhongming. Instead, he glanced at Xia Bai—rumored to be the boss's woman, infamous for her ruthlessness. Now that someone openly declared they'd "steal" her man, would she suddenly snap?

"Quit dreaming!"

Hai Dayu glared at Yan Shuangfei but smacked his own son on the back of the head instead—hard—as if blaming his own flesh and blood for being useless.

Young Master Qing looked aggrieved. Dad, if you want me to compete, at least pick a fair matchup. Even combined, we're not worth one of the Cloud Peak King's toenails.

"If I were a woman, I'd think like Shuangfei, too." White Skin pulled out a sheet of paper and handed it to Yan Shuangfei. "For us in the Northern Wastelands, the only relevant rankings are the Mutated Lifeforms list. The rest? Only Old Dragon and his Holy Snow Mountain made it—and even then, not high."

"And Old An's warbeast, plus our Four Dragon Heads," added Ah Kai, the cold and aloof leader of Night Kill.

"So many of us, so many factions—yet only a handful made the list. None of us even cracked the top 500 in the region. This is fucking ridiculous!"

Hai Dayu, already in a foul mood after failing to test Ye Zhongming and seeing his son's marriage prospects evaporate, was the first to vent. Previously, Black Dragon City's factions and top evolved had at least appeared on the country rankings. But in this latest edition, most had vanished from both the Individual and Faction Power lists—those remaining clung to the very bottom.

Still, he was just blowing off steam. Deep down, he knew they'd fallen behind the rest of the country, failing to keep pace.

The half-city of mutated lifeforms and the region's abundant resources had indeed granted them more demon crystals—but also bred complacency. Black Dragon City's factions operated independently, often undermining each other, slowing their growth. The disparity had been subtle before, but after the sky rained down chests—few of which reached the Northern Wastelands—they'd been overtaken.

"First place—Lie'er."

Yan Shuangfei's eyes narrowed as she read the Mutated Lifeforms ranking.

Ye Zhongming, overhearing, was equally surprised.

Since the fall of Armor King, the rankings had been chaotic. Debates raged over who deserved the top spot, with even authoritative organizations like Five Ring Money facing skepticism. The Mutated Lifeforms list was the most contentious of all.

Yet this time, when Lie'er claimed first place, silence fell.

During the Bright Water Banquet, this psychic-type zombie had barely cracked the top ten, commanding just over 500,000 zombies. Unlike Red Hair or Talking Lady, who combined formidable combat prowess with psychic abilities, Lie'er was purely a mentalist—physically weak but psychically overwhelming.

According to Five Ring Money's notes, her horde exceeded five million, and she herself had evolved into a nine-star lifeform.

A zombie king controlling millions? The thought alone was chilling.

"Second place—Sea Dragon King."

A new entrant, this oceanic mutated lifeform had been spotted in the East China and Bohai Seas. Initially confined to water, it had since grown wings and taken to the skies.

Little was known about it, but one feat secured its ranking: in a fit of rage, it had ravaged three coastal cities—one of which housed a nine-star mutated lifeform. It won.

Victory against a peer was proof enough.

"Third place—Bu Gua."

In the era of Armor King, this desert-dwelling monstrosity had held second place. Now, surpassed by Lie'er and Sea Dragon King, it remained the undisputed ruler of the sands—a flying terror with no equal in its domain.

"Fourth place—Four-Pupil Spirit Cat."

This nocturnal killer was nearly mythical. As before, most had only seen its victims—never the cat itself. Rumored to be housecat-sized, its speed eclipsed lightning. None escaped its strikes.

"Fifth place—Red Taishan."

Previously tenth, its ascent was inevitable after evolving to nine stars. Witnesses described it as mountainous even at rest. It dominated its tier with colossal size, innate strength, and berserker rage.

"Sixth place—Frostplain Snow Wolf King."

The Black Dragon City leaders wore complex expressions. On one hand, the wolf king's high ranking brought a twisted pride to the Northern Wastelands. On the other hand, it was their enemy.

Humans weren't its primary prey, but this nine-star beast had no qualms snacking on them. Leading a pack of over a hundred wolves (lowest rank: six stars), it terrified the city. Even these bosses feared it—let alone the wolf king, encountering its eight-star lieutenants meant near-certain death.

"Seventh place—White Rice."

A mutant Tibetan antelope with a taste for rice—hence the name. Lately docile, its rank hadn't shifted much beyond its evolution to nine stars.

"Eighth place—Deep Pool Ellie."

This octopus-like lake monster, with no natural predators, could now roam land for extended periods. Reaching nine stars wasn't surprising—its peaceful nature had only slightly lowered its rank.

"Ninth place—God Tree."

The sole plant in the top ten. Rumored to span a city's breadth, no lifeform entering its domain ever returned. Even other nine-star mutated lifeforms avoided it.

Its passive nature and halted growth kept it ninth—harmless if left alone.

Chapter 1551.5- Who doesn't know him (2)

"Tenth place—Man-Bear King."

Another Northern Wastelands native. Solitary and formidable, its rages were legendary. But it had one quirk: a sweet tooth.

Black Dragon City stockpiled sugars and syrups solely for this beast. Every two months, it would visit, and the evolved would offer barrels of sweets. Once satiated, it left peacefully.

Likely, Black Dragon City's residents had seen nine-star lifeforms more than anyone else in the region.

The Mutated Lifeforms rankings had shifted dramatically. The top ten were now all nine-star, with some rising, others falling, and a few vanishing—whether displaced or dead.

Like the Talking Lady.

Ye Zhongming's mood darkened. The Talking Lady's absence from the list—where was she now?

He was eager to rescue her, but the apocalyptic world was perilous. He couldn't guarantee absolute safety. A nine-star encounter could end everything, and venturing into unfamiliar foreign lands multiplied the risks.

He would save the Talking Lady—but not recklessly. Hence, this stop in Black Dragon City—to prepare.

"What's wrong? Aren't there other rankings? Why stop? I wanted to hear more!"

Ye Zhongming noticed the group had gone quiet after discussing the Mutated Lifeforms list. Only Yan Shuangfei still grinned at the sheet.

Hai Dayu offered a grimace worse than a frown.

"Mr. Ye, it's not that we don't want to—it's just... there's nothing to say. The other lists can be summed up in four words."

Curious, Ye Zhongming asked, "Which four?"

"Cloud Peak. Ye Zhongming."

