

Apocalypse 1641

Chapter 1641: Dai Zhi's attack

Dai Zhi felt an unreal sensation.

Because she had clearly killed her opponent.

Dai Zhi was different from Xiao Min.

Xiao Min's combat style was somewhat similar to Xia Bai's—or rather, it aligned with the overall style of Cloud Peak.

Bravery, fearlessness, iron will, sacrifice, and an emphasis on offense.

But Dai Zhi's fighting style carried her own distinct flair.

Her attacks seemed unremarkable, lacking any striking characteristics, and her battle beast was purely support-oriented.

Apart from her complete lack of fear toward injury or death, Dai Zhi didn't seem like a member of Cloud Peak at first glance.

Yet within the Female Guards, her importance was no less than Xiao Min's.

Because she was responsible for defense and support.

Many outsiders regarded the Female Guards as Cloud Peak's top combat unit, but the members themselves knew their primary duty was to protect Ye Zhongming.

Xia Bai was too aggressive—she was the sharpest blade, and her way of protecting Ye Zhongming was to slaughter anyone who dared approach him. But often, a blade alone wasn't enough. You also needed a shield.

Dai Zhi was that shield for the entire Female Guards.

If they had been facing any other opponents, Xiao Min and Dai Zhi would have cooperated—one leading the offense, the other providing support and defense when necessary.

But Troyilia and Melfis were different. It was obvious that their combined strength was formidable, so Xiao Min and Dai Zhi chose to engage them separately.

Yes, Dai Zhi specialized in defense and support, but that didn't mean she couldn't attack. On the contrary, her assaults carried a sense of fluid elegance.

Dai Zhi's weapon was the Backblade.

This was a set of Wheel Space equipment that, after Ye Zhongming's enhancements and enchantments, had reached blue-htsfr. The Backblade consisted of eight flying daggers with four innate skills—all offensive. The black blade shadows she had used earlier against the half-man, half-woman duo were one of them.

Under the Three-Headed Spirit Bird's Song of Fearlessness, Dai Zhi unleashed her signature chain attacks.

The eight flying daggers danced around her, weaving through the air as they relentlessly pressured Melfis.

From time to time, blade shadows would shoot from the daggers, slicing toward the half-man, half-woman's body.

Melfis, unlike Troyilia, fought in a manner surprisingly similar to Dai Zhi's.

Her hands didn't expand like rubber bands, but her masculine half could—constantly morph into fleshy spikes, whips, or even spheres to assault Dai Zhi.

The flying daggers left only shallow marks on these deformations, failing to penetrate.

Melfis was the first to escalate.

She noticed Troyilia struggling on the other side. Her bizarre dual-gender mouth opened, emitting an incomprehensible syllable, and the rubbery flesh began moving faster and more wildly.

In an instant, the Backblade daggers were all knocked aside, and Dai Zhi took a heavy blow.

Just like Xiao Min, her armor shattered on impact, leaving her defenseless.

Melfis lunged forward to finish Dai Zhi off, but before her grotesque fleshy spikes could strike, a tiny black blade shadow—barely a few centimeters long—streaked in from behind and slashed the back of her neck.

A lethal strike.

This was another skill of Dai Zhi's Backblade—Killing Thread!

Melfis immediately collapsed forward, fluids spraying from her wound.

The Three-Headed Spirit Bird's third head sang a melody, and a radiant pillar of light descended, enveloping Dai Zhi completely. From the outside, her figure was no longer visible.

The Female Guard deputy captain sprang up from the ground, the eight flying daggers merging into a single black longsword. With a decisive leap, she brought the blade down on Melfis—who was still stumbling forward—with unstoppable momentum.

As the distance closed, the light surrounding Dai Zhi erupted with tremendous suction, dragging Melfis toward the descending sword.

This was Dai Zhi's way—whether she held the advantage or was at a disadvantage, her attacks never ceased.

Melfis's expression remained cold and unchanging, as if the injuries weren't hers. Even now, as she lost her balance and was pulled toward the blade, she seemed utterly indifferent.

Her masculine half split into two sections—one covering the gash on her neck, the other shielding her head.

The Backblade longsword hacked into the rubbery flesh, sinking deep.

Dai Zhi felt an immense force transmit through her arms. After a quick mental command to her battle beast, two of the Three-Headed Spirit Bird's heads opened their beaks simultaneously, singing the same tune.

