

## **Apocalypse 1611**

### Chapter 1611: Earth King Wheel open

"Why isn't it enough?!"

Alamos reacted like a cat whose tail had been stepped on.

In his view, White Cave Crystals were among the most precious resources, if not the most precious. Equipment and potions were valuable, but they couldn't compare to White Cave Crystals—especially those below gold and purple grade.

He believed this deal heavily favored Ye Zhongming.

Ye Zhongming shrugged.

"There's no pricing bureau here. You're the one asking for my help, so I set the terms. If we were friends, maybe we could negotiate. But we're not."

Alamos was left speechless.

He was the one who had sought out Ye Zhongming for this trade. The leverage wasn't his.

White Cave Crystals might be as miraculous as he claimed, but Ye Zhongming wasn't desperate for them. This was a seller's market—the final price was up to the seller.

Of course, Alamos could refuse outright. With his gene-enhanced forces, Ye Zhongming wouldn't dare attack him.

But... he couldn't walk away.

He knew his own situation too well. He needed those equipment and potions to build a high-level evolved army.

Because... he had nowhere left to go.

After crossing the Bering Strait, Alamos had gone to a pre-established outpost just over 70 kilometers east of the strait.

But when he arrived, he found only corpses—nothing intact, not even complete skeletons.

From the evidence, the attack had happened at least two months prior.

In the apocalypse, such things weren't uncommon. A single level-eight lifeform or a mid-tier faction could easily wipe out a small outpost of fewer than a hundred people.

But then he found a message left by a loyal subordinate.

It detailed betrayal within his organization. His headquarters, all branch bases—everything he had painstakingly built—had been attacked and seized. His labs, his researchers, his research—all stolen.

For a man who once commanded power across this land, this was unacceptable.

Yet compared to when he'd left, every faction had grown stronger. Meanwhile, his own progress had stalled—first with the setback at Thousand Beast Villa, then struggles across Eastern Europe and West Asia. If not for the White Cave Crystals and the gene-enhanced forces they enabled, he might not have even made it home.

He had no confidence in retaking what had been stolen from him.

So, while strategizing, he thought of Ye Zhongming.

Back in China, he had thoroughly studied this man who had handed him defeat. He knew more about Cloud Peak than most Chinese factions did.

In his desperation, Alamos saw only one viable path: trade with Cloud Peak.

It was the fastest way to reclaim what he'd lost.

So he couldn't afford to storm off in anger.

"Let's be honest—I'm in a hurry to assemble a combat force. The gene-enhanced soldiers with White Cave Crystals are my core. I can't give you more of them, but I can offer other things."

Ye Zhongming nodded. "Let's hear it."

Suppressing his frustration at Ye Zhongming's indifferent tone, Alamos considered, then pulled something from his spatial storage.

"This is something I obtained from the Mediterranean coast—the 'Angry Sea Platform.'"

In his hand was a transparent case containing what looked like a miniature oil rig, glowing faintly blue.

"When placed in the ocean, it expands into a small platform about ten meters tall and twenty meters in diameter. It has multiple functions—hunting harpoons, luring sonar waves, reinforced defenses. Best of all, it's modifiable. You can install weapons or equipment to adapt it for different uses."

Ye Zhongming's interest flickered. This could be useful for coastal bases.

Xiao Peng's operations, though thriving, still relied heavily on support from the main base. Tools for oceanic exploration were scarce.

The Angry Sea Platform would be a valuable addition.

Seeing Ye Zhongming's silent nod, Alamos continued, pulling out more items.

"I know you're a skilled craftsman. These materials might interest you."

Alamos clearly valued these less than the platform, but he hoped they'd appeal more to Ye Zhongming.

And they did. The materials weren't top-tier, but they averaged around level seven—nothing to scoff at.

Ye Zhongming nodded again but remained silent. The message was clear: Still not enough.

"Don't push it."

"Should I repeat myself?"

Alamos took a deep breath, forcing calm. He produced a few more items, but Ye Zhongming rejected them outright.