Old Long of Holy Snow Mountain—one of Black Dragon City's few ranked figures—answered.

Xiao Peng, Xia Bai, and Red Hair exchanged glances, then borrowed a ranking sheet from Black Brother for Ye Zhongming.

"Look at the battle beast and Equipment rankings. Is this a national list? Or Cloud Peak's private playground?"

White Skin gnawed on a mutant tendon, took a swig of liquor, and sighed.

Ye Zhongming scanned the lists. Indeed, Cloud Peak dominated.

Thousand Beast Manor's Chisel Tooth still held the top spot on the national battle beast rankings. The second place remained the God Hall Director's Demon Vine.

However, starting from third place, Cloud Peak began to reveal its dominance.

Yangos ranked third! Yellow Ball ranked fourth! Both have surpassed Li Daqian's Giant Bear! Even the Five Ring Money organization recognized the Undead Fish Dragon as Cloud Peak's battle beast, placing it fifth!

The once third-ranked Giant Bear was now forced down to sixth!

Seventh place was still Cloud Peak's—the giant earthworm, Jiubao! Formerly belonging to Jiulong, it now belongs to Xia Bai.

Eighth place was the Resistance Zone's Zhang Hetai's mutated tiger, Blue Eyes. Ninth was the Cannibal Chain's boss's battle beast, Yang Feng. Tenth place again went to Cloud Peak, though even Ye Zhongming was surprised by this entry—it's actually the mutated zombie, Brain Child!

After some thought, Ye Zhongming agreed that Brain Child did meet the criteria for a battle beast—an extremely intelligent one with independent thinking at that.

Cloud Peak had five entries on the country battle beast rankings, dominating half the list.

If we only look at the top ten, it's impressive but not jaw-dropping. However, this year's rankings extended to the top thirty.

Looking at spots 11 to 30 was where the real shock sets in. The Three-nose Elephant, Ice Bird, Rat King, and others followed closely outside the top ten, while Cloud Peak's long-cultivated battle beasts now dominate the list—these belong to various core members and the Battle Beast Camp.

From 11th to 30th place, Cloud Peak occupied twelve spots, leaving only eight for other factions. Combined with the five in the top ten, Cloud Peak holds seventeen of the thirty strongest war beasts—more than half!

If the war beast rankings were already staggering, the national equipment rankings were outright a solo show by Cloud Peak and Ye Zhongming.

1st Place: "Gate of Sacrifice" (seven colored-grade equipment). Owing faction: Unknown.

2nd Place: "Wind and Thunder" (Saint Light Hall Artifact). Ye Zhongming, Cloud Peak.

3rd Place: "Undead Sand Moon Blade" (Purple). Ye Zhongming, Cloud Peak.

4th Place: "Harvester Mimicry Shooter" (Purple). Ye Zhongming, Cloud Peak.

5th Place: "Misty Fear Gauntlets" (Purple). Ye Zhongming, Cloud Peak.

The top five were all Ye Zhongming's—except for first place, though insiders knew even that belonged to him. It was the only seven-colored-grade equipment in the nation.

This is like seeing a single player dominate an in-game equipment leaderboard. The reaction wasn't envy—it's despair.

In a game, you could quit and let the top player enjoy their solo show. But in the apocalypse, you can't quit.

One can only imagine the despair felt by the big shots of Black Dragon City. They know they'll never catch up, no matter how hard they try.

But the terror didn't stop there. While other factions appear further down the list, Cloud Peak still held the majority.

6th Place: "Holy Army Coat" (Gold set). Ji Ruiguang, Resistance Zone.

7th Place: "Greed Bracelet" (Purple). Ye Zhongming, Cloud Peak.

8th Place: "Lunar Armor" (Gold set). Liang Chuyin, Cloud Peak.

9th Place: "Legacy Shield" (Purple set). Sheng Yuan, Cloud Peak.

10th Place: "Howling Sky War Banner" (Purple). Glory Army.

To outsiders, Cloud Peak held seven of the top ten spots—absolute dominance. But Five Ring Money knew it was actually eight!

The national equipment rankings didn't include alien tech, but Cloud Peak was terrifying even limited to wheel-forged gear.

The rankings extended to the top 500, and skimming through revealed page after page of Cloud Peak entries: Merit Badge, Companion set, Lucy's Tear, Goddess's Gaze, Three Sharp Spear, and more, all near the top.

And that wasn't all—even equipment from others, like the Amplification Jade Pendant, Relic Mage Robe, and Wave Resonance Mace (all Purple-grade), while not owned by Cloud Peak, were clearly labeled as "crafted by Ye Zhongming."

Before even seeing the country power rankings or individual combat rankings, Ye Zhongming had already made the entire nation bow before these two words: Cloud Peak.

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Chapter 1552: News for price

"This person, simply..." Hai Dayu kept shaking his head as he looked at the other two lists, feeling utterly at a loss for words.

The other two lists: the first was the individual combat power ranking.

Ye Zhongming was unsurprisingly ranked first.

Second place went to the leader of God Hall, the director who possessed the Demon Vine.

Third place was the leader of the Glory Army, Mu Hanyi.

Fourth place: Li Daqian from Thousand Beasts Villa.

Fifth place: Ji Ruiguang from the Resistance Zone.

Sixth place: Director Tong from Five Ring Money.

Seventh place: Wang Hanran from the Cannibal Chain.

Eighth place: the Great Chairman from Soul Merchant.

Ninth place: Xia Bai from Cloud Peak.

Tenth place: Red Hair from Cloud Peak.

This list had Cloud Peak occupying three spots, and Five Ring Money counted Red Hair as an evolved.

There was no helping it—Red Hair now was indeed no different from an evolved, and no one could tell she was a puppet. Even her creator, Ye Zhongming, couldn't determine what Red Hair should be classified as after her transformation.

Perhaps calling her an evolved was more appropriate.

The individual combat power ranking listed the top 500, with dozens from Cloud Peak making the list. Elder Long from Black Dragon City was ranked in the latter half, barely noticeable.

As for the most attention-grabbing National Comprehensive Strength Ranking, Cloud Peak was the undisputed first place. After seeing the other lists, it would be inexcusable not to rank Cloud Peak at the top.

Second and third places went to the Resistance Zone and the Glory Army.

Fourth place: Thousand Beast Villa. Fifth place: Five Rings Money. Sixth place: Cannibal Chain. Seventh place: God Hall. Eighth place: Soul Merchant. Ninth place: Black Star. Tenth place: Blood Tumi.

