

## **Apocalypse 1751**

### Chapter 1751: Night Blood (4)

The first to land were the matte, elongated projectiles that Cloud Peak referred to as Type-1 rounds.

These shells flew high, bypassing interception attempts, and with the cover provided by missiles and rockets, they struck deep within the city.

The closer they got to the ground, the faster they became, eventually turning into mere blurs. Not only were most evolved completely incapable of intercepting them, even those who could dared not try—anything moving at that speed, coupled with its unknown nature, made interception a suicidal gamble.

While evolved in the apocalypse were willing to take risks, they were far from reckless or self-sacrificing. None would throw their lives away so easily for the Holy City.

The shells landed in several different locations with dull thuds, neither exploding nor producing the distinctive crackle of magic crystal weapons. It was as if they had simply burrowed into the ground and stopped functioning.

Duds?

Some residents of Holy City near the impact sites were puzzled. A few curious onlookers approached to investigate. Before they could get close, thick green mist suddenly erupted from the holes in the ground. Those who failed to hold their breath in time managed only two stumbling steps backward before collapsing, their bodies convulsing violently. Hands clawed at their throats, faces turning crimson as if trying—and failing—to vomit something up. Within seconds, their flesh began rotting away, leaving behind nothing but green-tinged skeletons.

The mist spread rapidly, outpacing even the fastest evolved. Soon, the three poison gas shells—all concentrated near the western sector—had contaminated a vast area.

This naturally alarmed every evolved in the vicinity. Specialists in toxins, protected by elite fighters, were quickly dispatched to the edges of the spreading gas.

An old man darted into the mist, then immediately retreated, his escorts following suit. Only when he signaled safety did another summon a translucent, jellyfish-like battle beast to envelop the group.

"It's 'Sewage Toxin,'" the old man declared with certainty. "A formula from intermediate alchemists. There was an Eastern European alchemist who mastered it—some potions made their way here, and I've encountered them before. No mistake."

"Then what do we do?"

The question came from the western sector's defense commander, one of the four generals overseeing the city's garrison.

While the wall's defenses were holding steady despite the chaos, the sudden appearance of poison gas demanded immediate attention. Cursing the Easterners' ruthlessness, he had rushed here for solutions—conveniently forgetting his own forces' black mist-spraying weapons mounted on the walls.

"Well..." The old man pondered briefly. "From the intel we have, those Easterners only fired three of these gas shells. Based on their size, the toxin payload can't be too large. The wider it spreads, the more diluted it becomes. At the periphery, it's no longer lethal."

"Also, any standard antidote—potion or pill—will grant temporary immunity. At least until the gas dissipates. For those without antidotes, just avoid the blast epicenters. The outer areas are safe if you hold your breath—skin contact won't harm you."

The defense commander relaxed slightly.

But just as he began to exhale in relief, a chorus of furious shouts erupted from the walls. His head snapped up in time to see two merged shadows plummeting to the ground.

When the bodies hit, his eyes widened in shock.

"Where the hell did zombies come from?!"

In the Chinese region, zombies had become a normalized threat—so much so that humans often slept soundly just a wall away from them. The population density and pre-apocalypse economic development there ensured zombies remained survivors' primary foes.

But here was different. Settlements clustered around scarce water sources, and while zombies existed, their numbers paled in comparison. The Holy City had long since purged all undead from its territory. Attacks were rare, with threats like sand monsters far more prevalent.

For many Holy City elites, going months without seeing a zombie was a normal occurrence.

Now, not only had zombies appeared—they'd emerged on the city walls. The commander's shock was understandable.

"To the walls! Mobilize the Royal Guard, too!"

He bellowed the order, his instincts screaming that things were spiraling out of control. The 5,000-strong Royal Guard, held in reserve below, was summoned to reinforce the defenses.

But he overlooked one critical detail—or failed to connect the dots. The lower city was now engulfed in toxic mist, communications in disarray. By the time he personally led reinforcements up the walls, the Royal Guard's belated mobilization had only just begun.

Chaos reigned atop the walls.

Zombies—impossible to count—were tearing into every evolved in sight. Their evolutionary levels were terrifyingly high; within the commander's immediate line of sight alone, several were level seven.