A crimson glow erupted beneath Dai Zhi's feet—the Song of Savagery had arrived!

While the Song of Fearlessness enhanced overall physical attributes, the Song of Savagery drastically amplified strength and speed.

The longsword wrenched free from the flesh, splitting back into eight flying daggers that shot toward Melfis's original feminine face from all angles.

At the same time, the Female Guard deputy captain's body underwent a sudden transformation—sleek fur sprouted across her skin as she activated her explosive Primary Spirit Cat Bloodline. Alongside it, she unleashed her Juggler job skill—Ball Play!

The eight flying daggers and a newly summoned short dagger became a blinding storm of steel, their movements too fast to follow. Only interconnected afterimages remained as they rained down on Melfis with frenzied intensity.

The speed and agility from the Spirit Cat Bloodline, combined with her class skill's ability to control nine weapons while boosting attack power, allowed Dai Zhi to seize total dominance.

She didn't know what job this half-man, half-woman belonged to, what skills she possessed, or what those elastic, defensive, and powerful fleshy tissues were.

Dai Zhi only knew one thing—reduce her to mincemeat!

The Backblade was blue-grade equipment, and so was the short dagger. As the third-in-command of the Female Guards, this level of gear was standard.

The dual enhancements from her bloodline and job also ensured overwhelming offensive capability.

Chunks of flesh were sheared off Melfis's body—even the rubbery tissues couldn't withstand the assault. Some wounds reached bone!

Compared to Troyilia, Melfis was in far worse shape.

Yet, the half-woman's face showed no trace of panic.

Dai Zhi's onslaught ceased. Her opponent's body was now more than half-exposed bone. Apart from the head and neck she had shielded, not a single part remained intact.

By all logic, Melfis should have been dead. No one could survive after losing so much tissue.

But against all reason, Melfis was unharmed. Her smile remained intact. When she lowered her arm, Troyilia—on the other side—was just beginning to topple backward.

Then, in the next instant—

Both of them vanished without a trace.

Chapter 1642: Eight Trigram

The two genderless monsters froze simultaneously before vanishing, only to reappear at the very center of the arena.

Xiao Min and Dai Zhi stood on either side, not attacking.

The scene before them was utterly bizarre.

Xiao Min should have already killed Troyilia, yet this sudden turn of events had occurred.

Xiao Min's job was neither Swordsman nor Blade and Sword Twin Mastery, but rather Tri-Weapon Warrior.

This job, much like Ye Zhongming's purple-grade weapon Harvester Mimic Shooter, had multiple branches—sword, saber, and spear.

The difference was that the saber and sword in Xiao Min's job were standard weapons, used as ordinary arms in combat. In other words, these two weapons had to be prepared by Xiao Min herself, with their power directly proportional to their tier.

The spear, however, was an illusory weapon, typically materialized from energy when executing class skills.

For instance, the strike that had nearly killed Troyilia earlier was Xiao Min activating her class skill "Heavenly Spear Strike", successfully ambushing her opponent and piercing his heart.

Dai Zhi had also killed her opponent with her own abilities.

Yet, Troyilia and Melfis had not only survived—they had fused into a single entity.

The man's head returned to its original form, as did the woman's, but now, both heads grew from the same torso!

Beneath the man's head was the woman's half-body, and beneath the woman's head was the man's half-body. Each side had one male and one female arm, and the same went for the legs.

Two heads.

One torso.

Four arms.

Four legs.

There was no visible seam—it looked unnaturally natural, yet every inch of it radiated grotesque horror!

Even more revolting was how both their heads and bodies appeared to be melting, with thick, milky-white flesh sagging toward the ground without dripping. It was as if... molten wax from a burning candle had solidified mid-flow.

"Die, die, die! You've successfully pissed them off!" The little boy pressed his face against the energy arena, not wanting to miss a single moment of what was unfolding inside.

The "wax monster" stretched out its upper and lower limbs, opened its mouths, and let out a violent, wordless scream.

Outside the energy arena, Ye Zhongming clenched his fists.

Even from below, he could sense the terrifying power of this creature's impending attack.

This... was likely the final showdown!

Ye Zhongming made his judgment.

As the monster screamed, its body seemed to explode, ejecting blobs of wax-like liquid that shot toward the two women like raindrops.

The air inside the energy arena was instantly filled with a strange, acrid stench.