Compared to the previous list, the biggest change was the disappearance of Pin Palace. After Mr. Wen took Thousand Years abroad, Five Ring Money simply excluded them.

Due to the battle with Ye Zhongming, God Hall's ranking dropped significantly to seventh place. Black Star remained in the top ten, even advancing one spot due to Pin Palace's disappearance. Blood Tumi, a rising force, also broke into the top ten for the same reason.

Similarly, forces with good relations with Cloud Peak—such as the Freedom Army, Deacon Water's organization, and those that had become Cloud Peak's subsidiaries like Star Beauty Corporation—saw their strength increase dramatically, breaking into the national top 100. Within the top 100, over ten forces were connected to Cloud Peak.

It could be said that the Cloud Peak faction had become one of the most essential forces in the country.

One could imagine that once this ranking became public, many more forces would flock to the dominant Cloud Peak. By then, the Cloud Peak faction's size would be unimaginable.

“We’re all humans, so how can the gap be this big?” Some leader blurted out this rustic “famous quote,” instantly lightening the tense atmosphere in the room.

Everyone laughed, and many snapped out of their daze, coming to terms with reality.

Before, since Black Dragon City had members and forces on the rankings, it felt like the lists were relevant to them. But now, with few Black Dragon City members remaining, these rankings were just after-dinner chatter in the remote Northern wastelands. If you cared, they were a belief. If not, they were nothing.

What mattered now was the present.

When Ye Zhongming saw the rankings, he felt somewhat uneasy. He understood the principle that “the outstanding are often envied.” With Cloud Peak at the peak of its prominence in the country, every move was watched by countless eyes, and any weaknesses would gradually be exposed.

If Cloud Peak noticed, they would fix them. But what about the flaws they missed? No one was perfect, and neither was any large force. Ye Zhongming himself couldn’t guarantee that Cloud Peak was truly impregnable without a single weakness.

Under these circumstances, all he and Cloud Peak could do was tread even more carefully and stay fully alert.

However, one thing did bring him some relief: through Deacon Water, Five Rings Money—which possessed the machine capable of detecting equipment and weapons across the country—had not exposed the Gate of Sacrifice as belonging to Cloud Peak, nor had they revealed the specifics of the purple-grade equipment. This spared Ye Zhongming considerable face.

Otherwise, he would have been completely transparent, and any future battles would have become far more difficult.

Seeing that the people in the room had moved on from the topic, Ye Zhongming was glad. He had no interest in discussing himself with others.

Ye Zhongming was sharp—one look at their expressions told him exactly what they were thinking. So, he began taking items out of his spatial equipment.

The moment he pulled out the first item, Young Master Qing's jaw dropped. It was a gold-grade weapon. Then came the second, the third... all items these leaders had previously requested.

Ye Zhongming calmly fulfilled every request.

At this point, the eight-star leaders realized just how extravagant this man was.

Who was he? A director of Five Ring Money? A regional manager of Cannibal Chain? Or the heir of one of the top forces in the country?

After briefly stating his requirements, these people paid up.

Ye Zhongming didn't charge exorbitant prices—slightly below market rate. These people weren't fools; even if they didn't have enough money, they'd borrow to make the purchase.

“Mr. Ye, you're the real deal!” Hai Dayu gave a thumbs-up. Glancing at his son's gold-grade weapon, he couldn't resist asking, “The few of us here have more money than these folks. What do you say...?”

The others stared eagerly.

Ye Zhongming smiled. He wasn't afraid of them wanting—he was afraid of them not wanting.

“I do have some items that might be useful to you all, but...”

Hearing Ye Zhongming drag out his words, even Little Yan Shuangfei, who had been lost in thoughts of joining Cloud Peak, blinked and said, “We'll definitely offer a price that satisfies Mr. Ye.”

Ye Zhongming's gaze swept across the faces of the leaders in the room. Each one nodded in agreement with Yan Shuangfei's statement.

“Let's take a look at the items first.”

As a top-tier craftsman with access to countless rare materials, it was effortless for him to have a few items that would interest an eight-star evolved.

The moment these pieces were brought out, the leaders in the room lost their composure, drooling as they examined them.

The isolation of the northern lands meant they had far fewer opportunities to acquire high-quality items compared to evolved elsewhere in the country.

“As for the price, I can offer a discount. But I need some information. If anyone can tell me what I want to know... half price.”

This statement stunned the leaders. What kind of information could be worth half the price of these items? These were things useful to eight-star evolved!

Ye Zhongming waved his hand, and Xiao Peng immediately handed a piece of paper to the leaders.

The people in the room passed it around, looking bewildered.

Was this man planning to wage a war?

Chapter 1553: Old An's visit

The chaotic noises outside didn't affect Ye Zhongming, who was quietly enjoying tea with an elderly man.

This tea was a specialty of Blue Secret Realm. After being processed by a few Cloud Peak members who mastered pre-apocalypse tea-making techniques, it carried a rich aroma with a distinct, lingering sweetness. It was one of Ye Zhongming's favorite beverages, which he drank frequently, as it greatly benefited his health.

Of course, Ye Zhongming didn't feel its effects much—firstly because his physical constitution was too robust, making the incremental benefits negligible, and secondly because he drank it so often that he had grown accustomed to it.

But this wasn't the case for others. The elderly man before him wore an expression of astonishment and envy as he savored the lingering taste.

"Does Cloud Peak have nothing but treasures like this?"

The old man set down his teacup. He had already drunk three cups in a row but still seemed reluctant to stop.

Ye Zhongming smiled. "Since Old An is here, of course I'd bring out the premium stuff."

This white-haired elder was none other than Old An, the mastermind behind Morning Light Pavilion and the creator of Black Dragon City's Four Dragon Heads.

Old An laughed heartily, stroking his beard. "Master Ye, you don't seem the least bit surprised that I guessed your identity."

"Those pieces of equipment all bear my mark. Others might overlook or fail to recognize it, but how could it escape the notice of a fellow craftsman like you?"

Old An nodded and sighed. "I thought I was at least one of the best craftsmen in the region, if not the absolute best. But after seeing the equipment you've made, along with those on the national rankings, I realize the gap between us is so vast it's disheartening."