And he himself had only reached level eight two months prior.

"Goddamn it, where are they coming from?!"

Drawing his weapon, he charged toward the high-level zombies wreaking havoc among his troops.

Soon, he got his answer.

With the wall's defenses in disarray, nothing could stop the next aerial bombardment. Several massive metal spheres smashed into the ramparts, splitting open to disgorge hordes of zombies. Just this first wave—six spheres—spilled hundreds of undead onto the defenses.

Some were injured or even dead on arrival, but far more emerged unscathed.

"This is a desecration of your own kind!"

An evolved, his neck clamped in a zombie's jaws, screamed the accusation with his dying breath—denouncing Cloud Peak's crimes.

But no answer would come. His neck snapped, life extinguished.

This scene repeated across the western wall's entirety.

With interception efforts collapsed, missiles and rockets rained unimpeded into the Holy City.

Outside the walls, Liang Chuyin led her thirty-five-woman squad to the vanguard of Cloud Peak's forces. Each wielded a whip, their movements synchronized as they lashed upward in unison.

The whips' trajectories transformed into strands of energy, weaving together into a colossal net. Linked to all thirty-six weapons, the mesh expanded before catapulting toward the incoming necrotic orbs.

The exertion visibly drained Liang Chuyin and her team. Escorts immediately pulled them back as a shield-bearing unit hundreds strong advanced, forming a barricade against the projectiles.

From the rear, Guang Yao watched, gripping his battle merit medal as he transmitted:

"Boss, the opening salvo's done. The rest is up to you."

Chapter 1752: Night Blood (5)

Beneath West City's walls, a play of light and shadow unfolded.

This was the aftermath of a silent battle.

The gray necrotic orbs collided with the energy net, creating a scene that chilled the blood. Like unstable currents clashing without sound, they alternated between blinding radiance and abyssal darkness.

Hovering midair, the struggle appeared deceptively calm—yet everyone knew a life-and-death contest raged within.

After consuming recovery potions, Liang Chuyin and her team regained some strength, watching intently.

The energy net was their ultimate attack—Sighing Net—activated through their Team Book.

Though inferior to the Female Guard's higher-tier version, their Team Book granted formidable bonuses: enhanced weapon potency when fighting near allies, damage distribution, and most crucially, access to this devastating technique.

As Liang Chuyin and her squad's levels rose, the Sighing Net's power grew terrifying. At full strength, even Yangos would evade its grasp, while a level-nine Ye Zhongming would need serious effort to counter it.

After all, this was the combined strike of dozens of high-level evolved.

Cloud Peak hadn't marched blindly into this siege. Their intelligence on the Holy City—its defenses, population, surroundings—would shock its residents if laid bare.

While combat began tonight, Cloud Peak's strategists had started this war long ago.

Though they might not have anticipated these necrotic orbs specifically, they'd prepared contingencies for every direction.

The lightshow ceased. Under countless Cloud Peak gazes, the energy net dissipated.

Yet the necrotic orbs remained.

They resumed their advance.

"Dammit!" Liang Chuxi spat, uncouth but furious, raising her whip to charge—only for the shield-bearing troops to intercept first.

They were the second form of insurance.

These burly warriors—all close-combat specialists—wore Cloud Peak's sturdiest mass-produced armor and tower shields capable of weathering any storm.

Defenders. Every core team had them. These were all Liang Chuyin and Guang Yao could muster.

With battlecries, they interposed themselves as the orbs accelerated downward.

"Ugh—"

Upon contact, radiant auras flared around several defenders—proof their protection relied on skills, not just gear.

Yet the light vanished instantly. Grunts escaped clenched jaws before bodies thudded to earth.

For Cloud Peak's iron-willed defenders to vocalize pain? The agony must be excruciating.

As men fell, others immediately filled their positions, meeting the orbs head-on.

A relentless cycle of collapse and reinforcement played out.

Watching, Liang Chuyin and Guang Yao felt their vision blur with rage, rushing forward. Dozens already lay motionless—a dire sign.