Finally, after a long hesitation, Alamos pulled out...

A level-nine demon crystal.

"You can have this. But the hundred gene-enhanced soldiers drops to fifty."

Before Ye Zhongming could respond, he added, "We're both striving for nine-star evolution. You know how valuable this is."

Ye Zhongming studied the crystal, then agreed.

Seven days later, the deal was done.

Alamos left with enough equipment and potions to arm five thousand men, heading in a different direction. Before departing, his gaze lingered on Ye Zhongming, filled with envy.

He never imagined a craftsman could be this formidable.

Producing five thousand sets of equipment—including a purple-grade piece—in just seven days? That wasn't just skill. That was borderline supernatural.

Perhaps the only thing limiting this man was the scarcity of high-tier materials.

Thinking of the top-grade resources he'd handed over—and the equivalent-value high-level magic crystals when materials ran short—Alamos felt his heart bleed.

But at least he had what he needed. Now, all that remained was recruiting an army.

Ye Zhongming watched Alamos's group vanish into the snowstorm, then turned his gaze elsewhere.

After nearly ten days of travel, their destination was finally within reach.

But just as Cloud Peak's forces advanced the final few dozen kilometers, an explosion of light erupted from the mountain where the Mountain King Wheel awaited.

As dusk fell, the radiance lit up the horizon like a second sun—a beacon to all approaching evolved.

The Mountain King Wheel's special space had opened.

Chapter 1612: Factions gathering

"Hey Jack, your big moose is becoming as ordinary as your name."

A voice made Jack, who was feeding his war beast, turn his head with a frown. He saw Adron swaying toward him, his dreadlocks bouncing, followed by a tall, snow-white, mutated moose that strutted proudly through the camp just like its owner.

"You shameless bastard, get the hell away from me!"

Jack cursed and continued feeding his mount. Moose, being one of the few herbivorous lifeforms left in the apocalypse, were picky eaters—only mutated plants above level four could satisfy them.

What Jack held in his hand was a mutated plant called Black Fern Sedge. This particular one was level four; its demon crystal had already been extracted, leaving about five pounds of leaves and stems.

It might seem like a lot, but for a mutated moose weighing over a ton—sometimes close to two—it was barely a drop in the bucket.

Yes, Jack's mutated moose was starving.

In North America, in Alaska, this wasn't unusual.

This place was different from the other continents. There were large, disciplined, and powerful organizations here, but there was also a deeply ingrained culture—a mercenary culture.

Mercenary groups and solo mercenaries further divided this culture into two branches.

Perhaps it was the locals' inherent love for freedom that made them resistant to authority and orders.

Here, freedom might truly rank higher than love—or even life itself.

The prevalence of mercenary culture had fostered a habitual employer-employee dynamic between people and organizations. When factions had tasks, they'd hire mercenaries to assist or simply post rewards for mercenaries to complete independently.

Once something became a custom, it persisted until it was no longer viable.

In North America, the mercenary system hadn't yet reached its end. Despite its flaws, it remained a mainstream phenomenon. But the law of survival of the fittest still applied.

Jack was someone who felt this deeply.

He had once been a mercenary fighter. Since he hated negotiating with clients, the group's fixed salary had suited him just fine.

But in an era where strength ruled all, his slow evolution on a steady paycheck became a liability.

After a few missions where he suspected he was being used as cannon fodder, Jack quit in anger and became a freelance mercenary. To land more jobs, he spent his savings on a level-three mutated moose, becoming a famous Moose Cavalryman in Alaska.

But freelancing meant finding his own jobs and haggling with employers—neither of which were Jack's strengths. Often, for equally dangerous missions, his pay was lower than others'. Over time, he earned even less than he had in the mercenary group.

If it were just him, he might've managed. But now he had a mutated moose to feed. As a five-star evolved, Jack often skipped meals to afford high-quality feed for his battle beast.

The problem was twofold:

In the northern wilderness, mutated plants were scarce, and moose were picky, making feed exorbitantly expensive.