Ye Zhongming waved his hand. "You're too modest, Old An. Even from a distance, I could tell your Four Dragon Heads aren't ordinary purple-grade equipment. They're integrated into the city walls, capable of four different attack modes, each with adjustable intensity. I'd even guess that with sufficient energy, they could pose a threat to level-nine lifeforms."

Noticing Old An's stunned expression, Ye Zhongming continued, "That level-nine Bear King who always comes here for sweets—it's actually interested in the Four Dragon Heads, isn't it? Though the dragon heads are dead, you've preserved their... nutrients through special means. Over time, nourished by the energy within the walls, these nutrients have grown richer, becoming increasingly enticing to it. Am I right?"

Old An's jaw dropped. After a moment of silence, he said, "If I weren't absolutely certain you've never been to Black Dragon City or seen the inside of its walls, I'd swear you had a hand in crafting the Four Dragon Heads. How did you figure this out?"

Ye Zhongming didn't answer. Some things couldn't be put into words—it was purely the experience and intuition he'd gained after evolving into a top-grade Glory Smith.

But one thing he wasn't lying about: he truly held the Four Dragon Heads in the highest regard. He couldn't even guarantee that he could replicate or create something similar.

He genuinely admired Old An.

Old An sighed. "There's a saying: peaking right out of the gate. For me, crafting my first purple-grade equipment was my peak. I doubt I'll ever make anything surpassing the Four Dragon Heads."

Seeing Ye Zhongming about to console him, Old An smiled and cut in, "I mean it. The creation of the Four Dragon Heads was a perfect storm—exceptional materials, my own peak condition right after evolving into a high-level craftsman, and stumbling upon a semi-finished energy-link foundation. That's how today's Four Dragon Heads came to be."

"In the future, even if I advance further as a craftsman, I'll never again come across such materials or an energy-link foundation. These things are serendipitous, not something you can seek out."

After a pause, Ye Zhongming nodded honestly.

Indeed, creating a masterpiece required many conditions. Had Ye Zhongming not been fortunate enough to obtain rare materials like Ghost Metal and Ocean Gold, or had the Blue Secret Realm not provided abundant resources, he wouldn't have advanced so smoothly to Super Craftsman status, much less produced so many purple-grade pieces.

A couple of failures might have bankrupted him—nothing like his current fearlessness toward setbacks.

"Old An, was there something you wanted to discuss?"

After seeing off those VIPs, Old An had sought him out—clearly for a reason.

Old An said, "May I first ask why you've gathered these children?"

He gestured toward the still-noisy commotion outside.

Ye Zhongming had Xiao Xuan spread word among Black Dragon City's orphans—those without family or factions to rely on—that he would take them in, providing food, clothing, basic security, and even some evolution potions. In exchange, they'd have to follow him to the north.

No one understood the terrors northward better than these children. Going there meant facing extreme danger.

Yet Ye Zhongming also offered hope—freedom from hunger and bullying, with the chance to obtain evolution potions.

Weren't these the very things these orphans strived for?

So when Xiao Xuan and his friends spread the word, Black Dragon City's children quickly learned. Many came to see for themselves, including some affiliated with factions.

They weren't ignoring the dangers—they saw hope.

"If it were anyone else, I'd stop them. I still have sway in this city—I wouldn't let someone take these children. They may not be the city's hope but its fresh blood."

"But if it's Cloud Peak—if it's you, Ye Zhongming—then I can't find grounds to object, nor do I have the right. I just want to ask: why? From what I know, Cloud Peak isn't short on manpower. At your call, evolved across the region would flock to serve under you. These children... shouldn't qualify."

"I plan to form a youth army."

Ye Zhongming stated it plainly.

Chapter 1553.5- Old An's visit

He stood, gazing through the spotless window at the crowded scene outside. "Old An, have you ever considered that we'll all die?"

Caught off guard by this shift, Old An paused before responding. "When the apocalypse began, I thought daily about death. But as I evolved, gained and advanced my craftsman profession, earned respect, and no longer needed to hunt... I haven't contemplated death in ages."

"This may be our difference. You're both the finest craftsman and the strongest evolved. I can sit indoors crafting gear, while you constantly face challenges. You confront death; I've forgotten it."

He too rose, stepping beside Ye Zhongming.

"Though we're both eight-star evolved, at first glance, I knew the gap between us was vast—not just in strength, but in perspective, understanding, and foresight."

Perhaps meeting the region's top figure prompted Old An to voice these reflections so soon.

"Since you mention death, something must have alarmed you. Whatever threatens the region's strongest is beyond me." Old An chuckled self-deprecatingly, without resentment—just acceptance.

"Then I won't ask. I'm too old for such burdens." He pointed outside. "I'll handle negotiations for those unwilling to release the children."

Ye Zhongming suddenly found this elder quite intriguing—measured, wise.

"Truthfully, after meeting Xiao Xuan here, I saw them as vessels of hope—not just survival, but legacy. You know how none of us truly trust others after all we've endured. I'm no exception. Taking them away stems from believing Cloud Peak and I can better safeguard that hope."

Old An nodded in understanding. "You're taking them to the north. Many likely won't return."

"Hope can't just be hope—it must be hope tempered by survival of the fittest."

They returned to the table. Ye Zhongming asked what else there was.

"Two more matters where I'd ask your help."

"Go ahead."

Old An began with the first, which surprised Ye Zhongming.

This high-level craftsman was inviting him to craft a piece of equipment jointly.

"It's like this: long ago, I had an adventure and obtained two blueprints—unique, single-use ones."

Ye Zhongming indicated understanding. He'd encountered such items before, like the fixed-formula blueprint from Zhang Dalong in Tree Corpse City—the essence water that granted him a second life had been a one-time recipe.

"The first produced the energy-link foundation I used in the Four Dragon Heads. The second was delayed due to the lack of materials until recently, when I finally gathered everything."

Old An looked both excited and wistful.

"But crafting this item requires five craftsmen, each completing separate components before assembling them for the final product."

Ye Zhongming grew intrigued—he'd never heard of such a method.

Any blueprint requiring five craftsmen's collaboration must be extraordinarily valuable, yielding something remarkable.

But Ye Zhongming didn't inquire further. Having made this request, Old An would surely explain—just not necessarily now.

As Ye Zhongming had noted earlier, in the apocalypse, everyone trusted themselves first. Old An likely wouldn't reveal everything prematurely, remaining guarded even toward the King of Cloud Peak. Had their conversation not gone so well, he might not have made this request at all.

