

Old Gods 1061

Chapter 1061: The Coming of Flame!

December 12th.

Beifeng City was covered in a blanket of silver, with snowflakes fluttering down into the bustling city.

Divine-Beifeng had fallen on December 3rd, exactly nine days ago, yet the ancient city remained crowded, with a large gathering of North Wind believers.

Some had come specifically to mourn Beifeng.

People knelt and bowed in the direction where the Divine Sculpture of Beifeng had vanished, sending Lord God on his final journey.

Some were unable to accept the death of Lord Beifeng, holding onto a faint and unrealistic hope deep in their hearts.

Deceiving themselves, they desperately awaited a miracle.

Others were unwilling to leave the sect, feeling that only among the crowds in this darkest hour could they find a sense of safety and solace.

The atmosphere in the city was oppressively terrifying.

Hu Jiaojiao, her face full of worry, was leading a team on patrol to maintain order in the city.

Nine days ago, on the very day the god fell, she received a special task from her grandfather, the City Lord:

Protect the families of two close friends.

However, after many days of investigation, Hu Jiaojiao was shocked to discover that the families of her past friends had all disappeared.

One or two going missing could mean they met with misfortune on the night of the fifteenth of last month.

But all of them disappearing?

Hu Jiaojiao realized that someone must have beaten her to it!

Whether they had arrived first to protect the families or to harm them was unknown.

Hu Jiaojiao was quite dejected and returned to Beifeng City two days ago. To her surprise, her grandfather remained optimistic about the matter.

And to this day, she still didn't know what the two friends had done.

The City Lord grandfather was evasive and unwilling to reveal much.

One task was not completed well, and another challenge was already at hand.

The fifteenth night was soon approaching!

On the fifteenth of the lunar month, the ghost gate opens, and demons and spirits come unbidden.

This was a common rhyme known even to children.

For over forty years since the descent of the gods, Evil Demons invaded monthly, never failing to miss an invasion.

And at this time, Beifeng City, and even the entire Da Xia, the strength of the Human Clan believers had suffered a devastating blow.

The vast majority of believers were left with only the Universal Skill: Water Flow Armor.

On the coming fifteenth night, people could only rely on this defensive attire and their martial arts skills to resist the invasion of demons.

Looking back at the fifteenth of the previous month, Evil Demons invaded the Human World like mad, with warfires even extending to late winter!

All over Da Xia, human tragedies were everywhere, and devastation was visible all around.

This December fifteenth, how many more will die tragically, how many more families will be shattered?

Is there still hope for this world?

"Ah! Song Song Song... Mount Song, Vajra Temple has... has has has..."

An urgent, yet stammering voice broke the oppressive atmosphere.

Hu Jiaojiao paused her steps, frowning as she looked towards the people kneeling by the street.

The speaker was a young man, and judging by his attire, he must have just arrived in Beifeng City.

In this period of social turmoil, transportation in Da Xia was not as smooth as before; traveling was fraught with difficulties.

At this moment, there still might be former North Wind Disciples on their way to the North Country.

"Vajra Temple, has has has... Ah!" The young man's face turned beet red with urgency and anger, and he slapped himself hard with his mobile phone.

Hating that his tongue couldn't get the words out.

"What's going on?"

"Speak up! What's there?"

"Shut your dog mouth! Stop freaking yelling!" The street instantly became chaotic.

The atmosphere in the city was already tense, people's moods were poor; some were sad, some desperate, some fearful, some angry. Any unexpected event could trigger chaos.

"Silence!" Hu Jiaojiao decisively commanded, letting out a crisp rebuke.

The surroundings immediately quieted down.

In the human domain, Yangyang Sea naturally had supreme authority.

To Hu Jiaojiao's surprise, just as things quieted in this alley, there was an uproar in a distant street.

No, it wasn't just that street.

In a very short time, calls erupted throughout the city!

"Snap!" Hu Jiaojiao's brows furrowed as she leapt over several heads, grabbing the young man's phone.

Hu Jiaojiao looked at the screen, her eyes slightly widening in astonishment.

What had she seen?

A photo taken from a low angle, a colossal female sculpture standing tall?

This stone sculpture, strange yet familiar, was not one of the known gods of Da Xia.

And this divine sculpture possessed a feature that neither the gods of Da Xia nor those worldwide had—
clarity!

She had short, sleek hair and strong facial lines, a high nose bridge, and defined lip line.

Her brows exuded a dense heroic spirit!

Even through the screen, looking at the photo, it could stir one's emotions!

Underneath her heroic brows, her eyes were bright and sharp, overlooking the masses below her.

Strange,

because this clearly-featured female sculpture was not among the gods of Da Xia.

Familiar, because...

Wasn't this Da Xia's second Heavenly Pride, He Qifeng?!

"He Qifeng?" Hu Jiaojiao, as someone maintaining order, couldn't help but join the exclamatory crowd.

The renowned Da Xia's second Heavenly Pride, who didn't know her?

Indeed, this was He Qifeng!

She had long made her name in Da Xia, serving as a spiritual pillar for millions, and was the only female disciple in the Martial Monk Faction in the forty-plus years since the gods' descent.

Full of legendary colors.

Now she was...

Hu Jiaojiao's hand trembled slightly, unable to believe or digest the shocking news, her fingers accidentally touched the screen.

Chapter 1062: The Coming of Flame! (Part 2)

As the picture shrank, the comments below immediately came into view.

"He...He Qifeng?"

"Who the hell P's this picture, do you want to die?"

"The gods are all dead, stop dreaming! Gods die in droves, we're gonna die too, stop fantasizing!"

"Why make this kind of picture? Is it self-consolation? I really laughed, if you really want a savior, then P a picture of Ran the Dog instead..."

"Idiot! Reported it, just causing trouble."

"Holy shit!! It's true! This is real!! Mount Song! Vajra Temple! The new god has descended!"

"Huh???"

"There's a live broadcast! The new god has descended, right at Vajra Temple!"

"Are you telling me that He Qifeng, Da Xia's second Heavenly Pride who went missing for years, has become a god?"

Hu Jiaojiao was stunned for quite a while, hurriedly exiting the thread, scrolling down to refresh, and sure enough, she saw a bunch of explosive posts emerging.

Really?

Is it really true?

"Gulp." Hu Jiaojiao swallowed and clicked into the first post, but there were no Divine Sculpture images, instead, it was more like an information summary post.

Hu Jiaojiao was completely confused!

She just wanted to confirm whether He Qifeng had transformed into a Divine Sculpture and descended upon the Central Plains' Mount Song·Vajra Temple, but unexpectedly, she found an even more unbelievable piece of news.

When she clicked into the post, the poster was still frantically updating the post content.

Almost changing it every few seconds! Continuously summarizing the many Divine Sculptures descending in Da Xia's various places and ancient cities.

The comments below were even more frantically flooding in:

"Guangyue! Liyuan Ancient City in Guangfu City also has a new god descending!"

"!!! Damn it!!!"

"Ah! Qiantang River Hang City, the Lantern Festival Ancient City also...quick, look at the photos!"

"Wait a minute, why does the goddess sculpture in your Lantern Festival Ancient City look so familiar?"

"Shanghai...Thunder City, a new god also came to Shanghai! It's a mighty male god sculpture! Quickly change it, quickly note it down!"

"What...what is all this? What are you all talking about? Are all these real?"

"Lord Ash has returned, no! A goddess sculpture with a bow came to our Qiongya Island, she seems...seems like Ash!"

"Dragon Carp City ahhh! Our Dragon Carp Ancient City also has a goddess blessing, no way! Seems like a male?"

"They're here, they're all here..."

"Wuwuwu...Mom, I feel like I'm going crazy, am I crazy? Or does the world really have hope?"

"Yumen Pass! Lady Luo Xian! Luo Xian...my god, I saw it in another post! I saw Jiang Ruyi, Ran the Dog's fiancée!"

"What did you say??"

"Huh???"

Hu Jiaojiao was breathing rapidly, trembling with excitement.

One person might be deceit.

But in a short time, messages were coming from all over Da Xia, accompanied by a lot of Divine Sculpture pictures, could it be fake?

Suddenly, Hu Jiaojiao's breathing stagnated.

She just felt shrouded in a shadow.

Along with it, the bustling Beifeng City fell into silence in an instant.