Perhaps agitated by the net, the orbs turned frenzied, tearing through defensive lines.

By the time reinforcements arrived, the orbs had shrunk noticeably—their only consolation.

"RAAAAH!"

Several colossal figures erupted from the ranks, shield-charging the now head-sized orbs.

Squad leaders. All level-seven evolved. All true defensive professionals.

Silence.

The orbs vanished.

Left behind: over a hundred motionless Cloud Peak warriors.

"They..."

Kneeling, Guang Yao's voice cracked.

The fallen bore ashen, withered faces—youthful vigor replaced by necrotic decay. No life remained.

Not drained—infected.

A sight Cloud Peak knew well. The Netherbone Dragonfish's victims died in identical circumstances.

One Holy City counterattack. One hundred losses. The weight threatened to shatter Liang Chuyin and Guang Yao's composure.

Elite forces came with this price: every life was precious. Every loss was unacceptable.

"Request West City as primary assault vector!"

Fury burned, but Guang Yao's mind stayed icy. He reiterated his plea through the Battle Contribution Badge.

"I second!" Liang Chuxi echoed.

After seconds of silence, Ye Zhongming's approval came.

To Holy City's defenders, West City's ferocious battle might seem the main event. Yet until now, Cloud Peak had viewed all four gates equally.

Arrogant? Perhaps. But facts were facts.

With the king's unconditional assent, the battlefield transformed. Three previously inconspicuous Netherbone Demon Platforms hummed to life, disgorging War Fortresses, followed by V3 rocket teams and gene-modified troops. **RANOBÊ\$**

"The boss says we're yours to command."

A cold voice addressed Guang Yao. None minded its tone—least of all him.

This was no ordinary researcher. A mental powerhouse surpassing Park Xiuying, second only to Ye Zhongming himself.

Commander of Cloud Peak's gene forces. His brain—a surgically altered "conducting baton" courtesy of Liu Zhenghong.

With gene troops' expanding numbers and... quirks, conventional leadership proved impossible. The solution? Specialized commanders.

It demanded sacrifice. Becoming half-gene-life hybrids carried irreversible consequences.

This man had willingly paid that price.

Respect followed him like a shadow.

"I need the walls distracted," Guang Yao stated.

The gene commander nodded. "Perhaps... I can breach the gates, too."

Chapter 1753: Night Blood (6)

The Holy City's intelligence had made one critical error.

Their assessment of Cloud Peak's troop numbers was wrong.

True, only about 110,000 evolved from Cloud Peak had initially surrounded the city—their main force.

But they'd forgotten one thing: Cloud Peak possessed more teleportation equipment than any other faction in the Chinese region. The Netherbone Platforms and other devices ensured they could deploy massive reinforcements anywhere in minutes.

Before the battle, Ye Zhongming had worried that revealing their full strength might frighten the Holy City into desperate measures.

So he'd hidden the vast gene-modified army in the oasis, ready to emerge when needed.

This might also catch the Holy City off guard.

Now that West City had been designated the main assault vector, the gene army's main force appeared here.

From multiple teleportation gates, lifeforms poured forth like divine magic—thousands of gene soldiers emerging every minute.

But the Holy City's western defenders had no time to investigate. They were under furious bombardment.

The Exquisite Floating Balls reappeared after their brief disappearance, launching incendiary missiles. War Fortresses concentrated their rocket barrages here, saturating the battlements. The grenade-launching rocket launchers became an outright nuisance—their sheer volume painting the sky above the walls red with exhaust trails.

Zombies still rampaged across the walls, leaving few hands free to intercept the projectiles. The Thousand Defender's long-range support was clearly overstretched. Had the remaining 5,000 Royal Guards and reserves not reinforced the position, the rocket onslaught alone would have turned the city walls into an inferno.

Even so, West City's defenses had degraded from active interception to passive resistance.

Before, skilled evolved had easily shot down missiles with precision attacks—no great challenge for those with ranged abilities or weapons.

Now? Those specialists were either zombie fodder or dead. The fresh reserves relied on defensive gear and skills to weather the storm.

While their levels and equipment could barely handle the bombardment, the sheer volume threatened to overwhelm them.