Yet unexpectedly, while Old An didn't disclose the item, he stated that upon completion, he wanted Ye Zhongming to purchase it.

"Hearing this, it must be exceptional. Why not keep it yourself?"

Ye Zhongming voiced his confusion.

Old An smiled wryly, touching his nose. "Of course, I'd prefer keeping it. But I can't—possession breeds envy! Something this outstanding would tempt many. On the national rankings—this would be conspicuously top five, maybe top three—in my hands, I wouldn't last two months."

That remarkable? Ye Zhongming recognized Old An's modesty—since top-ranking gear mostly belonged to him, the elder was being polite. But he inferred this equipment might rank second, surpassed only by the mysterious seven-colored-grade Gate of Sacrifice.

Second-place gear? Superior to Wind and Thunder?

Ye Zhongming's interest deepened.

"But I have conditions. Agree, and I'll craft it and then sell it to you. Refuse, and I'll sell you the blueprint outright—cheaper—for you to craft yourself."

This left Ye Zhongming exasperated. "Old An, just tell me what it is. The more you say, the more confused I get."

Yet instead of clarifying, Old An pivoted to the third matter.

"Black Dragon City is my home—I've lived here my whole life. Now it faces a crisis from foreign forces. I beg your intervention. With your help, this threat would surely be resolved."

This final request—to aid Black Dragon City—was expected. Their brief interaction had shown Ye Zhongming Old An's decent character. Even Xiao Xuan waived fees for the city's sake; surely this elder would contribute.

As Black Dragon City's de facto top figure, Old An's request came as no surprise.

"Of course, not for nothing. I've seen your intelligence requests to Yan Shuangfei's group. I can fulfill those—in greater detail—plus provide guides and coordinate friendly northern factions to assist you."

Ye Zhongming's eyes lit up. For someone claiming to avoid hunting and prefer comfort, Old An's influence extended beyond the region!

If true, this northern expedition might prove far smoother.

Already inclined to help, Ye Zhongming agreed immediately.

However, as they prepared to discuss the equipment and northern intelligence further, Ye Zhongming's expression changed. He glanced northward, sensing something intently for two seconds before turning back. "Trouble's coming!"

Chapter 1554: Deep into the controlled region

When Old An arrived, the city center of Black Dragon City had already descended into complete chaos.

He had been in the middle of a conversation with Ye Zhongming when the King of Cloud Peak suddenly said trouble was coming and rushed out of the house. At the time, Old An had no idea what was happening—until, nearly a minute later, he smelled the thick scent of blood in the air.

Then, news came: for some unknown reason, the mutated lifeforms on the other side of the city had become extremely aggressive, launching a large-scale assault on the human side. Some of the most powerful among them had even breached the human-controlled zone of Black Dragon City, slaughtering evolved humans.

This was something the humans of Black Dragon City could not tolerate.

The half of the city they occupied was their foundation for survival. If they lost it, they would become rootless wanderers.

In the frozen wastelands of the north, amid the ever-looming threat of ice storms, no one could survive.

Because of this, when the mutated lifeforms in the city's other half began to stir, all the prominent figures of Black Dragon City gathered around Old An, their expressions grave.

"What's going on?"

Due to the city's unique circumstances, there was a strict rotation system in place for the central district.

To explain this, one had to mention the area's peculiar "terrain." The evolved humans naturally hadn't left themselves defenseless, allowing themselves to mingle freely with the mutated lifeforms. Instead, they had established special defensive lines.

Though it was said that humans and mutated lifeforms coexisted in the same city, only four access points led from the human side to the other.

The city was oriented north-to-south, with the southern half under human control and the northern half ruled by mutated lifeforms. Roughly speaking, the two sides were separated by an east-west strip of land, which the people of Black Dragon City habitually called Blood Street.

The widest parts of Blood Street stretched over a hundred meters, while the narrowest were at least fifty meters across. It was littered with boulders, ruins, massive pits, and skeletal remains.

The ground itself was stained an eerie bluish-purple from the blood of countless creatures, creating a bizarre and unsettling sight.

On the human side, Blood Street was accessible through four passageways. The two in the middle were the widest—one was a gap between two massive ruins of ice-crusting buildings, about a hundred meters wide and just as deep.

At the end of this passage, the humans had built a small wall connecting the two ruined structures using the same materials as Black Dragon City's defensive walls. There was no gate; evolved humans who wanted to enter Blood Street from here had to use ropes to descend from above.

Because this passage resembled the Chinese character for concave, it was called the Concave Exit.

About a kilometer west of the Concave Exit stood the enormous skeleton of a powerful mutated beast. By the third year of the apocalypse, this creature had already reached level eight. It had once rampaged through Black Dragon City from the north before being killed in a joint effort by the humans.

Though the battle had come at a great cost, the beast had brought tremendous benefits to Black Dragon City. Its demon crystal was the first level eight crystal ever obtained here. Much of its body had been turned into equipment now wielded or worn by the city's leaders. Its flesh had enhanced the physiques of many...

And then there were its bones—thick as a grown man's torso, rooted so firmly in the ground that no evolved human could move them. Eventually, people realized these bones were incredibly durable; even another level eight lifeform couldn't damage them. So, instead of trying to remove them, they repurposed the skeleton into another passage to Blood Street.

Numerous heavy weapons and fortifications were in place on the human side of this passage. A hundred meters ahead lay the skeletal passage, while behind it was the human city. This was where most hunters chose to enter Blood Street, where the fighting was most intense, and where attacks from mutated lifeforms were most frequent.

Over the course of a year, the mutated lifeforms launched over two thousand assaults on this location—an average of more than six per day!

The evolved humans of Black Dragon City called this place the Bone Passage.

These bones provided excellent cover for the evolved humans when they ventured out—though, just as often, they also served as cover for the mutated lifeforms.

Aside from these two wider passages, there were two other access points, one each on the eastern and western sides.

The eastern one was called the Hive Maze. It wasn't an actual maze, but rather a network of tunnels carved through the ruins by both humans and mutated lifeforms, connecting Blood Street to the human district. Some mutated lifeforms liked to linger in the Hive Maze, allowing evolved humans to hunt them for magic crystals and materials without even needing to enter Blood Street.

However, the Hive Maze was dimly lit at all times, day or night. Only evolved humans with special visual or auditory abilities were willing to hunt there.