The damned thing ate so much. The daily food bill was crushing. Forget saving for a six-star evolution potion—some days, he could barely afford meals for himself and his moose.

Mutated moose had a unique trait: when underfed, they didn't weaken to uselessness. Instead, they downgraded, losing strength but remaining functional.

Jack's moose had once reached level four—until malnutrition forced it back to level three.

Hence, Adron's taunt: "Your moose is as ordinary as your name."

The two had once been comrades in the same mercenary group, with Adron as Jack's squad leader. Those "cannon fodder" assignments? Adron was almost certainly involved.

Naturally, they weren't on friendly terms.

This time, a major faction had issued a lucrative call for mercenaries in Alaska. No one knew the exact mission, only that it was dangerous.

But the pay was three times the usual rate. They weren't just hiring groups—they wanted freelance mercenaries above four stars. That was how Jack and Adron ended up in the same camp.

"Jack, you're skilled, and you're still a Moose Cavalryman. Want to come back? I could—"

Adron's words were cut off as a blinding light erupted behind him, forcing everyone in the camp to shield their eyes. When the glare dimmed, all heads turned toward the source.

Seconds later, a shout echoed through the camp:

"Assemble! Assemble! We move out in thirty minutes—destination, Denali Mountain!"

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"How many did you catch?"

A muscular Black woman plopped down beside a gray-haired white woman, their stark contrast in appearance offset by equally striking, sharp features.

"Not bad."

The gray-haired woman gestured to the ground beside her, where four grotesque fish—each frozen solid—were impaled on metal spikes. Their razor-sharp teeth were still bared in death.

"You got a Canvas Carp too? We're eating well tonight."

Canvas Carp meat was tender. Sliced into two-millimeter strips and seared for seconds on a hot griddle, then sprinkled with salt and crushed chili, it was unforgettable.

"That's barely enough for you alone."

They both laughed, but the mirth faded quickly.

"Ella... are you sure about this intel? We can't afford another failure."

The Black woman's voice was low, heavy.

The gray-haired woman's fishing rod, glowing faintly green, twitched but steadied. Ripples spread across the hole in the icy lake.

"I spent two days and nights with that disgusting bastard for this info. If it's fake, he'll regret it."

She turned to her companion. "You'll back me up, right, Jiana?"

The Black woman laughed and slung an arm around her. "Damn right. We'll cut something off him— show him what the Amazon Camp is made of!"

Chapter 1613: Factions gathering (2)

"adkaehnnga, wongn, aeangnad, aa, eaonedng ae aakeng....."

The melodious music drifted throughout the grand hall, where a solitary figure moved back and forth like a wandering ghost.

Sometimes he would close his eyes and embrace emptiness, sometimes spin in a continuous motion, and sometimes throw back his head in silent song, his ghostly eyes closed as he enjoyed his solitary isolation.

In this vast, enormous hall stood many machines of various forms, with life present in only one being - himself.

"Ah, Angie, how are you? Do your joints still hurt? I patched you up with Hurricane Gilding last time, you should be better now."

"Oh, it was just a bit too expensive. Be good now, or I won't treat you so well anymore."

"Hmm, Park Dong-jung? What's wrong? Why are you bent over? Is the spear too heavy? Don't worry, hold on a little longer, it'll be fine soon."

"Hi, Great Emperor, hello there. Still so tall, I see? Let me check... oh dear, your teeth are a bit rusty. I should give you some maintenance, yes, some maintenance. But no time this round, maybe next time."

"Big Leopard, Big Leopard, you're the best. I love your metal armor the most - full of power and beauty. How about I choose you as my mount?"

"Oh, right, I almost forgot you, Little Wild. You're my real mount, I'm just a bit tired of you. I feel like some close-quarters combat this time, what do you say?"

The man kept talking to these machines throughout the music. Strangely, whenever he spoke to a machine, lights would activate on its body as if responding.