Mid-flight, the wax ignited, burning with an eerie blue-green flame.

Anyone could tell—these things were undoubtedly deadly.

After unleashing this attack, the grotesque fused entity split apart, Troyilia and Melfis both collapsing to the ground—one sitting, the other half-kneeling.

Their condition was dire. Once restored to their original forms, their bodies were no longer resilient, now covered in wounds. Troyilia clutched his chest, while Melfis could barely move.

They had no strength left to fight. This was their final assault. If it succeeded, they would emerge victorious. If it failed, they would lose.

Despite their critical state, their eyes were unwavering. They believed this last attack would, as it always had before, utterly annihilate their foes.

The liquid not only carried devastating offensive power but was also highly toxic and possessed a burning property—upon contact, it would ignite violently. Another crucial detail: once released, these droplets would inevitably strike their pre-selected targets!

The moment the fused entity launched its final attack, Xiao Min and Dai Zhi moved toward each other. Xiao Min stepped back slightly, while Dai Zhi advanced, but as the rain of blue fire closed in, the two had already converged.

Dai Zhi's Backblade vanished, replaced by two crescent-shaped "combs." She crossed the bizarre weapons together, merging them into a single entity—on its surface, a clear Eight Trigrams pattern was visible.

The instant the weapon combined, it began to spin, rapidly expanding in size until the Eight Trigrams symbols blurred into streaks of black and white.

A black-and-white palace materialized before Xiao Min and the rotating metal Eight Trigrams mirror. Though illusory, it exuded majesty, shrouded in mist, with faint hymns echoing from within.

"Noble Eight Trigrams Palace!"

The Female Guards recognized this equipment at once.

It was a defensive artifact—the core piece for the Female Guards' collective defense formations. The entire unit typically centered around this metal Bagua mirror.

Due to its nature, the mirror's power peaked when linked with other defensive equipment or skills. Yet Xiao Min had deployed it now, signaling that she believed only this could withstand the final assault.

The entire Cloud Peak contingent tensed.

The wax droplets, burning with blue flames, crashed into the Noble Eight Trigrams Palace. Instantly, the illusory palace was engulfed in blue fire, its original black-and-white hues drowned out.

"The palace is shrinking..."

Someone from Cloud Peak murmured. Everyone could see it—the Noble Eight Trigrams Palace's defensive power was rapidly diminishing!

Both sides now understood: the battle's outcome hinged on this clash between skill and equipment. Whoever prevailed here would claim victory for their faction.

The black-and-white palace continued to shrink. The blue droplets dwindled in number.

Yet the flames only grew fiercer.

"Zzzzt!"

The sound of a magic crystal weapon firing rang out. Xiao Min, who had been sheltering behind Dai Zhi, now wielded a magic crystal rifle, shooting at the remaining fire-rain.

Even the latest-model magic crystal weapons could, at best, neutralize a single droplet per shot. Yet Xiao Min fired relentlessly, easing the pressure on her comrade.

Amid the blue inferno, the black-and-white palace collapsed. The Noble Eight Trigrams Palace had been breached.

Dozens of remaining blue fire-drops surged toward Dai Zhi.

Hidden Snake Journey erupted in cheers. These few dozen droplets were more than enough to claim the lives of the two women.

The little boy had already opened his mouth, ready to roar in triumph.

But—

A clear, resonant song suddenly rose into the air.

A red-and-white figure charged forward, placing itself between the two Female Guard captains and the lethal rain.

Chapter 1643: Revolving Barrel and Miracle Potion

"Big White!"

The words tore from Xiao Min's throat in anguish.

She had grown accustomed to calling her battle beast by this name, popular in the peaceful era—before she had endured unbearable suffering, before she had been subjected to inhuman treatment. Now, like the other warriors of the Female Guards, Xiao Min trusted only her battle beast and her sisters-in-arms.

Ye Zhongming was the one they pledged loyalty to.

Now, the battle beast that had accompanied her for countless days and nights was burning before her eyes. Even so, the great red-and-white-maned lion charged toward the enemy.

But the blue fire-rain was too terrifying. The moment the droplets touched Red-White Simba, they corroded its body, leaving gaping holes. As the lion surged forward, the horrific flames gradually reduced it to bones, then to ash.

The final mournful cry struck Xiao Min's heart like a hammer. Since the day she had watched her little brother die before her, this was the most agonizing moment of her life.