The western access point was a roughly twenty-meter-wide slope extending from Blood Street to the top of the ruined ice walls. The slope was about two hundred meters long, and the humans had set up defensive positions at the summit. Few evolved humans ventured out from here; instead, they used bait—usually flesh—to "fish" for mutated lifeforms, luring them onto the slope before attacking from above.

Because the icy surface of the slope was hard and slippery, the mutated lifeforms often lost their footing while charging upward, making them easy targets.

This place was thus named Fishing Slope.

Right now, Old An and the others were standing at the top of Fishing Slope.

Just moments ago, this place had been attacked by a horde of over ten thousand mutated lifeforms. If not for the fact that the battle-crazed Yan Shuangfei and her team had been stationed here today, the defenses might have been overrun.

Now, looking down from the slope, the entire path was carpeted with the corpses of mutated lifeforms. Some weren't completely dead yet, their bodies still twitching.

"It's not just Fishing Slope," said Hai Dayu, cracking his knuckles. "The Bone Passage, the Concave Exit—they've all been attacked. Just not as many as here. Each location had at least one level eight or higher leading the charge. The only place that's quiet so far is the Hive Maze."

"Who's in charge at each location?" Old An asked. Given his status, his words were practically commands in situations like this.

"White Skin's at the Concave Exit. Ah Kai's at the Bone Passage, with Sister Ru and He Qinchuan supporting. The Hive Maze hasn't seen any action yet, but with everywhere else in chaos, it's bound to be next. So Old Long's gone to hold the line there."

Hearing this, Old An's expression eased slightly.

These people might not always get along, but when real trouble came, they stood together.

Chapter 1554.5- Deep into the controlled region

"Why is this happening?"

Old An couldn't understand why the mutated lifeforms seemed to have gone mad. They had attacked before, but never in such numbers. Even in past instances where they had coordinated assaults on multiple passages, there had never been so many high-level leaders among them.

Humans treated this place as hunting grounds—but so did the mutated lifeforms.

They wouldn't recklessly destroy it.

"No idea," Yan Shuangfei shrugged. She wasn't interested in why the mutated lifeforms had come—she was happy as long as there was a fight. "But the level eights have pulled back. Maybe they just decided to come get a meal together?"

Standing at the top of the slope, Old An gazed across Blood Street. He could vaguely see movement through the scattered ruins and debris—more mutated lifeforms than usual. It should have been normal, but for some reason, he couldn't shake the feeling that this was the prelude to some unknown conspiracy against Black Dragon City's humans.

"Where's Mr. Ye?" Old An suddenly asked.

"Mr. Ye?" Hai Dayu and Yan Shuangfei exchanged glances. Neither had seen Ye Zhongming.

"Check with Ah Kai, White Skin, and Old Long," Old An said, a hint of urgency in his voice. The other two leaders didn't understand why, but they followed his orders, quickly contacting the other locations.

Three minutes later, the responses came in—no one had seen Ye Zhongming.

Old An was certain Ye Zhongming had headed in this direction.

"Find him—"

He only got two words out before stopping abruptly. Yan Shuangfei and Hai Dayu also turned their heads toward the east.

"Damn it, Old Long might not be able to hold out alone!" Old An snapped. He looked at Hai Dayu. "Tell White Skin at the Concave Exit to reinforce the Hive Maze. Ah Kai will take over the Concave Exit. Dayu, you go relieve Ah Kai at the Bone Passage!"

"Got it!" Hai Dayu knew there was no time for questions. He immediately relayed the orders and set off with his men toward the Bone Passage, the closest of the three locations.

"You," Old An called to one of his subordinates, "notify all major factions in Black Dragon City. Have them reinforce the nearest passage based on their camp locations. Those near the walls should organize patrols along the ruined ice walls. If they spot anything unusual, they must hold their ground and report back."

The man nodded and hurried off to deliver the city-wide mobilization order.

"Shuangfei, you hold here. I'll send more people your way soon. I'll take the position at the central command post. Contact me immediately if anything changes."

The young woman nodded, her entire body thrumming with pre-battle excitement.

Just moments ago, as eight-star evolved, they had all sensed two terrifyingly powerful auras suddenly appearing near the city's eastern side—close to the Hive Maze. That meant two level eight lifeforms were approaching, possibly even entering the area. Old Long was the strongest individual fighter in Black Dragon City, but even he would be in grave danger facing two Level 8s.

As Old An walked away, his mood was grim.

And yet, strangely, he also felt an odd sense of reassurance.

Because he knew there was someone extraordinary in Black Dragon City.

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Ye Zhongming stood beside a pile of ruins, four dead mutated lifeforms lying around him in grotesque poses.

He had already crossed Blood Street and entered the mutated lifeforms' territory.

"A Bullsnot Beast, a Disk-Rat, a Mutated Hound-Wasp, a Blackjaw Fiend..."

Frowning, Ye Zhongming studied the four corpses.

Xia Bai stood beside him, while Red Hair had stayed behind at their base to command the female guards. If needed, she could mentally communicate with Ye Zhongming and bring the troops to reinforce him.

"These creatures are at different levels of the food chain. They shouldn't be together unless..."

Ye Zhongming muttered to himself, sensing something was off.

The reason he had rushed out earlier wasn't just because of the scent of blood—he had also faintly detected a peculiar energy here.

He couldn't identify what it was, but it drew him in.

Now, the question was: should he follow that pull?

He'd have to venture deep into mutated lifeform territory if he did. And seeing these four creatures, which should have been natural enemies, coexisting, made him suspect that something had ordered them not to attack each other.

A creature capable of that likely possessed extremely high mental power, meaning it was undoubtedly strong. Disorganized mutated lifeforms were one thing, but organized ones? That was an entirely different threat. Even someone as powerful as Ye Zhongming had to be cautious.

After a moment's hesitation, he decided to investigate. He wouldn't be satisfied otherwise.

To be safe, he summoned his two ice birds. They had evolved to level eight and were formidable allies, especially in the frigid northern climate, where their abilities were enhanced. Together, they were as strong as Yellow Ball and Yangos.

At the same time, he instructed Red Hair to position the female guards near Blood Street, ready to provide support if needed.

Once Xia Bai had collected the demon crystals and materials from the corpses, Ye Zhongming led her toward the source of the strange energy he had sensed.

The mutated lifeforms' territory was a hellish landscape. The cold kept the stench bearable, but frozen excrement, carcasses, and secretions littered the ground, making the place deeply unpleasant.