Thus, the man continued - talking to machines, dancing by himself, playing obscure songs in unknown languages.

Moments later, something lit up on a crystal screen at the hall's center. The man slowly walked over and saw a mountain peak glowing on the display.

He chuckled, patting the head of a mechanical rabbit that only reached his knees.

"Ah, it's beginning!"

His face broke into a long-awaited smile.

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In a dense forest, several kilometers of vegetation had been completely cleared.

In Alaska's climate, few plants could survive naturally, making such deforestation highly unusual.

In this clearing, a moderately sized but extremely sturdy camp had been erected at some unknown time.

The camp buzzed with activity as people drank and feasted. Several massive bonfires roasted mutated creatures. Being farther from the Pole than the Bering Strait, the winds were milder here, allowing the aroma of alcohol to permeate the camp.

In this post-apocalyptic era where everyone was an evolved, alcohol could no longer intoxicate.

Around the central bonfire sat six or seven individuals. One large man in white fur gulped down a 700ml bottle of liquor in one go before tossing it behind him, where dozens of empty bottles already lay.

"Hey Dru, trying to drink yourself to death? We came here with a purpose, not for your binge drinking," said a green-eyed man disapprovingly, his dagger deftly slicing uniform pieces of meat from a mutated creature's leg. He coated a piece in red pepper and popped it in his mouth.

"I can't get drunk," the large man grunted in reply.

Though evolveds couldn't get drunk now, excessive drinking in short periods could still cause dizziness and slowed reactions. The duration varied by individual - those with higher evolution levels recovered faster.

"Governor gathered us here. You got some problem with that?" asked an extremely thin man with a third eye on his forehead - clearly an ocular-type evolved. As he spoke, his central eye occasionally opened, revealing a ghastly white pupil.

"Shut up, damn thief! Dirty liar! Disgusting beggar! You Gypsy son of a (whore)!" Dru roared, hurling a bottle with such force that it whistled through the air. Yet when it reached the three-eyed man, it suddenly stopped, twisted unnaturally, then vanished into nothingness.

After nullifying the attack, the Gypsy said coldly, "You want to die?"

Just as conflict seemed imminent, both suddenly fell silent.

A figure was emerging from a nearby tent, lifting the flap. Through the opening, the group glimpsed several bizarrely shaped female corpses inside.

When the flap fell back, the mountainous figure blocked both the interior view and the escaping blood scent.

"No good. Too low-level. Broke during play. I still prefer Ella," the figure said.

The bonfire group all stood to greet him.

"Governor!"

Governor nodded, walking with difficulty due to his immense obesity.

Clad only in a loincloth like a sumo wrestler, but far more massive. His sagging flesh hung grotesquely from torso and limbs, creating a nauseating visual effect.

Yet none dared underestimate him - this wasn't ordinary fat, but a result of his unique job and bloodline. He was universally recognized as one of North America's most powerful beings.

Governor Spade.

"Sit, sit," Spade rumbled, his landing shaking the entire camp as he took a seat. Someone immediately offered him the choicest cut of meat.

As he ate, Spade's nearly invisible small eyes scanned those involved in the earlier conflict. He smiled: "No need for hostility, friends. We're all here for this special roulette space. We've got plenty competition - like the Women Camp, those troublesome females. And that Mechanical Prodigy will surely come too. Heard there are people from other continents, too, like those yellow monkeys from Asia. So we must stay united."

The group listened in silence.

"While the Mountain Crown will be mine, the roulette space holds other excellent rewards. You won't leave empty-handed, plus the payments I promised. All good stuff, no? So let's keep things civil."

Suddenly, his expression turned as cold as his voice:

"Otherwise, I won't hesitate to eat you all."

The others shivered involuntarily. Governor's cannibalism was well-known.

Governor pulled a watch from his loincloth, checked it, then looked toward the distant mountain, murmuring: "It's time."

The next instant, the mountain erupted in brilliant light!

Chapter 1614: Three new pieces of equipment

Hoo~

Ye Zhongming awoke from his brief slumber, his previous exhaustion completely gone.

