

Apocalypse 1636

Chapter 1636: A6 reward

The luminous dueling platform slowly opened a gap, allowing the scorching magma inside to flow out. Floating atop it was the last remaining half of Ahan's face, his single remaining eye filled with unwillingness and hatred. Then, as the magma continued to move, it slowly dissolved into the terrifying liquid.

The surrounding crowd quickly retreated, afraid of being splashed by even a single drop. The scene was eerily silent.

"Look, Red Hair's points."

A juvenile corps member pointed upward, and everyone turned to see Red Hair's constitution points rapidly increasing, soaring from a mere few hundred back to several thousand. By the time it stopped, her points had not only returned to their initial full value but even surpassed it by over a hundred.

"Completely restored..."

The little golden-armored boy muttered under his breath, his voice trembling.

No matter how he tried to rationalize it, he couldn't believe what had just happened. Red Hair had been on the verge of death—how had she suddenly turned the tables and fully recovered?

From what he knew, Ahan wasn't the absolute strongest evolved, but he was undoubtedly a top-tier fighter. In the entire North American continent, there were only a handful who could defeat him. Among those who had come here, he knew of no more than five who could kill his subordinate.

How had they lost to some random Korean woman?!

The brightness of the luminous dueling platform dimmed slightly, while the surroundings brightened, returning visibility to everyone.

The difference in mood between the two factions was stark. Cloud Peak was jubilant, while Hidden Snake Journey's members wore grim expressions.

There were only five matches in total. Losing the first one didn't guarantee defeat, but starting with a loss still put them at a disadvantage.

The next match had just become critical.

If they lost again, they'd be fighting with their backs against the wall—no room for further mistakes.

Ye Zhongming smiled faintly as he welcomed Red Hair back. This woman had truly given him a pleasant surprise.

In the past, Red Hair had never displayed abilities like this. She had her vines, and she had her magma, but they had never been interchangeable, nor had she ever been able to restore her condition by bathing in molten rock. Yet now, she had done both.

"What were those vines that appeared on the platform?" Xiao Min asked curiously from behind.

Red Hair opened her palm, where a tiny seed visibly formed.

"The platform couldn't be destroyed, but even if it was made of energy, it was still physical—something you could touch. So all I had to do was stick them on."

Hearing this, everyone suddenly understood. They recalled how Red Hair had been constantly touching the luminous walls while dodging—they had assumed she was using them for leverage, but she had actually been planting seeds the whole time!

In hindsight, Ahan had been completely outmatched in both combat experience and offensive techniques. If not for his bizarre, near-unstoppable profession, Red Hair might have achieved an overwhelming victory.

"The first singles match has concluded. Cloud Peak faction is victorious. The winner is disqualified from further participation and granted immunity."

The announcement left everyone confused again.

Disqualification made sense—it meant Red Hair couldn't fight again. But what did immunity mean?

They listened intently, hoping for an explanation, but the space offered none.

"Now distributing rewards..."

The next prompt was about the rewards. Though the "immunity" mystery remained unsolved, Cloud Peak's spirits lifted.

According to the earlier rules, since Red Hair had ended the fight in just over six minutes, she would receive an A6-tier reward, while Cloud Peak as a whole would get a B6-tier reward.

No one knew what these letter-graded rewards actually were, so they waited eagerly to see what the space would give them. Even Hidden Snake Journey craned their necks to look, including the little golden-armored brat.

Two glowing orbs appeared—one in front of Red Hair, the other before Ye Zhongming.

Red Hair glanced at Ye Zhongming, then reached into her orb and pulled out an item.

"Angeli Magic Sticker and Hordo Magic Sticker."

"When the Hordo side (marked with Hordo's image) is applied to a desired body part, the Angeli Magic Sticker activates. This body part will receive the blessing of Angeli, granting a random initial ability."

"If this ability is used to kill a target, the cooldown for the next Angeli blessing is 1,000 hours, and the next blessing will be one tier higher. If the ability injures the target, the cooldown is 2,000 hours, and the next blessing remains at the same tier. If the ability misses, the cooldown is 3,000 hours, and the next blessing drops one tier."