How could it just be Hu Jiaojiao overshadowed?

Inside and outside the ancient city, all living beings raised their heads and saw a magnificent Divine Sculpture that blocked out the sky and sun.

She was as tall as two hundred and seventy or eighty meters, wearing a bamboo hat and a large straw raincoat, carrying a huge broken blade on her back.

There was also a wisp of tulle, seemingly made of stone, yet it was soft and eclectic, flowing between the goddess's long hair like a waterfall.

"Crack!"

In her excitement, Hu Jiaojiao accidentally crushed her phone.

Just now, she saw the shocking news from various parts of Da Xia in a small post.

And at this moment, it was Beifeng City's turn, far away in the North Country!

The new god has descended!

"Boom!!"

The magnificent Divine Sculpture slowly descended into the Inner City, seemingly connecting heaven and earth, causing the ground to shudder.

Under the wide brim of the bamboo hat were the sharp eyes of the goddess statue.

She slowly lowered her eyes, looking down upon the living beings at her feet.

"Crack..."

Hu Jiaojiao's pupils contracted violently, completely crushing the bent phone.

She finally saw the face of the goddess sculpture clearly!

That solemn and severe, yet not dazzlingly charming stone face.

"Yu... Yuxiang?" Hu Jiaojiao stood in place, murmuring foolishly.

Countless people gazed up at the newly descended goddess sculpture, each with different expressions.

Some were surprised, some were afraid.

Some were at a loss, anxious and restless, while others were emotional, full of anticipation.

There were also people like Hu Jiaojiao, who already knew Deng Yuxiang and were momentarily unable to react.

In the Inner City, there was a middle-aged woman with a special identity, struck as if by lightning.

Liao Wushuang looked ashen-faced, staring blankly at the broken blade behind the Divine Sculpture.

The enormous, broken stone saber...

Was it the Night-slaying Great Saber that I once shattered?

Was this woman, transformed into a Stone Sculpture, the junior who once challenged me?

"God! Lord God has arrived!"

"Beifeng City also has, we also have a new god coming to save us..."

"So wonderful, so wonderful—ooh ooh ooh..."

Where Deng Yuxiang's gaze passed, the crowd knelt down with a whoosh.

The originally silent Beifeng City erupted with an astonishing sound, cheers and sobs of joy echoing unceasingly.

Deng Yuxiang did not stop people from venting their emotions.

Her scanning gaze paused slightly, landing on a certain spot in the Inner City.

There was a remarkable woman, though middle-aged, her hair already white.

"Ah." Liao Wushuang's body trembled violently, legs shaking as she backed away nervously.

She gazed up at the familiar yet unfamiliar Divine Sculpture, as if to confirm something.

And as the gaze of a person met that of a god, Liao Wushuang's suspicions were confirmed, losing all her strength.

With a thud!

Liao Wushuang fell to her knees, trembling as she bowed her head, wide-eyed at the snow beneath her, cold sweat streaming down her forehead.

The junior who once bore grudges with her now replaced Lord Beifeng, standing lofty between heaven and earth.

Perhaps, the other side only needed to move a finger to crush her to death.

No, not perhaps.

It's a certainty.

The overwhelming power of the god could be felt by all beings within this realm.

Not inferior to the North Wind in the slightest!

Liao Wushuang trembled under the gaze of the god.

Unexpectedly, Lord God did not stomp down, crushing the insignificant ant into dust, but instead slightly raised her hand.

The back of her hand facing upwards, fingertips slightly lifting.

Lord God's sudden action naturally caught everyone's attention.

The noisy Beifeng Ancient City both inside and out fell silent once again.

People were astonished to discover that on the goddess' fingertip appeared a figure as small as the common folk.

He was draped in a large white robe, its sleeves and short hair fluttering sideways in the cold wind.

A ribbon behind him fluttered gracefully, dreamlike, like a flowing stream.

He was supposed to be ethereal and otherworldly, like an exiled immortal.

Yet his face was masked with a blood-colored mask, through the crystalline Blood Crystal, tendrils of blood mist flowed slowly, vibrant and mystical.

"Ran... Ran..."

"Is it me, is it... the one I think it is?"

"You saw him, right? You saw him too, it's not my illusion, is it?"

"Lu... Lu Tianjiao?"

People wanted to recognize yet dared not confirm, for the youth's image had changed greatly, and standing high up, perched on the god's fingertip made it even less recognizable.

"Take it off." The goddess spoke softly, her gentle voice spreading across the sky.

Lu Ran placed a hand on the Blood Crystal mask.

He knew what he should do, understanding that his and He Qifeng's appearance might even inspire the Human Clan more than the god's descent!

In this darkest of times, people needed this.

Lu Ran removed the mask and looked at the sea of people within the city, his gaze extending beyond to the modern cities outside the ancient city.

On the streets, the traffic and pedestrians had already come to a standstill.

The masses gazed up.

Amidst the crowded skyscrapers, on the rooftops of shelters and in front of bedroom windows in residential buildings, stood various figures.

Different people had different faces, but slowly, the same expression appeared.

Lu Ran smiled.

In this cold season with frost and snow, his smile seemed so warm.

So brilliant.

Da Xia, your Pride of Da Xia...

Has returned.

...

Chapter 1063: Three Questions from Back Then

The cold wind persists, frost and snow drifting down.

Yet, Beifeng City is no longer as cold as before.

Under countless fervent gazes, the tiny Human Clan standing at the goddess's fingertip slowly descends.

His visage grows clearer, the crowd below becomes more restless, and excitement sharpens on their faces.

But the issue is, some people are really only suited to be seen from afar.

As Lu Ran continues to descend, an overwhelming pressure crashes down alongside.

"Ah!"

"Don't, don't push! Don't..."

"Everyone, stay calm, be careful!" Amidst cries of alarm, the figure descending from the Majestic Heavenly Realm comes to a halt.

"Stop." Lu Ran utters a word, and the ink jade Tiger Talisman hidden in his collar quietly emits a glow.

The restless crowd below freezes in place almost instantly.

Their movements synchronized to an unbelievable degree.

Lu Ran ascends another dozen meters, gazing down at the crowd.

Where his gaze falls, some avert their eyes, while others hastily put down their phones and bow their heads.

Lu Ran gently says, "You may capture this on camera, let more people see."

The youth's demeanor is gentle; he does not employ the Tiger Talisman again, just issuing permission. Yet for most beings present, this is still an unyielding command.

In an instant, many raise their phones.

Lu Ran is silent for a moment, then slowly speaks: "You should know who I am."

"Ran Shen!" An excited shout triggers a chain reaction completely.

"Ran Shen! Ran Shen!!"

"Lu Ran! Lu Ran! Lu Ran!!" The clamors grow louder, the atmosphere more fervent, and the people become bolder...

When Lu Ran soars through the air, far enough from the ground, the crowd swarms towards him.

Occasionally, a cry tinged with sobs reaches Lu Ran's ears, unsettling his heart.

Their faces flushed with excitement, as though seeing a ray of light in the darkest of times.

Lu Ran looks at the crowd below, speaking solemnly: "Listen to me, today, in every region of Da Xia, within all the ancient cities, the Divine Sculptures have arrived to be worshipped by us Human Clan.

In each ancient city, whatever Skill the previous Divine Sculpture possessed, the newly descended ones today also have.

Like her!"

Lu Ran turns around, looking up at the towering goddess sculpture: "The North Wind Sect Divine Technique, this god sculpture possesses it, and its power is even stronger."

As his words fall, the crowd is silent for a moment.

Not only in this Beifeng City, but also in cities across Da Xia, the groups gathered on the streets and the families watching broadcasts have a moment of quiet.

As numerous Divine Sculptures descend, in people's hearts, there was a fervent hope these new sculptures would have powerful Divine Techniques.

Moreover, they hoped these new gods could have mercy on the suffering, help Da Xia through tough times.

And now, their hopes have become reality!

No one doubts The Pride of Da Xia, not only due to Lu Ran's influence but also because, at the brink of life and death, people want to believe, choose to believe.

"Wonderful! Wonderful..."

"Heaven bless Da Xia!"

"New gods, truly new gods, sob sob..."

News of this magnitude, after brief silence and fermentation, leads to an "explosive" outcome.

Lu Ran's ears are acute, painfully sharp.