Regardless, West City's walls were in chaos.

And it was at this moment the gene soldiers entered the fray—in an utterly unexpected manner.

Their first wave wasn't a roaring charge, but a silent infiltration.

A thousand shadows shot from Cloud Peak's lines like loosed arrows—so fast that under the flares' glow, anyone below level-six saw only faint blurs.

And occasional glints of light.

That familiar metallic sheen of edged weapons.

Some defenders noticed, shouting warnings, but no one took it seriously. Why would they? A thousand shadows meant nothing against a city's defenses—no siege equipment, no threat. Besides, with Royal Guards stabilizing the situation, what could these stragglers do against ballistae and catapults?

Under the garrison commander's lead, zombies were nearly cleared. Many defenders resumed intercepting projectiles, though smoke now obscured the ramparts.

"Catapults! Soulscource Ballistae! Crews, return to positions!"

The commander roared, realizing his usually proud troops were crumbling under pressure.

"Opdu—" He began calling his deputy to take another wall section when his voice suddenly sharpened to a shriek.

"DROP THE BARBED VINES! NOW!"

Sprinting to the parapet, he kicked a bundled mass over the edge. Others followed suit after a stunned moment.

"Those shadows! Almighty, what are they?!"

A defender who'd just claimed a level-six magic crystal from a zombie glanced down—and froze.

The towering walls didn't stall the shadows. They were scaling vertically at terrifying speeds. Five seconds—that's all they'd need to reach the top.

"Cici! Activate it!"

Crushing something in his grip, the commander watched liquid evaporate from his palm.

The dropped bundles unfurled midair—five-meter-wide nets of black vines studded with spikes, covering half the wall's height. Shadows caught beneath were either smashed downward or snagged, their ascent halted.

Now the defenders saw them clearly.

Gaunt, pitch-black humanoids with cracked, stone-like skin. Their limbs ended in suction-cup pores, wielding oversized silver daggers. No gear except wooden crates strapped to their backs.

Of the thousand shadow gene soldiers, vines claimed over a tenth—either impaled or sent crashing down.

Defenders leaned over the parapets, attacking frantically. Whatever these things were, nothing good.

Five seconds was nothing to evolved—enough time to unleash hell.

A storm of attacks ravaged the wall face. Meanwhile, the very bricks beneath the climbers' feet began scorching hot. Some shadows stumbled; a few even burst into flames and fell.

Casualties mounted rapidly—hundreds per second. By the time the first shadows crested the wall, fewer than thirty remained.

The garrison commander exhaled in relief. Between the barbed vines and Cici's thermal enchantment, the assault had been contained. Thirty stragglers couldn't possibly—

Then the survivors detonated.

Or rather, their wooden crates did.

Below the walls, Guang Yao smirked. The gene army's first wave had succeeded.

This meant the Western Wall would fall.

He gestured. The repositioned Candy Siege Cannon elevated its chasm-like barrel. After a pregnant pause, it launched a gargantuan shell over the charging gene army's heads—straight for West City's energy-shrouded gates.

Chapter 1754: Night Blood (7)

The cannon's roar this time was deafening, cutting through even the fiercest battles.

Every eye that could track the projectile turned toward it.

Sound didn't always equate to power—but this time, everyone instinctively knew: This thing was terrifying.

The Candy Siege Cannon shattered upon firing. Its final shot had exceeded its structural limits.

Forged through collaborative efforts from Ye Zhongming to Little Candy to Le Dayuan, this colossal weapon had expended every ounce of its potential. Its destiny was fulfilled.

The massive metal shell screamed toward West City's gates—now shielded by a translucent energy barrier.

Observers held their breaths, awaiting outcomes they either hoped for or dreaded.

CLANG!

The impact sounded like two titanic metals colliding.

Eardrums ruptured across the battlefield as hands instinctively flew to ears.

The entire western wall—no, the entire Holy City's fortifications—shuddered violently.

Defenders near the gates staggered like drunkards.

Their imbalance synchronized perfectly with the screams erupting atop the walls.

These shrieks originated from the aftermath of the shadow gene soldiers' explosions—specifically, the contents of their detonated black boxes.