"When the Angeli side (marked with Angeli's image) is applied to a target's body, the Hordo Magic Sticker activates. The target will receive a random initial curse from Hordo."

"If the target is killed while under this curse, the cooldown for the next Hordo curse is 1,000 hours, and the next curse will be one tier stronger. If the curse is used to injure the target, the cooldown is 2,000 hours, and the next curse remains at the same tier."

"After the Hordo curse takes effect, the sticker immediately returns to the user. The Angeli sticker must remain attached to the body part—if it falls off, it counts as a miss."

"The cooldowns for Angeli and Hordo are calculated separately."

"This equipment is bound to the winner and cannot be transferred."

The explanation ended there.

Having survived the apocalypse for over five years, everyone here—even if not as knowledgeable as Ye Zhongming—understood the value of equipment.

This item's worth hinged on two factors:

The initial strength of Angeli's blessing and Hordo's curse. If the starting abilities were powerful, this would be an insanely strong piece of gear.

How Red Hair used the stickers. If she succeeded every time, both the blessings and curses could level up indefinitely—the description didn't mention any cap. After dozens of upgrades, the effects could become...

Godlike.

If she never failed, the cooldown would always be 1,000 hours—meaning she could use it eight to nine times a year!

Chapter 1637: Cruel reward upgrade

Now it all depended on how effectively Red Hair can utilize this item.

But no matter what, one thing is certain—this equipment, with its separate cooldowns, will make Red Hair even more formidable, significantly boosting her strength.

As a top-tier craftsman, even Ye Zhongming felt a twinge of desire for this piece of equipment. He hadn't expected an A6-tier reward to be this good. If it were A1-tier or even S-tier, how incredible would it be? Could it actually reward a purple-grade item?

He turned his gaze to the glowing orb in front of him.

Initially, Ye Zhongming hadn't paid much attention to this B6-tier reward, assuming it would be more symbolic, with the real focus on the individual rewards.

But after seeing Red Hair's Magic Stickers, he became genuinely curious about what was inside his own orb.

He reached in and pulled out an item.

The Cloud Peak members naturally gathered around him.

"Earth-Treading Cloud?"

Ye Zhongming paused, momentarily puzzled—he'd never heard of this before.

Compared to Red Hair's Magic Stickers, the Earth-Treading Cloud was much simpler.

It was a transportation tool—a group transportation tool.

Despite its name, it couldn't fly. It could only hover about ten centimeters above the ground while moving.

As a group transport, it had a weight limit: currently, it could carry up to five tons of items or evolved.

It had two speed settings:

First gear: 40 km/h

Second gear: 100 km/h

Its power source was demon crystals, and consumption depended on speed.

Ye Zhongming sighed inwardly, slightly disappointed.

This was a group transport, but whether in terms of capacity or speed, it wasn't particularly impressive. It also required demon crystals—starting from level-five crystals.

It could only carry 50-60 people, and larger battle beasts might not even fit. For transporting goods, its capacity was limited, far less convenient than spatial equipment.

It seemed the B6-tier reward truly paled in comparison to the A6-tier.

However, the description mentioned that the Earth-Treading Cloud could be upgraded—though the conditions were harsh:

Specialized materials

High-level demon crystals

Usage duration

After a quick glance, Ye Zhongming concluded that upgrading it anytime soon would be impossible.

However, after the upgrade, its utility improved significantly. For example:

Capacity would jump from 5 tons to 30 tons.

Speed would gain a third gear (150 km/h).

Hover height would increase to 30 cm, significantly improving terrain adaptability.

Whether by coincidence or not, both rewards Cloud Peak received were upgradeable.

After briefly explaining the equipment's features, the others seemed quite pleased. While evolved had ample stamina, long-distance travel was still taxing. The Earth-Treading Cloud could lighten the load. Plus, it operated completely silently, which could be tactically advantageous.

Hidden Snake Journey couldn't see the equipment's attributes, but judging by Cloud Peak's expressions, they knew the rewards were excellent. Envy gnawed at them, fueling their determination for the second match.

"The second arena match begins. The losing side may choose the format."

Surprisingly, it wasn't another singles match as initially arranged—they could choose.