Cries and almost collapsing sobs echo throughout the city.

Various emotions like streams from all directions converge, ultimately forming a surging river towards where he stands.

Though all beings suffer.

But those struggling under the Divine Demon System suffer too bitterly.

Too repressed, too despaired.

"Ran Shen! Those gods, who are they?"

"Who are they, are they our Human Clan? I saw He Qifeng, in the Vajra Temple, is that god really He Qifeng?"

"Lu Ran, Lu Ran! Are they..."

Lu Ran does not heed the questions but speaks: "Do not rush towards the ancient cities."

In an instant, the crowd quiets down, looking up at Lu Ran, puzzled.

Lu Ran nods and says: "Stay in the place you currently live, stay securely at home! In the coming days, Da Xia's army and the Divine People Bureau's warriors will first worship the gods, protecting the upcoming Fifteenth Night.

"Soon, the authorities will announce the information of each god; you'll have over half a month to understand them."

"The next god-worship ceremony won't be next June first, but on the upcoming New Year's Day."

Lu Ran's words through phones and distant cameras spread across streets and homes.

"God-worship ceremony brought forward? New Year's Day?"

"Truly, is this possible? Is this really changeable?"

"But Lu Tianjiao said... said it's New Year's Day, he said..."

Forty years of continuous discipline have long taught people reverence and compliance; the gods' decrees are golden rules, absolute heavenly laws not to be offended.

They are survival rules all living beings must adhere to!

And now, Lu Ran openly defies All Gods' wills, even altering the rules set by the gods.

Is this possible?

"Lu Ran, do other Lord Gods agree?"

"Will this offend the gods?"

"Why did the demise of gods happen, why do the newly descended gods have the Divine Techniques of... old gods?"

"I saw Lady Luo Xian, Ran Shen, I saw your fiancée! She's also a Divine Sculpture, has Lady Luo Xian become a god?"

Questions pour in, every word reaches him.

Yet, Lu Ran cannot elaborate much.

At least for now, he cannot speak of the collusion between gods and demons, the potential consequences of which Lu Ran does not wish to see.

Chapter 1064: The Three Questions from Back Then (Part 2)

Currently, there is also a force led by the Evil Spear Emperor, occupying the northwest of the Heavenly Realm Battlefield, with numerous gods and countless human believers under their sect.

Once Lu Ran reveals the truth, he can't guarantee the safety of those believers' lives.

For those who have signed the master-servant contract, a god can, with just a thought, execute the believers under their sect.

This is just speaking about Da Xia.

Across the entire world, there are still billions of believers in various countries and regions!

Once the news is made public, how will the Gods and Demons from outer realms react? What consequences will arise?

These concerns make it impossible for Lu Ran to be open and sincere.

Perhaps one day in the future, the Ran Sect will indeed expose the lies of the Gods and Demons, but certainly not now.

"Lu Ran, are you also... a god?"

Suddenly, a voice overshadowed countless others, gradually quieting the crowd.

Lu Ran turned his gaze and saw a somewhat familiar figure.

It was a young woman with an adorable doll-like face, not matching her rank of power in the Sea Realm.

Hu Jiaojiao.

Seeing someone familiar, Lu Ran shook his head with a smile.

Hu Jiaojiao: "I don't believe it!"

Lu Ran: "..."

"Right, I don't believe it!"

"You are, you definitely are! You must be!"

"Ran Shen! Ran Shen! Ran Shen!"

Lu Ran did not tell a lie, but the people did not agree.

After all, many new divine sculptures descended into the world, including Da Xia's second genius, He Qifeng, but the one representing the new gods to speak was Lu Ran.

He directly changed the rules set by all gods, not fearing to offend the gods, just so people could more quickly worship under the new gods and regain familiar divine techniques to have the ability to protect themselves.

"All gods have fallen, Lady Luo Xian and He Tianjiao have become new gods, and also have the divine techniques of the old gods. Were those old gods... were they... by you..."

Another voice rose up, yet dared not speak the complete sentence.

Even so, it was enough for anyone to understand what this person was asking.

And this thought had already arisen in countless minds, just never dared to be truly voiced.

The crowd became completely silent.

Countless pairs of eyes looked up at the young man standing in the air.

Countless faces faced the screens of phones and televisions, watching the smile gradually fade from the young man's face.

Lu Ran put back on the Blood Crystal Mask, returning to a form both celestial and devilish, a muffled voice resonating from the eerie blood face:

"These years, I've traveled to many places."

Lu Ran didn't directly respond to the question, and on the scene, no one dared to ask further.

But across various live streams and forums, the questioning voices surged like a flood, utterly uncontrollable:

"Indeed, all gods have fallen, and you've inherited the abilities of the gods. Could it be the Lord Gods were all killed by you?"

"How can you do this! How dare you do this! The gods saved this world, saved us! The gods have always protected us..."

"Weren't you the pride of Da Xia? An ingrate returning injury for kindness? Ungrateful?"

"So many people died in Da Xia! The entire world was on the brink of destruction! It's because the gods fell that everyone lost their divine techniques! Is this all because of you, Lu Ran?"

"Stop making a fuss, did Ran Shen admit it? Why are you blaming?"

"That goddess who descended into Bihua Ancient City, I know her! She's from the Human Clan, she's He Yingcai from Wulie River University! She's my junior!"

"Yes! And there's Qiao Yuansi and Jiang Ruyi, they are Lu Ran's sister and girlfriend! These divine sculptures descending are all from the Human Clan, and Lu Ran was also a student of Wulie River University; these new gods are all connected to him!"

"Don't spread rumors..."

"Lord Jade Talisman and Lord Dry Sea have long announced, the gods are confronting the demons!"

"Exactly! Many demons have also fallen, perhaps before all gods fell, they chose successors and passed their abilities to their human disciples!"

"Stop saying that BS! Acting like a judge? I just ask if you want to live? Your junior can give you the Bihua Divine Technique, will you respect it or not?"

Across a screen, people were saying all kinds of words.

Forming a sharp contrast with the deathly silent Beifeng City.

"These years, I've traveled to many places, encountered many lives and deaths."

As Lu Ran spoke, he started to turn slowly, once again looking up at the divine sculpture towering in the sky:

"And met many like-minded individuals."

Deng Yuxiang lowered her eyes, wrapping her gaze over the small Human Clan, her expression softened slightly.

"Hoo~"

The stone gauze flowing between the goddess statue's hair slowly descended, transforming to fit the size of the human form, becoming a truly soft and flowing gauze.

Like smoke and mist, it swirled around Lu Ran.

The crowd below immediately felt a weight lift, the terrifying aura of the young man quickly dissipating.

"Do not rashly judge us." Lu Ran looked down beside him, letting the strands of Smoke Green Gauze flow through his fingers.

"You may know our names, but you do not know our stories."

"You only saw them transform into divine sculptures and descend upon ancient cities, but you do not know what we have endured."

Lu Ran knew very well that the identities of the Ran Sect Gods would soon be uncovered.

Their appearances were too clear!

Of course, the warriors of the Ran Sect did not intend to hide their identities.

"All you need to know is, the human Da Xia is our shared homeland; you and I living on this land are blood-connected kinsmen."

"Do you still remember the three questions I asked at the Heavenly Pride Ceremony?"

"Will this world always be like this?"

People looked up at the young man in mid-air; some even covered their mouths, their eyes reddening, waiting in excitement for his response.

Back then, Lu Ran shook his head and said three words – I don't know.

After so many years, with Da Xia's first pride descending as a god, would he give a different answer?

"The answer you've already witnessed," Lu Ran spoke in a deep voice.

Indeed, reality had already given the people an answer.

In the past two or three months, the world had changed dramatically, with gods and demons falling one after another.

As of today, one after another new god has descended into the world, standing tall in ancient cities, becoming new guardians, intending to bestow divine techniques upon humanity, and protect all living things.

Lu Ran continued to repeat the second question from back then:

"Then... will everything get better?"

People concentrated and held their breath, staring intently; many remembered the young man's two-word answer back then – Maybe.

"Continue to live, and see for yourself." Lu Ran's tone was immensely serious, "Do not give up! Just as our generations have not given up for the past forty years, do not give up.

Pick up your hope, reclaim your divine techniques, and then witness all this with your own eyes.

Do not fall before dawn."