The Three-Headed Spirit Bird sang with all three heads. Xiao Min and Dai Zhi's bodies swelled in size, their forms enveloped in a translucent mist that emanated from within, even their weapons glowing faintly.

Though most of the fire-rain had been blocked by Red-White Simba, a few droplets still slipped through. Upon contact with the mist, they hissed and dissolved into green smoke, dissipating into the air.

The mist surrounding the two Female Guard deputy captains thinned significantly, but some remained. It was clear—without Red-White Simba's sacrifice, even the Three-Headed Spirit Bird's final "Song of War" wouldn't have been enough to defend them fully.

Xiao Min didn't hesitate. Biting her lip, she rushed past Dai Zhi, charging straight for Troyilia and Melfis. Raising her crystal rifle high, she brought it down with brutal force.

She didn't even bother switching weapons. She just wanted to smash these two culprits to death.

The man and woman of Hidden Snake Journey exchanged glances, their lips curling into cryptic smiles. Suddenly, they turned to the little boy, Adam, and said in unison:

"See you soon."

Then, they kissed deeply—just as the hard stock of Xiao Min's rifle smashed into their skulls.

Dai Zhi didn't intervene. She simply watched as Xiao Min, silent yet frenzied, pounded the two into pulp.

The others watched too. No one cheered. In this moment, neither the victors nor the defeated had any reason to speak.

Sometimes, things were like this. There was no clear line between justice and evil—only victory and defeat, life and death. And emotions were the same. Winning or losing didn't necessarily mean excitement or despair. Sometimes, it was just a sigh, a lament.

"Second duo battle—victory goes to Cloud Peak."

As the announcement rang out, the little boy's face turned livid. When two glowing reward orbs materialized before the victors, he finally lost control, letting out a shrill scream.

Strangely, neither Cloud Peak nor Hidden Snake Journey paid him any attention. The former saw no reason to bother with a brat, while the latter simply couldn't be bothered—Adam's earlier actions had cost him the team's respect.

"Hidden Snake Journey has chosen to increase the reward. Cloud Peak Manor has declined. Per priority rules, the victor's reward is upgraded by one tier."

"Battle duration: eight minutes, thirty-five seconds. Duo battle reward: A8-tier. Upgraded to A7-tier. Team reward: B7-tier."

Hearing this, Cloud Peak's members felt a flicker of satisfaction. Though the upgraded A7-tier reward was still lower than the A6-tier from the solo battle, the duo battle involved two combatants—meaning two rewards, one more than before, which somewhat made up for it.

"Big White can't be replaced... but it left offspring."

Ye Zhongming patted Xiao Min's head.

The dim light in her eyes flickered back to life.

This time, Ye Zhongming retrieved the reward from the orb first.

Given the decent rewards so far, he was quite curious about what the B7-tier prize would be.

Besides, this would give Xiao Min time to steady her emotions.

"Revolving Barrel."

"Attachment component."

The name piqued Ye Zhongming's interest. Such components, when used correctly, could often outperform standalone equipment.

"Revolving Barrel."

"1. When equipped on a handheld ranged weapon, automatically duplicates the original firing system, turning it into a dual-shot weapon."

"2. When equipped on an autonomous weapon, if duplicating the original firing system, it becomes a dual-system weapon. If upgrading the original system, it elevates the original system by one tier."

"3. When equipped on summoned or skill-based weaponry, randomly adds one ability to the weapon and upgrades it overall."

Ye Zhongming stroked his chin in thought. Several people in Cloud Peak—himself included—could make good use of this. As for where it would be most cost-effective, he'd decide after returning.

Storing the reward, he turned to the two Female Guard deputy captains, especially Xiao Min.

Fortunately, Xiao Min was, after all, one of the apocalypse's finest warriors. In just this short time, she had mostly recovered. Together with Dai Zhi, she retrieved their rewards.

Dai Zhi's reward was peculiar—a heart-shaped crystal. At first glance, it seemed like a bloodline, but upon closer inspection, white glitter swirled inside, fluttering up and down, mesmerizing to behold.

"Miracle Potion No. 321."

The name left Dai Zhi stunned—even Ye Zhongming, who was helping her appraise it, was baffled.

This name... was too simple. Too plain.

It gave no clues whatsoever.