The little golden-armored boy's eyes lit up. "I choose doubles!" he blurted.

"Doubles match confirmed!"

Cloud Peak wasn't particularly bothered, though they felt a tinge of regret.

Had the second match remained singles, Ye Zhongming would have taken the field, securing a 2-0 lead. That wouldn't have guaranteed victory, but it would have been highly likely, while also crushing the enemy's morale.

"Both sides, choose whether to increase the reward tier for the second match."

The sudden announcement silenced the crowd. Many exchanged confused glances.

Increase the reward tier? What did that mean?

"Reward rules are the same as in the singles match. Quantity adjusts based on participant count. Either side may choose to increase the reward tier—no agreement required."

"If one side chooses to increase the reward tier, victory will raise the base reward by 1 to 5 tiers. If they lose, the opponent gains a +1 tier reward."

"If one side declines to increase the reward tier:

Victory: Reward remains unchanged.

Defeat: Penalty applies.

If the opponent also declines, the penalty equals the cost of increasing by 1 tier.

If the opponent increased rewards, the penalty equals their chosen tier's cost."**

Ye Zhongming sighed softly.

The wheel of fate tested luck and exploited greed—this was no exception.

Everyone wanted more, better rewards—human nature. These rules tempted people to gamble. Worse, they forced you to raise the stakes.

Sure enough, before the announcement even finished, the little brat shouted that he wanted to increase the reward—by the maximum five tiers! “

"Choosing to increase rewards requires a sacrifice."

"I accept!"

The boy didn't hesitate, drawing disbelieving looks from many.

"Increasing rewards by five tiers requires the sacrifice of 100 levels' worth of evolved lives."

A chill ran through the crowd.

Before anyone could react, the space continued:

"Locking onto leader—Adam. Please select..."

The little tyrant's name was Adam.

What did "100 levels' worth of lives" mean?

Simple: The sum of the sacrificed individuals' evolution levels must equal 100.

Ten 9-star + one 1-star = 100

One hundred 1-star = 100

A seemingly straightforward rule—brutal in execution.

Everyone knew: Low-level evolved would be the first to go.

Most leaders would hesitate—or even regret—if they knew this rule in advance. Even if they won, their team's morale would shatter, leading to collapse.

But to everyone's shock, Adam didn't hesitate at all.

He turned and started pointing at his subordinates.

With each finger he raised, an evolved human exploded into a bloody mist.

The manner of death made the sacrifice even more horrifying.

Soon, nearly 20 people died, their levels summing to 100.

The little tyrant licked his lips, almost regretful that it was over, then pointed at a man and woman nearby.

"Troyilia, Melphis—you're up!"

Chapter 1638: Doubles

The little boy pointed at two individuals who took two steps forward and stood at the edge of the arena as if they had been waiting there all along.

Their faces showed no expression, and they did not respond to the little boy in any way.

However, Little Adam didn't seem to mind at all. Instead, he gazed excitedly toward Cloud Peak's side, as if fantasizing about victory and the reward of advancing five levels.

Regarding this little boy, Ye Zhongming and the Cloud Peak members all had doubts in their hearts.

He gave off the impression that he was... playing.

Yes, utterly unserious.

How could someone who cared so little about sacrificing his subordinates' lives even become a leader?

In the apocalypse, a team leader would indeed exploit their subordinates to some extent, but that didn't mean they could drain the pond to catch all the fish or burn the forest to hunt. Even if you were a level-nine evolved, you couldn't indiscriminately kill or sacrifice your followers—otherwise, even the dumbest people would abandon you.

Moreover, the Wheel Space of the Mountain King Wheel—or any other Wheel Space, or even the entire Wheel Apocalypse—was like a game, something every survivor knew. But as long as they were mentally

sound and not driven to madness, no evolved would truly treat it as a game, because failure meant no second chances.

This little boy, Adam, was different. He gave the impression that he was playing a game, where all that mattered was winning—everything else could be disregarded.

Ye Zhongming didn't know if this was just his misconception, but he genuinely felt this way.

"Cloud Peak, please select your combatants."

The space prompted Cloud Peak to send its fighters.

Surprisingly, the usually battle-hungry Xia Bai did not step forward. Upon reflection, it made sense.