Ruins of old buildings served as nests for all kinds of creatures, and the original streets were long gone, forcing them to pick their way through open spaces.

Rather than fighting their way through, Ye Zhongming and Xia Bai relied on stealth, avoiding the mutated lifeforms whenever possible.

The deeper they went, the more uneasy Ye Zhongming grew. He noticed that the mutated lifeforms were gathering in large numbers, moving rapidly toward the human-controlled zone. Soon, tens of thousands—maybe more—would converge near Blood Street.

According to earlier reports, large-scale attacks had been rare here for a long time. Both humans and mutated lifeforms had tacitly agreed to treat this place as mutual hunting grounds.

So why the sudden change?

Ye Zhongming and Xia Bai moved swiftly through the ruined city until they encountered a massive horde of zombies, so many that they couldn't bypass them.

From the shadows of a collapsed building, Xia Bai observed the horde and signaled five. Ye Zhongming nodded. There were at least fifty thousand zombies, and more were joining by the minute.

Among them, he spotted three level eight zombies.

None of them were psychic types, meaning they weren't the ones giving orders to the other mutated lifeforms.

Were they, too, obeying something else?

What kind of existence could command three level eight zombies?

A bad feeling settled in Ye Zhongming's gut. He gestured to Xia Bai to retreat while mentally instructing the ice birds, now circling high above, to stay alert.

But just as they turned to leave—

A terrifying wave of energy engulfed them.

The King of Cloud Peak's face paled.

Chapter 1555: Waiting for helpers

Ye Zhongming stopped. Xia Bai took a step forward and stood by his side. Her wings extended from behind, lifting her entire body about one meter off the ground.

Two ice birds circled above the two, emitting waves of cold air.

Both human and beasts looked ahead.

There had only been a pile of ruins there.

A few seconds later, a giant snow-white wolf slowly climbed to the top of the ruins, staring down at the four lives opposite it.

This mutated wolf was enormous, standing over three meters tall with thick limbs. Its hard black claws rested casually on the ruins, easily piercing the thick ice layer.

Its tail was thick and swung behind it.

If not for the demon crystal on its forehead, aside from its massive size, it would be no different from a tundra wolf before mutation.

But it was precisely that demon crystal on its forehead that made Ye Zhongming, the number one in the national rankings, tense up, ready to defend at any moment.

That demon crystal was silver.

A perfect match for its body color.

Level nine!

A level nine mutated wolf!

Ye Zhongming knew who it was—it must be the Ice Plains Snow Wolf King, ranked sixth on the national mutated lifeform leaderboard.

It had actually come to Black Dragon City!

No wonder there had been disturbances here—this was undoubtedly the Snow Wolf King's doing.

Ye Zhongming immediately guessed the purpose of this mutated lifeform.

At its current level, the Snow Wolf King could indeed force the mutated lifeforms here to obey it. But to say it was interested in the evolved here wasn't entirely accurate. While eating an eight-star evolved might still be somewhat beneficial, those of lower levels wouldn't even fill the gaps between its teeth.

However, killing an eight-star evolved was no easy task. Most lived in heavily fortified camps at that level, usually surrounded by large guard teams. Even if killed, the energy gained might not offset the expenditure. Moreover, human eight-star evolved were elites among elites, each with one or two life-saving tricks. Even a level nine lifeform couldn't guarantee catching an eight-star evolved who was determined to escape.

For level nine lifeforms, absorbing energy from the world and consuming special items were what truly allowed them to continue evolving.

Thus, level nine lifeforms generally had little interest in attacking human cities—unless they urgently needed energy.

In Ye Zhongming's past life, the few instances of level nine lifeforms massacring cities were either because humans had provoked them or because the level nine lifeforms were injured and needed energy to recover.

These level nine lifeforms were surely the same.

So why was this Snow Wolf King driving mutated lifeforms to attack the city, or at least to disrupt Black Dragon City? Its goal definitely wasn't to eat one or two eight-star evolved humans—it was interested in the energy source inside the city's four dragon-head structures.

As for whether it could eat eight-star evolved, those were just after-meal "desserts."

Ye Zhongming realized he might be one such dessert that had stumbled in.

The Snow Wolf King sat its massive body atop the ruins, its wolf eyes shifting between Ye Zhongming, Xia Bai, and the pair of ice birds, as if deciding which target to attack first.

It made no move, and Ye Zhongming didn't respond either, resulting in a brief standoff.

"Human, you're different," the Snow Wolf King suddenly lowered its body as if tired, then spoke in human language.

Ye Zhongming wasn't surprised. One hallmark of level nine lifeforms was understanding human language. While not all level nines did, most could.

"Not panicking? Or not kneeling to beg for mercy?"

Ye Zhongming smiled.

The man and wolf spoke while keeping their eyes locked on each other. It was clear that given any opportunity, neither would hesitate to strike.

When the Snow Wolf King said Ye Zhongming was different, was it being polite? No—it simply found Ye Zhongming difficult to deal with, or more precisely, taking on four level eight lifeforms at once was troublesome.

Level nine lifeforms were indeed extraordinary, but not invincible—otherwise, humans wouldn't have been able to hunt them down through teamwork.

Facing someone like Ye Zhongming, whose true strength hovered between level eight and nine, plus three powerful allies, even the Snow Wolf King had to be cautious.

"You carry something that interests me greatly," the Snow Wolf King stood up, its eyes gloomy as it stared at Ye Zhongming. "Submit to me, and you may continue living."

Ye Zhongming smiled again.

"You know, even the Armor King back in the day didn't dare speak to me like this," Ye Zhongming's smile faded as he spoke with disdain. "For a level nine lifeform, you're quite pathetic—needing to wait for backup to deal with me."

Hearing the name "Armor King," the Snow Wolf King visibly paused, its eyes showing hesitation. But by then, four level eight snow wolves had appeared beside it and from two other directions, forming a semi-encirclement around Ye Zhongming's group.

"You're waiting for backup? So am I," Ye Zhongming summoned both Wind and Thunder and the Undead Sand Moon Blade.

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At the Concave Exit, Ah Kai coldly watched the group of women opposite him, his forehead deeply furrowed.