Ye Zhongming instructed Dai Zhi to channel some mental energy into it. The prompt the Female Guard deputy captain received was equally cryptic:

"If you love adventure, Miracle Potion is your best choice. This potion cannot be traded or gifted."

Dai Zhi blinked, turning to Ye Zhongming.

"This... is your choice to make."

This item clearly had strong random properties. Even as Cloud Peak's ruler and Dai Zhi's sworn leader, Ye Zhongming had to respect his top subordinate's wishes.

After a moment's thought, Dai Zhi pocketed the red crystal. She wasn't willing to take the risk now—she'd decide later.

A prudent choice.

Now, all eyes turned to Xiao Min.

What would her reward be?

Chapter 1644: Mercury Centipede

In Xiao Min's hand lay... a piece of candy.

There were no prompts, no descriptions—just a beautifully wrapped piece of candy.

Xiao Min looked at Ye Zhongming. No matter how decisive she usually was in battle, she was now at a complete loss.

Was this... edible?

No one could say for sure. They didn't even know if it was really candy. What if it just looked like candy but wasn't?

Ye Zhongming was also stunned. Why were the rewards this time so random? What kind of reward was this?

"Since it's a reward, it probably isn't harmful. But as for its actual effect..." Ye Zhongming hesitated before giving his judgment. "It's up to you, but I suggest waiting until we return to Cloud Peak. With Sister Hong and Teacher Park around, it'll be safer."

Xiao Min nodded and stored the candy away.

Unlike the rewards from the solo battle, which were clear and provided immediate power boosts, these two items were too unpredictable. Though Cloud Peak had won, the benefits would have to wait.

With the second battle over, the third began immediately. The energy arena prompted both sides to choose the next battle format.

For Cloud Peak, if they ignored the issue of casualties, they were in a relaxed position. One more victory would secure the final win. But for Hidden Snake Journey, this was a desperate last stand.

The little boy had stopped screaming. His eyes, filled with a venomous hatred that should never belong to a child his age, locked onto Cloud Peak's side. Then, he made a decision that even surprised Ye Zhongming.

He chose... the five-person battle.

In the apocalypse, a team leader might exploit their subordinates, and in a lawless world, this was almost inevitable.

But when truly needed, they had to stand at the forefront, leading their team through danger and surviving in this ruined world.

Yet here, when the team's survival and interests were at stake, this child chose to avoid battle!

This was almost a fatal blow to the team's morale.

It was easy to imagine that even if this team made it out alive, they would no longer be able to function as before.

As the saying went: "When hearts are scattered, the team cannot be led."

Ye Zhongming was silent for a moment before declaring, "I choose the solo battle."

The two sides disagreed, and neither would yield. The Wheel Space's decision was—the beast battle!

Ye Zhongming smirked at the little boy and returned to prepare.

He had predicted that the kid wouldn't fight himself, so the Wheel Space would randomly select the format. Whether it was the solo battle or the beast battle, Ye Zhongming was fine with either. Even the five-person battle was acceptable.

The result? Not the best-case scenario of a solo battle, but also not the worst-case of a five-person battle.

When it came to battle beasts, Cloud Peak feared no one.

The space had previously imposed restrictions on battle beasts, but these would be lifted once the battle began.

Little Adam was shouting and cursing on his side, but his subordinates all watched him coldly—not a single one sent their battle beasts forward.

Aside from the fact that Adam had thoroughly broken their trust, Cloud Peak's battle beasts looked terrifying. Beings like Yangos and the others were clearly not to be trifled with.

"Fine! Fine! Fine!"

The little boy gnashed his teeth and pointed at his subordinates. "You're all against me, huh? Then don't blame me for what happens next!"

The others paled, knowing exactly what he meant. An older middle-aged man spoke up, "Even if we sent our battle beasts, you'd still choose to increase the reward. You're not worth our trust. If it weren't for your—"

"Shut up! SHUT UP!" The little boy screamed, cutting him off. He turned away, refusing to look at them, and pulled something out from his spatial equipment.

"A Beast Pool equipment?!" Ye Zhongming was shocked, growing even more suspicious of Adam's identity.

At the start of the apocalypse, this child would've only been two or three years old. How had he survived? Even if someone had taken him in, what about all his gear? Had someone given him a full set of gold-grade equipment? And even a precious Beast Pool?

Even if this was just a Miniature Beast Pool, it was still priceless!