The remaining solo match would undoubtedly be fought by Ye Zhongming, leaving her no opportunity. The beast battle was also out of the question. That left the duo and five-person battles.

Xia Bai's combat style wasn't suited for teamwork—the only person in this world she would willingly cooperate with was Ye Zhongming. Thus, if she participated in the duo battle, it wouldn't be ideal. The five-person battle, however, was different. Xia Bai could serve as the spearhead while the other four coordinated with her.

Since Xia Bai and Ye Zhongming weren't participating, the strongest among the remaining members were Xiao Min and another Female Guard deputy captain, Dai Zhi.

Xiao Min had grown into the de facto commander of the Female Guards, and Dai Zhi's assistance had been indispensable. The latter was also the third-in-command when Xia Bai or Xiao Min were absent.

The two usually cooperated closely, sharing excellent synergy. Both were eight-star evolved with sufficient strength, making them the most suitable candidates for this battle.

Ye Zhongming nodded in approval, and the two stepped through a glowing gate into the energy arena, followed by two battle beasts.

The restrictions on the battle beasts' abilities had been temporarily lifted, as there would be a beast battle later.

Once both sides entered the energy arena, the beautiful energy structure resealed itself, the surroundings dimmed, and the arena became the focal point.

"Troyilia!" the man from Hidden Snake's Journey said coldly.

"Melfis!" the woman beside him followed.

However, their seemingly polite behavior, coupled with their expressions, came off more like a provocation or a display of disdain.

No one could detect any emotion in their expressions—only complete indifference.

Such people either cared nothing for others or nothing for themselves.

In any case, they held no regard for life.

Though the apocalypse was full of ruthless individuals, those who truly disregarded life were still a minority.

"Duo battle countdown begins: 10, 9..."

As the space's countdown commenced, Xiao Min and Dai Zhi's battle beasts activated their abilities.

Xiao Min's battle beast was combat-oriented, nicknamed Red-White Simba, with the formal name Soul-Snatching Bicolor Lion. At level seven, it could serve as a mount in daily life, and in battle, it possessed all the traits of a mutated feline—agility, strength, sharpness—along with skills that could affect an evolved's mental state, making it an excellent combat partner.

Dai Zhi's battle beast was purely support-based, called the Three-Headed Spirit Bird, with three small heads facing different directions.

When needed, each small head could emit two different songs, producing different effects. Additionally, when all three heads sang together, they could unleash another ability.

The level-seven Three-Headed Spirit Bird was one of the few battle beasts in Cloud Peak born with full innate abilities.

One of the Three-Headed Spirit Bird's heads opened its beak and let out a melodious chirp, its tune incredibly beautiful. As it sang, Dai Zhi's body emitted a faint yellow glow—though barely noticeable compared to the energy arena's radiance—clearly indicating a buff.

Another head soon began singing as well, and Xiao Min and her battle beast were similarly shrouded in a pale blue light.

"Song of Fearlessness and Song of Swiftness."

Ye Zhongming silently recited the names of the two buffs.

The Three-Headed Spirit Bird had cast the Song of Fearlessness on its master, Dai Zhi. This buff enhanced the evolved's physical attributes—not by much, but it was a comprehensive boost. It also fortified mental resilience, reducing or even nullifying the effects of mental-type attacks.

Additionally, it dulled pain receptors, lessening the impact of injuries on combat performance.

Xiao Min received the Song of Swiftness, which increased agility—a significant advantage whether she fought on foot or atop Red-White Simba.

Seeing the two Female Guard deputy captains take action, the juvenile soldiers couldn't help but cheer.

The two from Hidden Snake's Journey merely glanced at them before ignoring them entirely. Instead, they clasped hands, standing face-to-face.

And then... they kissed.

The sight instantly silenced the cheering juvenile soldiers.

It wasn't because of the intimacy of the act—it was because their behavior was too bizarre.

Under everyone's gaze, as the space's countdown reached its final seconds, the two began to mutate.

Yes, mutate.

The left halves of their bodies began merging toward each other. Their flesh-and-blood forms melted like ice and snow, turning into a gelatinous substance that crawled onto the other's body before solidifying again.