"Hoo~"

Lu Ran descended again, closer to the people, just two or three meters from the ground.

With the aid of the Magic Artifact·Smoke Green Gauze, the crowd below was no longer frenzied, but instead surged forward, shouting loudly.

Lu Ran slightly raised his hand, calming the restless crowd, and asked the final question.

But this question did not seem like an inquiry, more like another answer to the previous two questions:

"What if?"

Lu Ran asked, nodding gently.

The scene was silent; before the people could react, they saw Lu Ran nod again.

He slowly turned, facing the densely packed crowd in all directions, facing each eager face, nodding continually, again and again.

A silent response, slow and resolute.

"Ahhhhh!!" The crowd below erupted.

"There must be a way! There must!!"

"Everything will get better, the world will be better, sob... my mom and I will surely survive, everything will be just fine, sob sob..."

The cry was like mountains roaring and seas crashing, deafening in its vastness.

The throng of people nearly boiling, like an enormous bonfire.

The hands held high seemed eager to grasp the youth's garment or perhaps clinging to a thread of courage, tightly clutching a strand of hope.

In short, people strained to stretch out their arms, as if trying to grab hold of something.

Or like they were lifting something up.

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Chapter 1065: A Dream Named Samsara

Within Yumen Pass, there is an ancient city built — Jade Lonely City.

Once, the Divine-Jade Talisman stood tall in the city, but now it has become a stunningly beautiful goddess sculpture.

She is cloaked in a dignified phoenix robe, her long hair cascading like a waterfall. Her exquisite face shows not a hint of expression, and there's no trace of emotion in her eyes.

Silently narrating her aloofness and indifference.

At the feet of the divine sculpture lies Jade Lonely City, seemingly shrouded by an intangible chill, eerily quiet.

Perhaps not intentionally, but her very existence is enough to bring the bustling world to silence, plunging all surging emotions into an icy cave.

Where people remain unaware, inside a secluded courtyard in the Inner City, Jiang Ruyi's heavenly realm body is sitting on a bench in an octagonal pavilion, browsing news on a smartphone.

It's quite magical indeed.

If the people inside and outside the ancient city knew, that the Lord God they revere is playing on a smartphone...

Who knows how vivid their expressions would be?

"God Bless Da Xia, All Gods Descend!"

"Once Da Xia's genius, now on par with the Gods!"

"He said, don't fall before dawn..."

Suddenly, Jiang Ruyi's sliding finger paused as a photo appeared on the screen.

In the photo, crowds thronged and clustered, countless arms stretched out, hands reaching for the clothing corners of a youth suspended in mid-air.

Jiang Ruyi seemed to witness people using their bodies to build a bonfire.

Above it all was the back of the youth, his garments fluttering.

Like smoke and mist, the smoke green gauze seemed to be the light smoke rising from the bonfire.

The smoke and mist silk, colorful like the evening glow, gracefully danced, enhancing the youth's dreamy silhouette.

A strange brilliance flashed across Jiang Ruyi's eyes, she didn't look away for a long time.

Until a voice called out from afar: "Lady, Da Xia's military forces have arrived outside the city. Sect Leader Song asked me to report to you, whether to invite them into the city for homage."

The speaker was Ran Sect's disciple An Xian.

In Jade Lonely City, there are three Ran Sect disciples: Feixian Hall Leader Song Yu, and two Vice Hall Leaders Zhang Zhenghu and An Xian.

These three were once Jade Talisman disciples, part of the same group who were cast into Holy Spirit Mountain with Jiang Ruyi, and have since followed the Ran Sect Lady, eventually entering her sect.

All three are from River Realm, remaining at the second and third rank.

In Holy Spirit Mountain, this strength isn't much, but it's more than adequate for tasks in the human world.

"Hmm." Jiang Ruyi gently responded.

"Yes." An Xian departed courteously, while Jiang Ruyi suddenly turned her head, noticing divine power fluctuations nearby.

Lu Ran was startled, instinctively stepping back.

Jiang Ruyi glared at Lu Ran, then looked down at her phone: "The speech wasn't bad, quite inspiring."

"Still...still okay~" Lu Ran awkwardly scratched his head.

Jiang Ruyi ignored Lu Ran, continuing to slide her finger across the screen, passing someone's photo.

"Hey? Whose phone is this?" Lu Ran leaned over.

"Let An Xian find a disciple in the city to borrow it from."

"Ha! That person is truly fortunate, having their phone used by the Goddess...drinking ah!"

"Ha." Jiang Ruyi was genuinely amused.

The figure she admired in the photo now appeared beside her, his image utterly diminished!

Just like a toy doll, with sensors all over, sensitive and fragile.

A mere glance would make him scream and shout...

"How's the Heavenly Realm Battlefield? Is everything usual?" Lu Ran stepped forward.

"Hmm." Jiang Ruyi nodded lightly, "It seems the Evil Spear Emperor is still trustworthy."

"I am trustworthy too, I haven't exposed the lies of the God Demon." Lu Ran snorted, circling to the Lord God's back, casually picking up the smoke green gauze at her waist.

Yesterday, after Jiang Ruyi, Yu Changsheng, and others successfully transformed into gods, Ran Sect held a meeting.

Afterward, Yu Changsheng traveled with a heavenly realm body to the northwestern part of the Heavenly Realm Battlefield, visiting the leader of the northwestern faction — the Evil Spear Emperor!

Ran Sect's stance was clear, descending into the world is inevitable and cannot be stopped.

Ran Sect promised not to tear off God Demon's fig leaf, ensuring the northwestern faction's gods, and indeed, all gods worldwide still have believers worshipping, maintaining their basic support.

In the future, if Ran Sect fails, the God Demons can continue upholding their meticulously fabricated lies.

Currently, Ran Sect will not launch a massive attack on the northwest camp but will rebuild and guard each Divine Mountain, protecting the Heavenly Realm Battlefield against Faceless Jade Venerable.

Your God Demon camp shouldn't seize this opportunity to create troubles either.

The Human Clan can be your resources in sight, can be the spoils of war for the eventual victors.

But the struggle between our two forces should remain in the Heavenly Realm Battlefield.

Should be retained at the God Demon level.

Who wins and loses, or what method to adopt for camp unification, goal unification, we'll discuss it in detail after the fifteenth.

Of course, Ran Sect's posture and stance are strong, but the envoy sent out is Mr. Cong Long, so his communication with the Evil Spear Emperor should exhibit the art of language.

"Right away~" Lu Ran stood behind Fairy Jiang, folding the smoke green gauze into a strip, covering her eyes.

Jiang Ruyi obediently sat on the bench, allowing it: "Given that the Evil Spear Emperor's nature is like this, we don't need to rush but can make ample preparations.

Within Ran Sect, many disciples are advancing to the heavenly realm."

Lu Ran nodded secretly.

Currently Bai Yanhui, Xuan Shuang Guard, Wei Yun have all advanced to the heavenly realm, Chang Ying, Golden Sparrow are also in the process of advancing.

Later, there is the Sea Realm Peak's Niu Zhengzheng, who could anytime realize a breakthrough.

Beyond this, there are those who have already advanced to Sea Realm·Fourth Rank like Guan Yiren, Tian Tian, and others.

Jiang Ruyi softly spoke: "After these few days are over, you should also enter the gourd to receive nurturing, and soon advance to the third level of the heavenly realm."

"Mmm." Lu Ran picked up the two ends of the smoke green gauze and tied a beautiful bow at the back of her head.

Finally!

The Lord God's imposing manner was gone, and Lu Ran was finally liberated.

"At that time, let the soldiers take turns on duty, always ensuring someone releases Holy Spirit Energy for you... hmm." Jiang Ruyi's body trembled slightly.

Someone had already removed the Blood Crystal Mask, leaning over to embrace her from behind, delicate lips dropping kisses on her neck.

Jiang Ruyi's cheeks gradually turned red, and even her fair and delicate earlobes were stained with a touch of pink.

She lowered her head slightly, softly saying, "In a while, I am going to recruit... recruit believers."

"Mmm." Lu Ran naturally knew what was more important, reined in his thoughts quite a bit, and lightly planted another kiss on those alluring red lips, then stood up straight.

Jiang Ruyi leaned back slightly, gently nestling in his embrace, "The Phoenix Dignity of Nine Heavens Robe seems like it's about to level up again."