"Ah Chong, kill them all!"

Adam aimed the Beast Pool's exit toward the energy arena's entrance. Slowly, a silver centipede crawled out.

Many people instinctively loathed multi-legged creatures, and few chose them as battle beasts.

The silver centipede was over five meters long but slender, no thicker than a child's arm. Rows of silver legs lined its body, glinting like its hard exoskeleton.

Its head showed clear signs of mutation—four antennae, each tipped with a red bulb like a cherry, swaying and spinning in the air.

The head wasn't much thicker than its body, but its mouth was filled with razor-sharp teeth. Even slightly parted, they looked like a forest of blades.

Once inside the energy arena, the eight-level evolved centipede reared half its body up, staring at Cloud Peak's side. Even when facing a behemoth like Yangos, it showed no fear.

"Mercury Centipede!"

Ye Zhongming recognized it instantly—a creature he knew from his past life.

This lifeform had two defining traits:

First, its multi-legged, segmented body granted it incredible speed, making it extremely agile in battle.

Second, its silver exoskeleton was incredibly tough, nearly impossible to penetrate.

Fast and durable, this thing was a nightmare to deal with, even if it lacked other outstanding attributes.

On top of that, it retained the natural traits of a centipede—deadly venom and razor-sharp, powerful mandibles.

"Damn it, daring to look at your Grandpa Dragon like that? I'm going in!"

Yangos cursed and flapped its wings, eager to fight. Even injured, its pride wouldn't allow it to tolerate such provocation.

Naturally, if a nine-level being had provoked it, Yangos would've pretended not to notice.

Yellow Ball also signaled its desire to fight. Since entering the space, it hadn't contributed much and was itching for action.

These two were currently Cloud Peak's most powerful battle beasts. Whichever one went up, Ye Zhongming believed victory was assured. Though the Mercury Centipede was strong, Yellow Ball and Yangos were top-tier battle beasts—defeating it shouldn't be a problem.

The only concern was avoiding too many injuries. If the Mercury Centipede's venom accumulated in large amounts, it wouldn't be easy to handle.

Yangos and Yellow Ball glared at each other, neither willing to back down.

But suddenly, both felt a strange force pulling them apart as another lifeform inserted itself between them—charging into the energy arena first.

Chapter 1645: Don't fight back

Yangos's curses were already at the tip of its tongue, but upon seeing who it was, it immediately flopped to the ground, muttering a string of low draconic words under its breath—no one knew what they meant—while its dragon eyes stared fixedly at the floor as if flowers were blooming there.

Yellow Ball sniffed, glanced helplessly at Ye Zhongming, then plopped down as well, instinctively panting with its tongue lolling out. In truth, it hadn't needed to cool itself like this for a long time.

The Cloud Peak members stared at the creature that had entered the arena, their faces twitching.

Was... this thing even a battle beast?

The one who had stepped in was the Undead Dragon-fish.

It was Red-Hair's mount. Given Red-Hair's unique status, everyone treated her as Cloud Peak's one-of-a-kind existence, and the Undead Dragon-fish was viewed the same way. It and Red-Hair were more like companions, partners, comrades—not master and beast.

In fact, the Undead Dragon-fish wasn't a battle beast at all.

Yet when it strode into the energy arena, the arena sealed shut, clearly recognizing it as a battle beast.

Many people glanced at Red-Hair. Had the Wheel Space system acknowledged her as human?

At this moment, the Undead Dragon-fish didn't look much like an undead creature. It resembled more of a... tattered ragdoll.

Of course, this "ragdoll" was a bit too large.

Previously, the Undead Dragon-fish's body had been slowly regrowing flesh, though it wasn't very noticeable. Now, its blackened bones were completely enveloped by newly grown flesh, and the White Cave Crystal responsible for this transformation had vanished without a trace.

However, since the Undead Dragon-fish's evolution wasn't yet complete, it had been lazily trailing along with the group. Everyone assumed this process would last until the end of this special Wheel Space event—or even longer.

But now, the Undead Dragon-fish had taken the initiative to enter the arena and was recognized as a valid combatant. The Cloud Peak members weren't sure whether this was good or bad.

Normally, the Undead Dragon-fish would have no trouble dealing with this giant centipede. Though the Mercury Centipede was an eight-level lifeform with incredible speed, the Undead Dragon-fish excelled in that area, too. As for its hard exoskeleton? Coincidentally, the Undead Dragon-fish had that covered as well. And poisons? Useless against undead.