When the two reappeared before the crowd, they had become "half-persons."

Troyilia's right half—from hair to feet—had transformed into Melfis. Likewise, Melfis's right half had become Troyilia!

Chapter 1639: Doubles (2)

Whether it was Xiao Min, Dai Zhi, or the other members of Cloud Peak, they had all seen their fair share of the world. Yet, the sight of two humans "merging" right before their eyes still sent chills down their spines.

Ye Zhongming also frowned. His knowledge from his past life no longer gave him the advantage of recognizing everything he encountered now. In his previous life, reaching only six-star evolution in ten years had destined him to be nothing more than an ordinary evolved. What he knew was common knowledge, and what he witnessed was mostly limited to what the Chinese region allowed him to see.

As for this kind of job where two people merged into one, he truly had no idea what it was.

Fortunately, the little boy provided him with an answer.

"Damn you, Cloud Peak! This time, you're definitely going to lose!" Little Adam's pretty face twisted in a way that was hard to imagine on a child. The previous impression he gave had been one of innocence, cuteness, beauty, and delicacy...

"Omni-Human!"

"A job beyond your imagination! With combat power you can't even fathom—just wait to die!"

The little boy's voice pierced through the energy arena, filled with absolute confidence that Hidden Snake Journey would win this round.

"Remember, after this, Melfis (Troyilia) and I will no longer owe your family anything. We're leaving."

The two "half-persons" suddenly turned their heads and spoke, their single face split into two halves. When they spoke, the male and female voices blended together, sending a shiver down everyone's spine.

"Got it, got it, shut up already!"

The little boy waved his hand impatiently, but his eyes darted around, clearly scheming something.

A massive claw mark descended from the sky, accompanied by a beast's roar. Behind the claw mark were four streaks of black blade light.

Xiao Min and Dai Zhi had no interest in listening to their grievances. Since the Wheel Space had declared the start of the battle, they weren't about to wait for their opponents to prepare or get distracted—they struck first.

Red-White Simba's skill landed swiftly under the buff's effects. The four black blade lights that followed were the ability of Dai Zhi's weapon, the Backblade.

Melfis and Troyilia, who had just been speaking, suddenly twisted their bodies and split apart, moving to either side without even appearing to move their feet.

The two captains' attacks missed.

Skills failing to hit their targets were normal—no one would just stand there waiting to be hit.

But there were many ways to dodge an attack, and the method these two freaks used was far too effortless.

Xiao Min and Dai Zhi were eight-star evolved. Their attacks weren't something that could be casually avoided, especially not within the confined space of the energy arena.

Though surprised, Xiao Min and Dai Zhi didn't hesitate. Without even exchanging a glance, they each charged toward one of their targets.

They didn't know what abilities these half-persons possessed, but they could guess that the two were stronger when combined. Now that they had willingly separated, it was the perfect opportunity to defeat them individually.

Xiao Min engaged Troyilia, as the left half of this half-person was male. Though it had melted earlier, it had reformed after attaching to the other's body.

Red-White Simba roared again, unleashing its skill that disrupted an opponent's mental state.

At the same time, Xiao Min thrust her longsword toward the enemy's eye socket.

Those with weak mental fortitude often died in a single strike.

The tip of the sword gleamed with a faint blue light. As it cut through the air, the very atmosphere seemed to split, producing a sharp sound and visible distortion.

"Swordsman? That job is a dime a dozen in North America. Figures it'd come from a worthless Korean."

The little boy curled his lip in disdain when he saw Xiao Min's skill.

This glowing thrust was the signature skill of the Swordsman class—Radiant Pierce.

Troyilia raised his left hand and directly intercepted the sword, which carried the combined momentum of Xiao Min and Red-White Simba's charge.

Xiao Min's initial joy quickly turned to suspicion.

At first, she thought the man wasn't dodging because he had been affected by her battle beast's skill, leaving him mentally dazed. But when she met his eyes, she found them completely clear.

If he wasn't affected, then he must have some trick up his sleeve!

Yet Xiao Min didn't pull back in the slightest.

So what if he was prepared? Could he really block it?!