"Oh?" Lu Ran's eyes lit up.

This was really good news!

The Third Rank Phoenix Robe was already incredibly strong; what dominant strength would a Fourth Rank Phoenix Robe attain?

Jiang Ruyi whispered, "Its leveling up route should rise with its owner's status. This time as we descend into the world again and widely recruit believers, it will greatly benefit the Phoenix Robe."

Lu Ran pondered, "Then do you want to bring your true self over? Recruiting believers while wearing the real Phoenix Robe?"

The Divine Sculpture standing tall in Jade Lonely City was not the true form of Xian Mo.

It had already become a stone sculpture avatar, an empty shell with a hollow interior.

Yumen Pass is located in the northwest of Da Xia. If Xian Mo's true self were here, it would truly be deep in the enemy's back territory.

After the Gods of Ran Sect descended to the world, they immediately created stone pillars under their feet, probing into the Demon Cave Gate below.

The continuously extending stone pillars pierced through the first and second layers of the Demon Cave, eventually opening a Black Cloud Vortex in the Third Heaven, penetrating the Heavenly Realm Battlefield.

Some stone pillars directly pierced into the Divine Mountain.

And some Divine Mountains were severely damaged; the Gods of Ran Sect used the method of creating stone avatars to constantly pile up stones and restore the Divine Mountain.

These abilities are naturally comprehended after becoming a God.

The Ran Sect also has many God Demon subordinates who can share experiences, so it isn't a difficult task.

It is worth mentioning that although Jiang Ruyi is in the northwest of Da Xia, the stone pillar extending from under her feet pierces through the Demon Cave Gate like a Starry Sky Curtain, and eventually, opens a Black Cloud Vortex directly above Fengxiang God Mountain in the southwest region of the Heavenly Realm Battlefield.

At this time, there are as many as four Black Cloud Vortexes on Fengxiang God Mountain.

They come from Jiang Ruyi, the Mad Immortal Guardian, the Xuan Shuang Guard, and the Tufeng Heavenly General, with Feng Yan and another general stationed on the mountain.

In the southwest region, there is another adjacent Star Moon Divine Mountain, guarded by the Ran Sect soldiers led by the Leng Siblings.

These two Divine Mountains, together with the Blood Dust Divine Mountain where the Lord Immortal Sheep dwells, form a triangle.

There is a triangle in the southwest, and in the southeast too.

The Bamboo Forest Divine Mountain, which once belonged to Bi He and Tangled Silk Shadow, has now been requisitioned by Yu Changsheng, who leads the Divine Color General and others in opening a Black Cloud Vortex above the God Mountain, penetrating into the mountain.

Thus, the Conlong Divine Mountain in the southeastern battlefield, together with the Yan Paper God Mountain and Nu Ying God Mountain on the Southeast Front, form another triangle.

Meanwhile, the Conlong Divine Mountain stationed at the rear of the front line, together with the Pear Garden Divine Mountain occupied by the Martial Emperor in the south and the Golden Jade Divine Mountain occupied by the Wind Emperor in the center, can form a triangle.

It can be seen that the geographical position where Yu Changsheng is located is extremely important!

Besides triangles, there are three-point connections, and pairs mutually depending.

For example, Yan Paper and Nu Ying God Mountain can form an arc line with Thunder God Mountain occupied by Huangfu Zhao on the Eastern Front.

Another example is the Nightmare Guardian stationed at the northernmost point; the North Wind God Mountain she requisitioned is adjacent to Sword One God Mountain in the central-northern part.

The overall layout of Ran Sect in Heavenly Realm was also the result of discussions among the soldiers.

Let go where necessary, guard where needed.

Lips and teeth depend on each other, mutually supporting.

It's also thanks to the Ran Sect soldiers fighting all the way that their internal energy is quite abundant; otherwise, it's uncertain whether such a layout could be completed in a short time.

Don't even mention reshaping God Mountain, just opening a Black Cloud Vortex consumes a lot of Source Energy from all the Gods.

And on the Heavenly Realm Battlefield, the number of God Demons is also decreasing; at this point in time, widely recruiting believers in the Human World is indeed a good choice.

"Lady... Sect Leader!" A voice called from the distance, evidently a bit awkward.

An Xian, seeing a young man appear in the pavilion, especially noting the Lady with her eyes covered by a light veil, immediately realized she came at a bad time!

"What is it?" Lu Ran turned his head to look.

"The soldiers have already prepared." An Xian bowed her head and replied.

"Got it." Jiang Ruyi acknowledged softly and added in a low voice, "There's no need to bring the true form over; I am spiritually connected with the magic artifact, and it can sense everything."

"Whoosh!!"

The remnant shadow of the God suddenly detached from the mortal body, and the gigantic shadow appeared beside the Divine Sculpture, looking down at the city below.

Lu Ran cradled the still unsolved fairy body, straining to look up, seeing her naturally lowered jade hand spilling out faint mist.

The strands of Immortal Fog fell upon the devout believers worshipping in the city.

In a daze, Lu Ran felt like he was transported back to the God Worship Platform of his sophomore year.

That day, young and small, he finally awaited his own God.

The Lord God granted him the capital for struggle, bestowing him the means to survive.

Now he returns to the Human World with the Gods of Ran Sect, unfolding grand remnants of Gods across Da Xia, sheltering all beings.

Bestowing Divine Techniques upon the people, helping them to hold on, striving to survive in this dangerous world.

"Puff~"

The fairy in his embrace quietly shattered, turning into wisps of Immortal Fog.

Lu Ran's arms emptied, holding the drifting smoke green gauze.

Everything,

felt like a dream.

...

Chapter 1066: Phoenix Soaring Through the Nine Heavens

Fairy Jiang's perception of the magical artifact was accurate.

The Phoenix Dignity of Nine Heavens Robe indeed showed signs of upgrading, its growth path is very unique, entirely relying on the Master of the Magical Artifact, constantly rising with the master's status.

Yesterday, Jiang Ruyi successfully devoured the Jade Talisman's Divine Soul, transforming into a complete god.

Reach the peak!

This was a significant stimulus for the phoenix robe.

Today, Jiang Ruyi again reigns over the world, widely accepting beliefs from the Human Clan, receiving worship from all beings.

This added fuel to the growth of the phoenix robe!

Indeed, the battle between the Ran Sect and the God Demon Camp is not yet over, Jiang Ruyi is merely the leader of the Ran Sect, not the king of the entire God Demon Camp.

But Jiang Ruyi's descent, establishing a sect with a powerful stance in front of the opposing gods, greatly delighted the phoenix robe.

What truly defines a king?

As the Master of the Magical Artifact received worship from the masses, the Phoenix Dignity of Nine Heavens Robe upgraded.

Magnificent!

In the southwestern region of the Third Heaven, on Immortal Mo Divine Mountain (formerly Fengxiang God Mountain), whirlwinds descended from the sky, falling toward a towering goddess sculpture.

Jiang Ruyi did not inform Lu Ran, but Sister Xian'er was so excited, shouting incessantly, constantly transmitting messages to Lu Ran.

At first hearing the news, Lu Ran was a bit confused, raising his head to glance at the shadow of the god.

The illusory Lady Xian Mo remained expressionless, without a trace of anomaly, those cold eyes occasionally sweeping over the trembling beings below, as if everything was only natural.

Lu Ran was overjoyed!

He promptly opened a Landing Mirror, arriving directly at the Heavenly Realm Battlefield · Immortal Mo Divine Mountain.

"Ha!" Lu Ran's eyes lit up as he indeed saw the whirlwinds.

He immediately flew upwards, his mind also recalling the previous functions of the Phoenix Dignity of Nine Heavens Robe.

First, it burns souls, no creatures dare to gaze upon it directly, where the Master of the Magical Artifact goes, beings lower their eyes!

Second, discerning truth and falsehood, differentiating loyalty and betrayal, a person's soul does not lie.

Third, the Phoenix Soul Mark, which can imprint a special mark deep in the target's soul, infusing it with the will of the Master of the Magical Artifact.

Those who do not comply will endure unimaginable pain, far exceeding the agony of heart-tearing and bone-scraping.

Now the question arises!

All three skills relate to mysterious soul elements, so powerful it is frightening.

With the Phoenix Dignity of Nine Heavens Robe transforming into a top-grade magical artifact, how potent will the fourth effect be?