These women had appeared here silently. They ignored questions about their purpose and refused to leave when told. Everyone knew they were bodyguards of that Mr. Ye, so no one dared lose their temper. But standing at the edge of the Concave Exit not only prevented defensive personnel from taking position but also disrupted the entire defense system. What if mutated lifeforms attacked now?

Yet no matter what was said, the women ignored them, simply staring toward Blood Street as if waiting for something.

Another key reason was that these women's battle beasts were all high-level—some even at level seven, most at level six, with only a few at levels four or five that clearly had special support abilities.

A force like this wasn't something even Ah Kai dared provoke lightly.

As the leader of Night Kill, Ah Kai was cold by nature and poor with words. But now that he was on rotation here, this was his defensive zone. If problems arose, he'd be held responsible.

After waiting a while with no sign of the women leaving, he approached their leader and said, "You can't do this. I know you're Mr. Ye's people, but you must follow Black Dragon City's rules. This is a defensive zone against mutated lifeforms—we can't afford negligence. Whatever your business is, this takes priority."

The leading woman acted as if she hadn't heard, still staring toward Blood Street.

"You—"

A Kai grew angry and was about to threaten her when he noticed her expression suddenly change. Then, she tore off the thick fur coat covering her, revealing red form-fitting battle armor and a head of blood-red hair.

Ah Kai, whose own hair was red due to his bloodline, froze at the sight.

Night Kill members and other defenders at the Concave Exit gasped as well.

Following their leader's example, hundreds of women behind her shed their animal hide clothing, revealing battle armor and weapons! An overwhelming aura erupted from them!

"My god, what am I seeing?!"

"Is that... blue-grade equipment?"

"All blue-grade! My god!"

"And gold-grade! Those few were holding gold-grade weapons! How... how is this possible? So many?"

"Their aura... what level do you think they are?"

"That leader... the leader..."

Amidst the murmurs, the women leaped straight off the city wall at the Concave Exit.

Chapter 1555.5- Waiting for helpers

"They're suicidal!"

That was many people's first thought. The Concave Exit was nearly fifty meters high, with walls too smooth for climbing. Even evolved humans would be severely injured from such a fall without ropes. Yet these women merely tapped lightly against the wall mid-descent before landing gracefully—some even slammed directly into the ground in crouches, completely unharmed.

Ah Kai watched below in shock. At his evolution level, he could survive such a jump too—but if these women could as well, didn't that mean...

Also, that leader's red hair...

Also, this squad's all-blue equipment, seemingly all seven-star evolved, entirely female...

Also, their leader's surname was Ye...

Only three words filled Ah Kai's mind now:

Female Guards, Cloud Peak, Ye Zhongming! “

.....

On Black Dragon City's opposite side, the tension from the city center had heightened defenses here, too. Many faction elites had been ordered onto the walls as reinforcements, just in case.

Elder An and other leaders feared problems arising here as well.

The icy plains held far more mutated lifeforms than the city—they just weren't concentrated.

Defending here were secondary leaders like Jiang Dabao, mostly seven-star evolved. Not many, but four or five were present.

With the support of the four dragon-head structures, they could handle emergencies.

One leader passed around cigarettes as the group smoked on the walls.

Such was the hierarchy among evolved—regardless of pre-apocalypse backgrounds, those with lower evolution levels now obeyed. While others patrolled the windy walls, the strongest smoked sheltered in watchtowers.

Their casual chat was interrupted by noise outside. Not daring to delay on such a day, they dropped their cigarettes and ran out.

They met messengers reporting a fast-approaching target.

Gathering at the wall's edge, they saw a golden object streaking toward them—so fast it was nearly a blur.

"Prepare to fire once it's in range!" the seven-star leaders immediately ordered. "Power up the dragon-heads! First level readiness!"

The speed alone marked this as an extremely powerful mutated lifeform.

But as Jiang Dabao's group prepared, they suddenly sensed something. Looking up, they saw two shadows descending rapidly toward Black Dragon City.

"Airborne enemies! Prepare defenses!"

The seven-star leaders broke out in cold sweat—as the flying figures neared, they appeared to be... dragon-like creatures? One a fire dragon, the other... an undead dragonfish?

Two of the four dragon-head structures slowly tilted upward under control, targeting the sky.

"Make way for this dragon lord! I am Yangos, mightiest of Cloud Peak's dragons—all of you, kneel!"

The deafening roar shook the city walls, stunning everyone.

They didn't recognize this dragon, but they'd heard of it. Anyone who'd seen the national rankings knew of Cloud Peak's Yangos.

The national ranked #3 battle beast!

"That's a dog!"

Someone identified the golden blur now just hundreds of meters away—a gigantic dog!

"It's Yellow Ball!"

"It really is Cloud Peak."

The impending attack halted immediately. Black Dragon City's residents weren't fools—attacking these three battle beasts today meant facing Cloud Peak's retaliation tomorrow. Could they withstand that? The answer was obvious.

Yangos roared again, pleased with the humans' reaction. It led the charge over the walls into the city, the undead fish-dragon close behind. Yellow Ball wasn't far either—treating the towering wall as flat ground, it leaped halfway up, scaled the rest in bursts, then jumped down the other side without a glance back.

Jiang Dabao and the others exchanged bewildered looks. They didn't know why Cloud Peak's famous battle beasts had come, but connecting this with the recent buzz around that Mr. Ye in the city... a realization dawned.

The nation's #1 might have arrived in Black Dragon City.

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"You're waiting for backup? So am I!"

As Ye Zhongming spoke, the frozen ground behind them suddenly split open. A gigantic, rabbit-eared earthworm emerged, its body like half a skyscraper, radiating immense pressure. Even facing a level nine lifeform, it didn't retreat, snarling defiantly at the Snow Wolf King.

"Clumsy thing."

The Snow Wolf King scoffed.

But it soon shut up—Yangos's silhouette had appeared in the distant sky, flying unimpeded straight toward them.

"Oh? A level nine? Listen here, Little Ye—after we kill it, I want at least two hind legs!"

The wicked dragon was utterly arrogant now. Its master wasn't running—that meant confidence in killing this big gray... no, big white wolf! So it had to perform well. Besides, even if they lost, Yangos could fly—this oversized wolf could chase till exhaustion and never catch it.

"And more." Ye Zhongming smiled, pointing behind.

From just a few hundred meters away, a figure rose into view—an undead creature carrying a red-haired woman. The undead fish-dragon had arrived with its partner.

Just like that, Ye Zhongming's side now had eight level eight lifeforms!