Xiao Min had become Xia Bai's proxy and the de facto commander of the Female Guards for a reason. In truth, her strength placed her among the elite of Cloud Peak's core members.

This strike wasn't something even her loyal protector, Ye Zhongming, could face head-on without evading.

Thud!

The glowing sword tip pierced into Troyilia's palm, but no blood spilled out as expected.

The half-man, half-woman's hand expanded like rubber, tightly wrapping around Xiao Min's sword. And it didn't stop there—it began creeping toward Xiao Min's position.

To an outside observer, that was what it looked like. But in reality, Xiao Min felt an overwhelming force transmitted through the sword, forcibly halting the momentum of both her and her battle beast.

If this were a skill, it could be understood. But if it was merely the raw strength of this mutated hand, then it was terrifying.

Xiao Min's mind raced, but her hands moved faster. She tossed a crystal grenade into the air.

This was a special grenade crafted for her by Le Dayuan—so special that Xiao Min had even cooked a meal for Master Le and Sister Hong in return.

Xiao Min's cooking was renowned for its deliciousness, something previously only Ye Zhongming had been privileged to taste.

The unique white grenade exploded midair, releasing a shower of colorful glittering fragments.

At the same time, Troyilia's left hand, which had engulfed the entire sword, reformed near the hilt, its fingers swelling and lifting to aim at Xiao Min.

Sssk!

The five fingers suddenly morphed into sharp, fleshy spikes, stabbing toward Xiao Min's chest.

The glittering fragments rained down, and Red-White Simba lashed out with its claws. Both attacks landed almost simultaneously.

A series of crackling sounds erupted. Troyilia groaned in pain and staggered back, his hand—now restored to normal—dripping with blood.

The armor on his body was in tatters, and the half-male, half-female face now bore several bloody holes!

Cloud Peak didn't fare much better. Red-White Simba whimpered softly, one of its paws drenched in blood, forcing it to kneel on the ground.

Xiao Min clutched her abdomen, her face still etched with disbelief. Her blue armor had five gaping holes, blood seeping out, and the glow from the armor had vanished, rendered useless in an instant!

Chapter 1640: Doubles (3)

When battle armor is rendered useless, it usually means one thing: before repairs could be made, the damage exceeded its durability.

Xiao Min's blue-grade battle armor, though not at the gold-grade level, was still a top-tier piece among blue-grade equipment. For it to be shattered in a single strike meant it had suffered instant, catastrophic damage.

Undoubtedly, the attack from Troyilia's transformed hand was horrifyingly powerful.

Ye Zhongming's brows furrowed tightly.

Given Xiao Min's current status in Cloud Peak, it wouldn't be strange for her to possess one or even several gold-grade pieces of equipment. However, for the sake of unity within the Female Guards, she had refused.

Ye Zhongming had agreed at the time, but now he regretted it. If he had insisted, Xiao Min would have obeyed, and perhaps this bizarre half-man, half-woman's attack wouldn't have breached her defenses.

He didn't know how deep the wound in Xiao Min's abdomen was, but the fact that the bleeding hadn't stopped told him it couldn't be minor.

Amid his concern, Ye Zhongming also observed Troyilia's condition.

The crystal grenade Le Dayuan had crafted for Xiao Min was no ordinary item—even Ye Zhongming himself didn't have one.

Le Dayuan hadn't given the grenade a name, but Xiao Min had dubbed it the "Hand Cannon"!

The glittering fragments inside were actually stacked magic crystal energy—each piece would release a tremendous burst of energy upon contact. In essence, this thing was more like a combination of many crystal grenades.

Of course, crafting such an item not only required a large amount of high-level demon crystals but also carried an extremely high risk of failure and danger.

After making just one, Le Dayuan never attempted it again. Why? Because it simply wasn't worth it!

The materials and magic crystals consumed to create a single "Hand Cannon" could be used to produce many, many of the latest-model crystal grenades, which, when used properly, would be far more effective than the former.

In order to attack Xiao Min, Troyilia hadn't dodged the glittering fragments, and he paid dearly for it. Every explosion from those fragments dealt full damage to him.

Like Xiao Min, he not only lost all his defensive equipment but also suffered severe injuries.