Will it too be related to the soul?

Lu Ran was full of anticipation, cautiously flying to the side of Immortal Mo's stone sculpture's hand:
[Me.]

"Hmm." Jiang Ruyi responded indifferently, casually capturing the tiny human between her fingers.

Before Lu Ran entered the Divine Mountain, all the divine weapons and magical artifacts on her body had already sensed his presence.

Additionally, Xuan Shuang Guards were stationed on the Divine Mountain, Mystic Frost Minions danced around the mountain, and the pervasive frost and scattered plum blossoms sensed everything in this realm.

In other words, for Lu Ran to reach Lady of Ran Sect's hand, it was with the tacit permission of the Xuan Shuang Guards.

The identity of the visitor was clear and obvious.

"Cultivate." The cool voice descended from the sky, like a bucket of cold water, thoroughly dousing Lu Ran's excitement.

Lu Ran: "..."

He can see through the fog, but he cannot see through the stone hand.

As Lady Xian Mo closed her hand, everything plunged into darkness, Lu Ran was imprisoned in a space dense with divine power, the sound of intense battle outside became increasingly clear.

It was apparent that the Jade Venerable Clan's offensive had intensified, clearly stimulated by the whirlwinds.

Yet, Immortal Mo Divine Mountain remained impregnable, not only equipped with the Xuan Shuang Guards' perception, but also the defensive and controlling power of Tu Feng, the Heavenly General, coupled with the Mad Immortal protector's fierce output!

At the mountain's waist, Feng Yan and two generals, though Fake Gods, had also created a significant number of Heavenly Realm minions.

At the foot of the mountain, the sand sea overflowed, burying each Jade Venerable, with swift sand arcs cleaving the invading foes.

And like this impregnable Divine Mountain, the Ran Sect possessed nine of them!

As long as they are well-guarded, it is sufficient to maintain the existence of the Heavenly Realm Battlefield.

The phoenix robe's upgrade went smoothly, in just twenty minutes, the whirlwinds descending from the sky gradually dissipated.

Lu Ran realized the change in environment, immediately flickered out, observing the magnificent phoenix robe.

[Success?] He circled around Immortal Mo's stone sculpture, seeing no reaction from the other, couldn't help but transmit a question.

"Want to see its abilities?" Jiang Ruyi couldn't help but smile, naturally sensing someone's eager demeanor.

[Want!] Lu Ran nodded repeatedly, his anticipation was sky-high.

After all, within the Divine Demon System, everything related to the soul is the most mysterious, even gods and demons find it hard to explore.

"Cry~~~~"

Suddenly, a grand phoenix cry resounded.

The sky originally shrouded in dark clouds burst forth with brilliant golden light.

"Wow!" Lu Ran jerked his head up, shielding his face with his hand, squinting through his fingers to gaze at the firmament.

The brilliant gold covered the entire sky.

It was a gigantic phoenix illusion, its grandeur was astonishing!

When transformed into ancient fierce beasts, even Jade-faced Snake or Yinli Tiger were no match for this.

Lu Ran gradually adapted to the light, observing the phoenix illusion's wide wings gently flapping, each feather's texture vividly clear, shining brightly in gold.

Like blazing golden flames, it was burning the firmament.

Lu Ran slowly turned around, catching sight of the phoenix illusion slightly bowing, those phoenix eyes composed of golden flames, solemn and sacred.

Under these majestic phoenix eyes, Lu Ran couldn't help but feel awe, even an urge to worship.

"Hiss..."

"Ugh." Sounds of pain and groans echoed.

Lu Ran was stunned to discover these voices belonged to the Faceless Jade Venerables?!

The white jade sculptures besieging the Divine Mountain ignited in golden flames.

Standing at the peak of the Divine Mountain, Jiang Ruyi's eyes grew increasingly similar to the Phoenix Illusion soaring above the heavens.

The shape of the eyes was merely superficial.

The key was the majestic aura emanating from the phoenix eyes.

Under the shadow of the Phoenix Illusion, wherever Jiang Ruyi's gaze landed, the Faceless Jade Venerables were ignited one by one.

But this special golden flame seemed to have no destructiveness, as the Faceless Jade Venerables appeared unscathed.

Lu Ran was even more puzzled.

If they weren't hurt, why were the Faceless Jade Venerables crying out in pain?

Could it be that their souls were being burned?

"Gulp." Lu Ran's Adam's apple moved.

Directly burning the souls of living creatures?

Is that right?

Lu Ran could only torture souls when the target was dead.

But Jiang Ruyi...

What was more terrifying was that the intensity of her golden flame was startlingly high!

Bear in mind that she was burning the Faceless Jade Venerable Clan!

Lu Ran had once burned the dead souls of the Faceless Jade Venerables with Soul Fire, yet they always had a nonchalant demeanor, even showing disdainful smiles.

Look at them now!

One by one, the Faceless Jade Venerables looked pained, occasionally unable to hold back their groans.

What level of agony must it be to make such beings change their expression?

If even the Faceless Jade Venerables were losing composure, if this fire were to fall upon the Human Clan, or used to burn Gods and Demons...

Could any being truly endure it?

"Hm?" Lu Ran voiced a light doubt.

The golden sky rapidly lost its luster, and the screen of the phoenix vanished without a trace.

[What's wrong, Ruyi?]

[The Domain Skill consumes too much, just experimenting for now.] A cool voice imprinted in Lu Ran's mind.

[Like the Domain of Silence of the Silent Night Blade, can you only maintain it for three to five minutes?] Lu Ran quickly asked.

[Even shorter than that. This domain isn't as domineering as your Domain of Silence, but the magic artifact casts independently, consuming its own energy, not in conjunction with mine.]

Jiang Ruyi slightly lifted her fingertips and added: [I can try to adjust the grade of the casting, to make the area covered by the Phoenix Illusion smaller, to see if it can extend the time.]

Lu Ran nodded silently, recalling the visual impact the screen of the phoenix had on him.

It really was no different from a primordial fierce beast.

So, the domain's range was probably about ten thousand meters?

Jiang Ruyi waited a moment, and indeed saw a certain figure flashing towards her at her fingertips.

Lu Ran continued closely watching the battlefield, seeing the golden flames extinguish on a Faceless Jade Venerable's body, but the impact continued.

The Jade Venerable's movements were clearly hindered, its expression alternating between pain and anger, no longer as composed as before.

[Ruyi, if you continue burning, can you directly destroy the Faceless Jade Venerable's soul?]

Jiang Ruyi pondered for a moment, then slowly shook her head: [The function of the magic artifact serves the purpose of its existence. The Phoenix Dignity of Nine Heavens Robe is intended to help me ascend to the summit, making all living beings kneel in submission beneath me.

The effect of this domain emphasizes intimidation and suppression, which can be seen as a support skill rather than an output skill.]

Upon hearing this, Lu Ran couldn't help feeling a bit disappointed.

If it could directly destroy souls, that would be great...

Next time encountering a true Faceless Jade Venerable, if it could be burned to ashes, wouldn't everything be blissful?]

[You're not satisfied?]

[Ah... satisfied! Very satisfied!] Lu Ran quickly responded.

[Remember, in front of me, you can't lie.]

[I'm not lying!] Fortunately, Lu Ran had his back to Jiang Ruyi, quickly managing his expression, [I really do like it, in the future it can be used to burn Spiritual Fortunes, or the Divine Soul of Lie Tian!]

Lu Ran had learned his lesson after being tricked once before.

The lack of a burning sensation in his soul meant Jiang Ruyi was not checking if he was lying.

In fact, since Jiang Ruyi acquired the Phoenix Dignity of Nine Heavens Robe, she had never used such a method against Lu Ran.

In front of her, all beings' small thoughts were exposed, true or false could be discerned in a few words.

Except for Lu Ran.

She always relied on what she saw and heard firsthand.

Lu Ran's voice entered her mind again: [If it really could destroy divine souls, we would be apprehensive instead!

If by accident we burnt away the soul of a Spiritual Fortune, wouldn't it set it free, conveniently benefiting that wretched creature?]

Jiang Ruyi's lips slightly curved upwards, her fingertip hooked a little.

"Oh~" Lu Ran let out a soft cry, falling downwards.

The gigantic stone hand gently closed in, plunging Lu Ran into darkness once again, imprisoned anew.