Thousands of green triple-bladed shurikens.

Each box contained a launch mechanism activated upon detonation, firing these cicada-wing-thin projectiles in a devastating bloom.

Powered by magic crystals to maintain lethality and crafted at green-tier quality, each shuriken struck with the force of a level-six evolved's full-power attack.

This weapon had begun as a researcher's idle experiment—a practice piece prioritizing raw destructive potential above all else. While successful in that regard, its flaws were glaring: indiscriminate area saturation made activation suicidal, while the stringent requirements (minimum level-seven magic crystals and matching projectile grades) rendered mass production impractical.

Simply put: it was a friendly-fire nightmare.

The emergence of gene soldiers provided a solution.

For this siege, the Gene Life and Magic Crystal Weapon labs had collaborated in an unprecedented manner, birthing this cost-ineffective yet brutal system.

Fortunately, with Ye Zhongming's supreme craftsmanship, mass-producing these shurikens—requiring only durability and sharpness—was trivial.

Dozens of gene soldiers. Dozens of devices. Over 200,000 triple-blades unleashed under the gene commander's control.

The inventor had whimsically named this weapon "Pear Blossoms in Rain"—likely inspired by the legendary mechanisms found in ancient martial arts novels.

This was why Guang Yao had known victory was certain with just a few dozen gene soldiers reaching the walls. The shuriken storm would turn the battlements into hell.

True, the gene soldiers' distribution created coverage gaps, but it sufficed to ravage over half the western defenses. Cloud Peak cared little for enemy casualties—their focus was the annihilation of siege engines.

These blades didn't discriminate between flesh and machinery. Unarmored, undefended war machines fared worse than evolved.

Death and destruction arrived simultaneously.

The gate's energy shield shattered. The metal shell rebounded, crushing gene troops in its path.

The walls became a graveyard—corpses and ruined machines studded with glowing shurikens, some intact, others broken.

The green weapons' gleam contrasted starkly with the spreading crimson tides.

"Hold... HOLD THE LINE!"

The garrison commander's order began as a growl before erupting into a scream.

He was unraveling.

The impregnable city was breaking.

The unrelenting artillery. The suicidal shuriken storm. The gate-crushing metal sphere. The zombie drops. The non-evolved siege army. All defied his apocalyptic combat experience.

This wasn't evolved versus mutants anymore. This was total war between humans—fought without restraint.

And neither he nor the Holy City was prepared.

"Beg the King for reinforcements! Tell him... the Holy City is falling."

As his order echoed, messengers fled the walls inward while outside, the vanguard gene troops reached the base. Some became living ladders for climbers. Others—massive but slow—hurled comrades upward like projectiles.

Then there were the specialists:

Armless constructs on wheeled platforms hammering the exposed gates with keratin-clad battering limbs—each strike vibrating the very earth.

Ranged variants spraying the battlements from below.

Leapers using dead comrades' corpses as springboards to bypass the paralyzing barbed vines.

Worst of all? The leapers kept coming.

Meanwhile, Cloud Peak's artillery shifted focus inward—harassing reinforcement routes while hunting the wall's power sources. Neutralizing the burning brick enchantments would simplify everything.

Guang Yao monitored developments. The dwindling counterfire from siege engines confirmed Li Qiang's snipers were picking off operators.

After murmuring with Liang Chuyin, he raised his hand.

The entire Cloud Peak evolved force mobilized.

Elsewhere, Ye Zhongming lowered his crossed arms upon hearing the battle contribution badge's reports.

The time had come—not to breach walls, but to create openings for the western assault.

After notifying the other flank commanders, he stepped from his tent. From the camp.

Alone, he walked toward the gates.

Chapter 1755: Night Blood (8)

At the City Lord's residence—or rather, the royal palace—the earlier relaxed atmosphere had vanished entirely. Standing atop the roof, Ahmad's expression was grim as he received the urgent plea for reinforcements from West City.

Indeed, the Easterners' attack had come suddenly, catching him and his subordinates off guard.

But that was no excuse for the gates to be in peril so quickly!