Ever since he saw the glow on Denali's peak two days ago, the Cloud Peak team had been advancing rapidly. But when they reached the mountain's base, they found the entire peak enveloped by a mysterious force—no matter what method they tried, they couldn't enter.

The Cloud Peak team had no choice but to set up camp where they were.

With no way of knowing when this place would open, Ye Zhongming had made some preparations.

The first was crafting equipment using materials gathered along the way, including some obtained from Alamos.

Though he had promised Alamos high-level gear, Ye Zhongming naturally kept a portion of the materials for himself. In this regard, he never hesitated or let morality restrain him.

Being called greedy and unscrupulous was better than being called a fool.

Among these materials were some of the highest-grade—materials from Level 9 lifeforms.

There were materials from the Bear King, the Snow Wolf King, some obtained from Alamos, and others acquired from the Blue Secret Realm.

If time had permitted, Ye Zhongming would have carefully studied the properties of these materials, planned the equipment he wanted to craft, and considered various blueprints and contingency measures in case of mishaps during the forging process.

After all, these materials were extremely rare and precious—once lost, they could never be recovered.

But the current situation made Ye Zhongming feel a sense of urgency.

After Denali's peak lit up, dozens of factions arrived at the mountain's base within just a few hours.

Any organization capable of obtaining information about the Mountain Crown Wheel was naturally not weak—even the weakest among them would rank within the top fifty in the national region.

After personally scouting the area, Ye Zhongming even spotted a few teams that demanded his full attention.

Gyanendra, the Motley Crusaders, and the Cannibal Chain were already known to him, but apart from them, he also discovered other factions that warranted caution.

The first was a massive war group that appeared loosely organized, but whose members all seemed exceptionally fierce. What caught Ye Zhongming's eye was that this group had a cavalry unit numbering over ten thousand, mounted on four-legged creatures with four massive, blade-like horns. Each stood several meters tall, and though their evolutionary levels varied, Ye Zhongming, who commanded his own cavalry, knew just how terrifying a force like this could be once they charged.

If caught in their path, evolved who lost their mobility would be left helpless.

The other evolved in this group were also highly leveled.

The second faction that drew Ye Zhongming's attention was an all-female team, much like the Female Guards. Such groups were exceedingly rare in the apocalypse.

Ye Zhongming didn't know why these women had banded together to form such a team. Still, after observing them for over ten minutes, he noticed that this faction—numbering around four thousand and referred to as the "Women Camp"—didn't seem opposed to interacting with other groups. Though their numbers weren't the largest, their camp was the liveliest among all the surrounding factions.

Many people inside were trading and engaging in... activities that Ye Zhongming couldn't quite comprehend.

This faction left him somewhat puzzled.

The third team also appeared to be a coalition, but this one was eerily silent and gloomy. Whenever their leader—a mountainously obese man—appeared, the entire group would fall into complete silence.

Even from a distance, Ye Zhongming could sense extreme danger emanating from this massive figure.

He was also the only one who reacted to Ye Zhongming's scouting, though he couldn't pinpoint his location.

The last faction was one that Ye Zhongming couldn't even begin to understand—a group composed entirely of metallic lifeforms. He saw no humans among them, yet over ten thousand mechanical beings stood silently at the mountain's base, most half-buried in snow. This tide of metal would immediately swallow any living creature that ventured too close.

Ye Zhongming spent the longest time observing this group, racking his brain for any information from his past or present life that could explain them, but nothing came to mind.

One thing was certain: these mechanical beings couldn't have come here on their own. They had to be controlled by an evolved—one who undoubtedly possessed an extremely powerful bloodline or skill in

this regard. And that person would inevitably become a formidable opponent in the battle for the Mountain King Wheel.

It was precisely because of these powerful factions that Ye Zhongming chose to craft equipment while waiting for the mountain to open. It was rushed, but he believed the risk was worth it.

Success and failure sometimes went hand in hand—other times, it all came down to luck.