Threads of Holy Spirit Energy spread in her palm, nourishing the small human body.

[Cultivate.]

Lu Ran: "..."

Came here in good shape, now can't return at all.

In the Human World, the Ran Sect's deities were already on track, so there was no need to worry too much.

Just return to hold the fort on the fifteenth.

[...Fine!] Lu Ran soaked in the Origin Energy released by the Lord God, laying directly down, [By the way, what's the name of this domain?]

[You decide.]

...

Chapter 1067: Coordinates: Da Xia...

Lu Ran was detained for three days.

He was confined in the palm of Fairy Jiang's hand, embedded in the shallow lines of her palm.

For three days, Holy Spirit Energy constantly enveloped him, nourishing his body and mind, gradually restoring warmth to his extremely exhausted physique, leaving him in an excellent state!

Lu Ran had a feeling that if this continued, it wouldn't be long before he could achieve a breakthrough.

But on the evening of the fifteenth day of the lunar month, Lu Ran temporarily broke out of prison.

This was the first fifteenth of the night since the descent of the All Gods of the Ran Sect to the human world, and he naturally needed to inspect it carefully.

When he returned to Rain Alley City, standing under the overcast sky, overlooking the entire city, he suddenly noticed a problem.

The small town of Rain Alley had already turned into a ghost city.

"Rustle..."

The pitter-patter of rain arrived as expected.

In the depths of winter, the rain was icy and piercing.

"Sigh..." Lu Ran sighed deeply, looking at the lifeless city below, feeling lost for a moment.

He didn't know where to go or what to do.

To Lu Ran, the human world, an abstract concept, materialized into his hometown in concrete terms.

But now,

the human world that belonged to him no longer existed.

The streets he had walked countless times on his way to school would never again be illuminated by the yellow glow of streetlights.

The sports stadium in West River, the shelter where he spent his years, now had hundreds of beds covered with dust, no crowds seeking refuge anymore.

Wu Lie Building would never again light its searchlights that pierced through the layers of rain, illuminating every corner of the small town.

Only the Wu Lie River continued to flow vigorously.

Endlessly.

Lu Ran slowly descended to the rooftop of Wu Lie Building, kneeling on one knee, gazing at the empty "human world," lost in thought.

Night gradually descended.

Dark, vast, lonely.

"Whoosh~" His waist's Divine Weapon suddenly hummed, and a Sword Spirit quietly appeared.

"Huh?" Lu Ran turned his head, surprised to see a youth clad in a yellow raincoat.

Is this... the Silent Night Sword Spirit?

Indeed, only the Silent Night Sword Spirit dressed like this.

The Dawn Blade, which had evolved into a Divine Weapon earlier, also had a sword spirit image of young Lu Ran, but wore a black combat suit.

Lu Ran looked up at his former self from many years ago.

Though the boy was undoubtedly a phantom, the yellow raincoat he wore seemed to flutter in the wind and rain, his side profile under the hood occasionally showing.

"Hometown, finally quiet." The Silent Night Sword Spirit said softly.

Lu Ran pursed his lips, but ultimately lowered his head and smiled ruefully, full of self-mockery.

He had still arrived too late, the human world growing more turbulent, demons more rampant, leaving people with no choice but to move away from this cursed land.

Without people, is this place still home?

More ironically, without people, without Lu Ran, Rain Alley City was instead tranquil.

"You are very sad," the boy in the raincoat said softly.

Lu Ran didn't know what to say, ultimately just smiling and shrugging his shoulders with feigned nonchalance.

"Me too." The boy in the raincoat murmured softly.

"Hmm?"

"We've done it, we can make the rainy nights of our hometown completely quiet, but it no longer matters." Young Lu Ran lowered his head, looking into the eyes of the youth.

Lu Ran opened his mouth: "Silent Night..."

The boy in the yellow raincoat swayed slightly, then silently disappeared in the wind and rain.

Lu Ran reached into his waist, grasping the Silent Night Blade's hilt, momentarily speechless.

The Smoke and Mist Silk hovering behind him suddenly curled slightly, brushing against Lu Ran's temple, whispering gently: "You can have the people return, all it takes is an order."

"Heh." Lu Ran chuckled softly.

You really do spoil me.

But doing so would be too willful.

Lu Ran knew very well that Smoke and Mist Silk wasn't exaggerating; if he wanted, Wu Lie Building could be illuminated again, and the entire city could even be packed with people.

But... why deceive oneself?

In life, disappointment is more common than contentment, I've done my best.

Really done my best.

From entering Holy Spirit Mountain in the first month of 2020 to returning in late 2023 with the All Gods, it's been less than four full years.

But under the brutal rule of the God Demon, the hometown couldn't hold on for four years.

Some regrets,

remain regrets forever.

Lu Ran slowly stood up, defiantly saying: "Having no people is quite nice, the whole city belongs to me, I can do whatever I want."

The soft ribbon gently patted Lu Ran's head, saying nothing more.

[Master.]

[Hmm?] Lu Ran responded, [Evil Shadow?]

[Da Xia is very quiet.]

[Quiet? Da Xia?] Lu Ran raised an eyebrow slightly, unsure what Lord Guardian meant.

Yan Shuangzi seemed perplexed too: [So far, there's been no demon invasion anywhere, the entire Da Xia is very peaceful.]

Lu Ran: ???

The next moment, he vanished with instantaneous teleportation.

From Rain Alley City to Beijing, it's only an hour by high-speed train, requiring just two teleports.

Through these two flashes, Lu Ran burst from the dark and cold rainy night into a beautiful snowy night.

Snowflakes fell gently, adorning the city in a silvery cloak.

On the well-lit streets, you could see patrols of Moon Gazers, but not a trace of the Demon.

This...?

Lu Ran, unconvinced by the supernatural, flashed again from the residential community to the bustling commercial street, from subway stations to air-raid shelter refuges.

Peacefulness prevailed.

Lu Ran was completely dumbfounded and then activated a Landing Mirror.

From the snow-covered Northeast Ice City to the warm as spring Southwest Yeyu City.

From Mount Song·Vajra Temple to Guangfu·Pear Garden Ancient City and then to Hang City·Lantern Festival Ancient City...

Again arriving at the familiar Hang City, Lu Ran flashed to the side of the Clock Tower, glanced at the clock that had passed eight, then let his gaze wander afar.

Skimming past the neon-lit bustling metropolis, he saw a magnificent Divine Sculpture of a maiden, the Yuanxi Divine Sculpture standing steadily, with the beautiful ancient city adorned with swaying lanterns at its feet.

So...where are the Evil Demons?

"Attention everyone!" A sudden loud voice captured Lu Ran's attention.

He looked down, only to see a troop of Moon Gazers halting and gazing upwards at him.

"Salute!"

The Moon Gazers stood upright, their expressions solemn, their military salutes standard.

Lu Ran seemed to be transported back several years.

In his hometown Rain Alley City, his authentic battle achievements earned the respect of the Moon Gazers unit.

Though not yet fully accomplished, he had already made his mark, and wherever he was, passionate gazes would greet him.

Lu Ran, just like years ago, reciprocated with a fist-palm salute.

"Ran Shen! Ran Shen!"

"Ah! Ran Shen! Here, here, I'm here!"

Lu Ran turned and saw a crowd gathered at the windows on the lower floor beneath the large clock dial.

"Wow! Wow! It's really Ran dog... ahem, ahem ahem..."

"Are the Evil Demons afraid to come now? You brought so many new gods to Da Xia, did that scare them off? Are they too scared to come?"

"Haha! Ran Shen is awesome!!"

"Forty years and I hadn't experienced such a peaceful fifteenth night!"

"Boohoo... Ran Shen, come over, come over! Let's take a photo, this excitement is killing me, come quickly~"

Lu Ran: "..."

For a fleeting moment, he contemplated having the Magic Artifact·Smoke Green Gauze withdraw its spell.

Why do you ordinary folks face Heavenly Realm masters without any fear?

Why am I, a dignified Heavenly Realm master, so flustered and intimidated before Little Ruyi?

It's just unreasonable!

But then again, I must cherish the time of being in the Heavenly Realm.

One day, if I truly become a god and forge a Heavenly Realm body again, my soul would be composed of remnants from the divine.

Smoke Green Gauze cannot cover the pressure from divinity.