He had poured immense resources into the city's defenses—every brick practically soaked in evolved blood and magic crystals. Ahmad had never imagined this city could be breached.

Not even under surprise assault.

Yet he knew the West City garrison commander wouldn't joke about this.

Over 20,000 regular troops, thousands of reserves, plus the 10,000 Royal Guards dispatched earlier—how could 30,000-40,000 soldiers fail to hold for even an hour?

"Pfft—!"

The Thousand Defender suddenly spat blood and collapsed. He'd strained his limits defending, but no amount of recovery potions could sustain him against such relentless bombardment.

Ahmad's eyes flashed with anger as he gestured for the man to be taken away for treatment.

Without this defensive bulwark, West City's situation would worsen.

"Order the 4th and 5th Brigades of the 2nd Royal Guard to reinforce them. Also, withdraw 3,000 troops from each of the other three gates to support West City."

Suhail immediately protested: "Your Majesty... this seems unwise! Even if West City is in danger, sending the Royal Guard should suffice. Why weaken other sectors? If attacks come there too—"

Feints were common in siege warfare. Suhail feared West City's fierce battle might be a ruse, with the real strike coming elsewhere.

The Holy City couldn't afford mistakes.

Moreover, while West City's situation was dire, before the Thousand Defender collapsed, his reports suggested they could hold for at least thirty more minutes. Perhaps partial reinforcements would suffice for now.

Another concern nagged at Suhail: If the enemy had committed so much force to West City, why not concentrate everything there for a decisive breakthrough?

The only explanation? A feint. Either West City was the diversion, or another sector faced equal threat.

"Rouse the Plum Blossom Slave Army. Have them advance to West City's inner gates and standby."

Ignoring his advisor, Ahmad continued issuing commands that left the room stunned.

When others tried objecting, he cut them off.

"Light every torch and illumination device in the city. I want the Holy City brighter than daylight!"

Silence fell. The king's resolve was absolute.

Watching his subordinates scramble to obey, Ahmad smirked.

West City, the main assault? Fine. West City a diversion? Also fine.

But that's where his counterstrike would fall!

If the Easterners truly aimed to breach there, his forces would stop them. If not... West City would become the Holy City's launching point for annihilation!

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East City Wall.

Defenders here found the situation bizarre. While West City raged, their sector remained eerily quiet.

The only anomaly? A single figure approaching the walls.

Under the lingering glow of flares, the sight was unnerving.

The East City commander took no chances. "The moment he enters siege weapon range, open fire."

The man was Ye Zhongming.

Almost simultaneously, Cloud Peak forces mobilized at the North and South gates—but differently from here.

BOOM!

A black shadow launched from the East walls—a catapult projectile, but not the primitive kind. This was a wheel-tech weapon with targeting systems. Though complex to build, seven post-apocalyptic years had allowed widespread replication. Among non-magic crystal weapons, these were considered successful innovations.

Yet no matter its power or accuracy, the projectile's arc moved like molasses to Ye Zhongming.

He dodged effortlessly. Not that he needed to—it would've missed anyway.

This seemed to trigger the defenders. As Ye Zhongming advanced, siege engines and evolved unleashed a torrent of ranged attacks.

Distance didn't matter. Area saturation would ensure hits.

Or so every East wall defender believed.

The barrage lasted two full minutes.

Brief in duration, but the sheer volume of firepower was oceanic!

With tens of thousands of defenders and weapons, they sought an opening victory—even if just one kill.

Then a messenger arrived with Ahmad's order: Dispatch 3,000 to reinforce West City.

The commander nodded, summoning a mediocre brigade leader for the task.

The captain hesitated until glared into compliance—only for gasps to interrupt them.

Below, the lone figure stood unharmed near the gates, having evaded everything. Those with sharp eyes could now clearly see the Easterner's features.

The man planted two objects in the ground—magic staves of some sort. One activated instantly, projecting a massive energy shield. The other's shaft began lighting up sequentially from base to tip.

One segment. Two. Three—until fully illuminated.

Then—

A colossal beam erupted, crossing the distance instantly to strike the shielded gates.

The captain gaped before finally muttering:

"Commander... still sending reinforcements?"