Cloud Peak's cutting-edge technology wasn't something to be taken lightly.

Of course, Troyilia's attack had also grievously wounded Red-White Simba—equally terrifying.

Xiao Min released her grip on her wound, glanced at her longsword to confirm it was undamaged, then suddenly raised her other hand into the air.

A long saber appeared in her grasp.

"Blade and Sword Twin Mastery?!"

The little boy was stunned, uttering the name of a high-tier job in the apocalypse.

Compared to the dime-a-dozen Swordsman job, Blade and Sword Twin Mastery wasn't the absolute pinnacle, but it was still an elite class.

The fact that Xiao Min hadn't revealed her true strength from the start made both the little boy and Troyilia tense up.

Crushing a healing crystal in her hand, Xiao Min traced two different trajectories with her weapons and growled a low, guttural "Die." Two distinct skills shot toward the half-man, half-woman.

On one side—a dazzling sword light.

On the other—a fierce saber aura.

Xiao Min leaped off Red-White Simba, transforming into a bolt of lightning as she charged at her opponent.

Red-White Simba howled. Even though its previous two mental interference attempts had failed, it still exerted its ability once more, hoping to aid its master.

Troyilia chuckled darkly. The other side of his body—the female half—moved.

A normal hand suddenly expanded into a giant, fan-like appendage, becoming as soft and elastic as the other side had been earlier. When Xiao Min's blade and sword arrived, it enveloped them directly.

The idea of blocking Xiao Min's attack with bare flesh should have been nothing short of a fantasy.

Both of her weapons were blue-grade, and combined with her eight-star evolution level and class skill bonuses, her offensive power was devastating.

Just like before, Xiao Min saw the enemy's response but didn't alter her course. She refused to believe he could intercept her this time.

The two clashed once more in close combat.

Splatters of something resembling melted flesh flew out.

The grotesquely enlarged hand was split open by Xiao Min's strikes, but the wounds healed almost instantly. Then, whether it was her longsword or saber, both were seized by the massive palm, immobilizing Xiao Min—unless she chose to abandon her weapons.

Troyilia's lips curled into a smirk. Then, abruptly, the giant hand released her weapons and morphed into a fist—an enormous, terrifying fist—that shot toward Xiao Min.

The distance between them was minimal, and the fist, like rubber, could extend in length.

Boom!

Xiao Min was sent flying.

This time, it wasn't just her equipment that shattered—likely some of her internal organs as well. Gouts of blood spilled from her mouth, drawing gasps from the Cloud Peak members watching below.

"Kill her!"

"Slaughter that woman! Dig out her battle beast's demon crystal!"

"We've won this round!"

"Hahahahaha!"

"What did I tell you? As long as Troyilia and Melfis take the field, you can't win!"

The last line came from the little boy, Adam.

But Troyilia, whom they had pinned their hopes on, didn't move. He remained rooted in place, even as they speculated whether he would finish off the severely wounded Xiao Min or her battle beast first.

"What's going on, Troyilia?"

"Kill her! What are you waiting for?!"

"Troyilia, execute your opponent! Otherwise, you and Melfis will have to stay with our family for another year—no, two years!"

The little boy grew impatient.

Despite his confident facade, he was anxious inside. If victory could be secured quickly, he wouldn't drag it out.

Now that Troyilia held absolute dominance yet hesitated, Adam was deeply displeased.

Just as the Hidden Snake Journey members were shouting—

A spear slowly emerged from Troyilia's abdomen.

A blue-grade weapon had pierced straight through the half-man, half-woman's chest, the tip protruding from his back—right where the heart should be.

No one knew when this spear had struck, but one thing was certain: Troyilia had lost.

Though he had grievously wounded the woman from Cloud Peak, he himself had been dealt a fatal blow!

Xiao Min slowly sat up, painstakingly retrieving a healing potion from her spatial equipment and drinking it. Watching Troyilia topple backward, she flashed a brilliant smile.

But that smile lasted only a second before freezing.

The normally unflappable Female Guard deputy captain actually showed a flicker of fear on her face.

Because she saw—

Troyilia, who should have collapsed dead on the ground, had stopped mid-fall, his body frozen at a steep angle!