This time, Ye Zhongming's luck wasn't exactly good, but it wasn't bad either.

He used up nearly all of his Level 9 materials to craft three pieces of equipment that would be useful to him.

None of them were large, but Ye Zhongming felt they were worth it.

On the far left was a box of bullets.

There weren't many—only five. But the colors shimmering on them would send a shiver down the spine of anyone who saw them.

Four gold... and one purple.

These five bullets were called the "Linked-Heart Five Rounds."

They were based on a bullet blueprint.

Ye Zhongming had never crafted them before because the required materials were too precious and the success rate too low. For something so extravagant—where increasing the success rate meant using even rarer materials—the King of Cloud Peak had always been hesitant.

They were simply too luxurious. Cloud Peak already had micro-engraved bullets, which offered better cost-effectiveness.

But this time, Ye Zhongming had no choice. He crafted these immensely powerful one-time-use rounds, which, when paired with the Harvester Mimic Shooter, would deliver devastating force. Even a Level 9 lifeform would be in mortal danger if struck by the strongest bullet.

In the middle was an accessory of gold grade.

Previously, Ye Zhongming hadn't used his "Mental Recovery Necklace" much because his mental energy reserves were vast, and the Soul Refining Technique gave him top-tier natural recovery.

But in recent battles against Level 9 lifeforms, he had frequently relied on high-consumption equipment and skills—such as the "Soul Shattering Bone Staff" or "Cloud Slice." This made him realize just how crucial mental energy was in combat.

With his stock of mental recovery potions running low, this upgraded gold-grade necklace would effectively solve that problem.

On the far right was a small round shield.

In the past, Ye Zhongming would have scoffed at defensive gear. But this time was different. Not only were there unknown dangers waiting for him within the Mountain King Wheel's mystical space, but the surrounding competitors were also formidable. This arm-mounted shield would grant him greater flexibility and initiative in battle.

And there was one more reason he had full confidence in this shield.

It was purple-grade.

Chapter 1615: Growing flesh

Even though Ye Zhongming is now a top-tier craftsman, creating purple-grade equipment was far from easy. Even crafting gold-grade items came with a high failure rate, and for purple-grade items, the failure rate exceeded 70% even when using the highest-grade materials.

But when making this round shield, he succeeded on the first try—an absolute stroke of luck.

Perhaps all his bad luck had been exhausted when crafting that purple-grade equipment for Alamos.

Fastening the shield to his arm, Ye Zhongming stepped out of the tent. The moment he exited, he saw the undead dragon-fish sprawled lazily on the ground.

As an undead creature, it knew no fatigue and needed no rest. As long as its soul energy remained sufficient, it was a perpetual motion machine.

Especially after inheriting the teachings of the Nine-Winged Crow, this behemoth's strength had increased significantly, its overall power now approaching Level 9.

Over the past two days, aside from scouting the surrounding factions, Ye Zhongming had spent most of his time crafting equipment. But there was one other task—monitoring and observing the undead dragon-fish.

Because this creature was undergoing a transformation that no one fully understood.

The cause could be traced back to when Ye Zhongming obtained the White Cave Crystals.

After acquiring two hundred White Cave Crystals from Alamos, the undead dragon-fish had shown an intense interest in them.

Previously, this undead creature had only been drawn to soul-related items, dismissing everything else.

Ye Zhongming was surprised but hesitant to act rashly.

After all, White Cave Crystals were meant for gene-enhanced lifeforms. Both Alamos and Ye Zhongming knew how precious each one was. He had planned to take them all back to Liu Zhenghong, believing that "Sister Red" could use them to create a batch of truly perfect gene warriors.

But now that an undead creature was drawn to them, Ye Zhongming wasn't sure what to do. If giving them to it led to unforeseen consequences, the loss would outweigh the gain.

In the end, it was Red Hair who intervened. After communicating with Ye Zhongming, she conveyed that the undead dragon-fish believed the White Cave Crystals would greatly benefit it and was willing to take the risk. Only then did the King of Cloud Peak decide to let it use them.