In other words, the Undead Dragon-fish was the natural counter to the Mercury Centipede. Its participation was even more reliable than Yangos or Yellow Ball.

But now, things were uncertain. The big guy was mid-evolution, its body still patchy and regrowing flesh. What if it got injured? What if it lost its immunity to poison?

Forget about losing rewards if they were defeated—what if it died here? That would be a tragic waste. The Undead Dragon-fish had first inherited the legacy of the Nine-Winged Crow, then obtained the White Cave Crystal. This evolution was essentially a step toward level nine.

This was a level-nine seed!

If something happened to it here, Cloud Peak's loss would be immeasurable.

"Please choose whether to increase the reward."

The space's prompt sounded. Naturally, Ye Zhongming declined, but Little Adam once again opted for the highest multiplier.

"Hell is the only place fit for you, child." The middle-aged man spoke calmly as Adam's finger, following the Wheel Space's instructions, pointed at his own team.

"Doesn't matter. You won't live to see it." Adam retorted, selecting the middle-aged man first. Under his finger, a full-fledged evolver exploded into a mist of blood.

Then, amid the curses of his team, one evolver after another died at Adam's command.

By the time the required number was met, the survivors in Adam's team looked at him with pure hatred.

But Adam either didn't notice or simply didn't care. His attention was fixed on the Mercury Centipede, hoping his battle beast could turn the tide for Hidden Snake's Journey.

The battle began as the countdown ended. The Mercury Centipede moved first, transforming into a silver streak as it charged at the Undead Dragon-fish, whose every motion seemed sluggish in comparison.

Thud!

Thud!

Thud!

The Mercury Centipede's razor-sharp legs and mandibles left countless wounds on the Undead Dragon-fish's body in an instant. The newly grown flesh was torn open, but no blood or other fluids seeped out.

The Undead Dragon-fish still didn't counterattack. It merely turned its body slightly, as if adjusting casually under the onslaught.

The Cloud Peak members grew increasingly anxious.

Relative to the Undead Dragon-fish's massive size, each wound from the centipede might seem insignificant. But the number of injuries skyrocketed in such a short time, and even minor damage could accumulate into something severe.

Why wasn't it fighting back?!

Every Cloud Peak member had the same question. The Undead Dragon-fish's toxic mist or its own physical attacks were incredibly potent. In the confined space of the energy arena, these abilities should have been perfect. So why was it just letting itself be attacked?

Ye Zhongming looked at Red-Hair. Since the Undead Dragon-fish wasn't his battle beast, he couldn't establish a mental link with it. He wanted to see if Red-Hair had received any feedback from her partner.

But the slight frown on Red-Hair's face told him that the Undead Dragon-fish hadn't communicated anything to her either.

The battle—no, the one-sided assault—continued. In just over a minute, the Mercury Centipede had inflicted no fewer than a thousand wounds on the Undead Dragon-fish. The already ragged-looking creature became even more tattered, chunks of newly grown flesh littering the ground where they'd been sliced off.

By the three-minute mark, the Mercury Centipede paused for the first time. Its mandibles still chewed on a piece of flesh torn from the Undead Dragon-fish—who knew how much it had already devoured.

Its body now gleamed even brighter, its silver exoskeleton radiating an almost hypnotic luster. Every movement it made produced a crisp, metallic clinking sound, like fine metal striking metal.

Even the color of its magic crystal had shifted slightly.

"Hahaha! What's the point of your big, dumb brute coming up here? To serve as food for my battle beast? And such nutritious food too! Look—my battle beast is evolving! Evolving!"

Little Adam, like a gambler who had lost all reason, screamed and laughed hysterically as the tide seemed to turn in his favor.

Ye Zhongming watched calmly, ignoring the boy's taunts.

He noticed that despite taking heavy damage from not fighting back, the Undead Dragon-fish stood as steady as a boulder in the center of the arena.

The Mercury Centipede stared at its opponent with its compound eyes, then suddenly reared back and let out a piercing shriek—before spewing an unfathomable amount of black venom!

The energy arena was instantly filled with a nauseating stench.

Yet at that exact moment, Ye Zhongming caught something—

A highly human-like smile flickered across the Undead Dragon-fish's face.