As for how to use them, Ye Zhongming could only rely on Red Hair—through her connection with the undead dragon-fish—to let it decide for itself.

After several hours of work, only seventy of the original two hundred White Cave Crystals remained in Ye Zhongming's hands.

He found this both amusing and frustrating.

If Alamos hadn't lied, then these crystals, when used on gene warriors, offered immense developmental potential. With Cloud Peak's current strength, two hundred gene warriors equipped with White Cave Crystals could gradually evolve, ensuring at least 80% would survive to reach Level 8 strength, meaning around 150 to 160 high-tier gene warriors could be guaranteed.

But now, the undead dragon-fish had consumed the majority, leaving only seventy.

Based on the original plan, seventy White Cave Crystals would yield just over fifty high-tier gene warriors—a full hundred fewer than with two hundred crystals. Whether the undead dragon-fish's enhancement from the crystals could match the strength of a hundred gene warriors was anyone's guess. Ye Zhongming wasn't sure whether to feel pleased or disappointed.

But since the decision had been made, he refused to regret it. Now, his full attention was fixed on what the undead dragon-fish would become.

Since everything was proceeding according to the creature's own will, all Ye Zhongming and Red Hair could do was embed the White Cave Crystals into its body—over a hundred crystals methodically placed from head to tail across its massive frame.

The rest was up to the undead dragon-fish itself.

Though Cloud Peak's numbers weren't large, creatures like the undead dragon-fish and Yangos were enormous, so their camp sprawled wide. The undead dragon-fish lay in front of Ye Zhongming's tent for easy observation.

After circling the massive creature, Ye Zhongming noticed several striking changes.

First, the undead fish-dragon's bones were turning black.

Previously, its bones had been a pale reddish-white, with vibrant red or black patterns appearing during attacks—a trait linked to its innate attributes and skills.

But now, the bones were entirely black, devoid of any patterns. Instead, they gleamed with an oily sheen, and when struck, they no longer sounded like bone but more like metal.

Their hardness had undoubtedly increased.

Second, the undead dragon-fish's necrotic aura had almost completely vanished.

Even as a top-tier undead creature, it had always carried that unmistakable scent of death—something that set it apart from living beings. Any sufficiently high-level evolution level could identify its nature just by sensing it.

But after the "modification" from the White Cave Crystals, this aura had disappeared. Even Ye Zhongming, with his eyes closed, could no longer detect any trace of undeath from it.

Finally, the most dramatic change: the undead dragon-fish... was growing flesh.

This transformation left the entire Cloudtop team in stunned amazement.

It meant the undead fish-dragon was breaking free from the category of undead and becoming a true living creature.

This was nothing short of miraculous—a literal resurrection from death.

Ye Zhongming and the Cloud Peak members gathered around the undead dragon-fish, observing the White Cave Crystals now encased in thick, pale-red membranes within its body. Networks of vein-like structures extended from them, forming what resembled a vascular system. No one could help but marvel at the sight.

The undead dragon-fish wasn't unconscious, just unusually lethargic. When it saw Ye Zhongming, it even rolled over slightly, making everyone nervous that the newly grown structures might detach.

"It looks like this will still take a while," Ye Zhongming thought, slightly concerned. With the Mountain King wheel's space potentially opening at any moment, if the undead dragon-fish remained in this state, it would be effectively combat-useless. They'd have to leave people behind to guard it, further splitting their already limited numbers.

"Boss."

Xiao Min approached, casting a curious glance at the colossal creature beside her before reporting, "The Cannibal Chain people are here again."

Ye Zhongming nodded, unsurprised. Even if they hadn't come, he had planned to seek them out for talks.

Ordering some hides to be draped over the undead fish-dragon—he didn't want others discovering Cloud Peak's current "weakness"—he headed toward the front of the camp.

But after only a few steps, he suddenly turned. A few seconds later, commotion erupted from both sides of the camp.