"Secure the windows." Lu Ran's voice overshadowed the excited shouts, "The night has just begun."

"What's there to secure, it's over already!"

"Right! The Evil Demons must be scared of you all, they dare not come!"

"How wonderful, truly wonderful..."

Lu Ran felt quite helpless, realizing his appeal wasn't as strong as imagined; the crowd behind the window was almost in a frenzy, jubilant amidst the perilous fifteenth night.

Very magical, very real.

"Hu~" Smoke and Mist Silk seemed able to extend indefinitely, rapidly reaching to the windows, helping secure them tightly from inside, then transforming into thin wisp of smoke seeping out through the cracks.

Lu Ran, fearing more people would gather, promptly concealed himself.

He didn't know what was up with tonight.

Why was the God Demon Camp, led by the Evil Spear Emperor, not taking any action?

Lu Ran didn't believe a king like Evil Spear Emperor would be afraid, could the opponent be making peace?

Impossible, right...

Or perhaps there was some conspiracy by the Northwest forces?

Lu Ran slightly frowned, slowly ascending into the night sky, overlooking the calm and peaceful city below.

He was equally unaware that the internet had completely exploded!

Especially on the Heavenly Pride official website, where Lu Ran's only social media account was, a flood of comments was madly pouring in.

"Ran Shen!! You returned, they dare not come!"

"Aah! I want to go out and set off firecrackers ahhh..."

"After so many years, damn it! On every fifteenth there are Evil Demon invasions, yet tonight none?!"

"Ran Shen, I misjudged you, I once even said... said... I'm going to slap myself twice!"

"Lu! Ran! You are! My! God!"

"On the lunar fifteenth, the evil gates open, demons persist still come? Where are they? Just tell me where are they? Our Ran Shen and All Gods have returned, come on! Huh?"

"Tonight, the world understands the value of this photo..."

Below the comments was a photo.

A young man suspended in mid-air.

The frenzied crowd, like a tightly clustered large bonfire, together encircling that figure with fluttering robes.

In countless pious and fervent gazes, he was the god descending from heaven.

Also the one being lifted high.

Photos of new gods within various ancient cities of Da Xia were also being uploaded, one after another.

And as time went on, the comments gradually changed.

"Location: Beijing, no Evil Demons!"

"Location: Jinling, no Evil Demons!"

"Location: Rong City, no Evil Demons!"

"Be confident now! With Ran Shen above, boldly say! Location: Da Xia, no Evil Demons!"

"Location: Da Xia! No Evil Demons!"

"Location: Da Xia! No Evil Demons!!"

...

Chapter 1068: A Cup of Green Plum Wine

Eight Min Land · Quanzhou City.

In Cong Long Ancient City (formerly Dragon Carp Ancient City), Lu Ran stood on the shoulder of the Divine Sculpture, overlooking the beautiful fireworks blooming in the night sky.

It's hard to imagine that such a beautiful thing as fireworks would appear on the night of the fifteenth.

Lu Ran's eyes pierced through the night, precisely finding a wide street outside the ancient city where a young citizen was being captured by two Moon Gazers.

Dare to secretly light fireworks?

And on such a dangerous night, if we don't catch you, who would we catch?

Interestingly, although the young citizen was being taken away, he was laughing loudly.

"Bang!"

"Bang..." In the night sky behind him, the fireworks continued. Windows on both sides of the street opened, and countless people peeked out, waving and cheering.

For the splendid fireworks in the night sky.

For this peaceful night without the invasion of Evil Demons.

This scene is a microcosm; the land of Da Xia was already boiling.

As the night deepened, the Evil Demons still hesitated to appear, and the prestige of Lu Ran and the gods of Ran Sect reached an unprecedented height.

Cheers, shouts, cries like an emotional release, all came to the ears.

Lu Ran listened to the joys and sorrows of all beings and sat down on the shoulder of the Divine Sculpture: "Sir, what intention do you think the Evil Spear Emperor has?"

Yu Changsheng pondered and did not respond immediately.

At this moment on the Heavenly Realm Battlefield, many scouts dispatched by Ran Sect continuously sent back messages, informing that everything was normal with the northwestern forces, seeing no abnormal movements.

Lu Ran sighed softly: "The Evil Spear Emperor is doing just that, actually helping us build momentum, boosting the prestige of the gods of Ran Sect. Is he really so kind?"

Yu Changsheng said embarrassedly: [The Evil Spear Emperor is different from other God Demons, and subordinates find it difficult to fathom this emperor's intentions.]

Lu Ran frowned: "Once the gods of Ran Sect descended, the Evil Demons disappeared without a trace. The effect is immediate, wouldn't this also undermine the prestige of the old gods?"

Moreover, Da Xia is peaceful here, while the Outer Realm still has Evil Demon invasions..."

The more Lu Ran said, the heavier his heart became.

The gods of the Outer Realm would perhaps be caught in the whirlpool of public opinion.

Would billions of people worldwide also want new gods to descend and protect all beings?

"Could it be that the Evil Spear Emperor wants to direct the trouble eastward, and in this way, unite the gods and demons of the Outer Realm to face my Ran Sect together?" Lu Ran continued to analyze.

The gods of Ran Sect being elevated to such a height would touch the fundamental interests of the gods and demons of the Outer Realm.

Yu Changsheng's tone was serious: [If it were other gods and demons, I might think so. But the Evil Spear Emperor, taking pride in his identity, guarding his honor and pride, should disdain to do so.]

Lu Ran curled his lips: "You just said it was difficult to fathom the emperor's intentions, but this analysis is pretty good!"

Yu Changsheng felt increasingly ashamed inside.

He could analyze many things based on the background of the Evil Demons, but the actions of the Evil Spear Emperor were too abnormal.

Could it be the Evil Spear Emperor showing goodwill, wanting to join the Ran Sect?

How could that be!

Or could it be a rebellion among the subordinates of the Evil Spear Emperor, with this action being the decision of other gods and demons?

However, the Evil Shadow Guardian personally brought back information that the Evil Spear Emperor was doing well, and the gods and demons under him were all behaving.

"Hm?" Lu Ran suddenly raised his head slightly, carefully sensed for a moment, and responded, [Ruyi?]

A clear, cold voice imprinted into his mind: [A disciple of Qiang Xiu has come to visit, bringing an invitation.]

[Oh?] Lu Ran was astonished, [What is the content?]

[The Evil Spear Emperor set a banquet in Rust City, Chang'an, inviting you to meet at midnight.]

Lu Ran: ???

Goodness~

I have truly made a name for myself.

The dignified First-class Evil God · Evil Spear Emperor has personally set a banquet invitation.

[This is likely not a good feast.] As Lu Ran communicated with Yu Changsheng, the military advisor promptly expressed concern.

Lu Ran suddenly realized something, showing a strange expression: "The Evil Spear Emperor hasn't taken action, and hasn't invaded the Human World tonight. Is it for the sake of this banquet?"

If I don't go, would the Evil Spear Emperor lead an army in a massive invasion?

At this moment, the people of Da Xia were ecstatic, their jubilation reaching its peak.

People had just ignited their hopes, only to be plunged once more into the abyss by the cold, harsh reality, hitting people's spirits would be incalculable.

Additionally, the current situation in Da Xia is not very ideal, with people showing tendencies of losing control.

The citizen who just ran out to the street to light fireworks is the best example!

The masses are venting the emotions accumulated in their hearts for a long time.

If at this time, a large number of Evil Demons suddenly appeared, we do not know how many tragedies would ensue.

Should this occur, Lu Ran can imagine that the gods of Ran Sect would become the target of public outrage!

After all, they brought unrealistic fantasies to all beings, indirectly becoming culprits.

Lu Ran spoke out what he thought, also hearing Yu Changsheng nod secretly, feeling quite gratified.

The Sect Master has grown a lot, considering matters more comprehensively and deeply.

[The Evil Spear Emperor's play is indeed clever.] Yu Changsheng pondered.

Next,

it depends on whether the master of Ran Sect dares to go to the appointment.

Yu Changsheng was willing to accompany the Sect Master to go; previously, he had negotiated with the northwestern forces as an envoy of Ran Sect.

But today's situation is different; the Evil Spear Emperor personally issued the invitation.

The Evil Spear Emperor is the absolute leader of the northwestern forces, a king proud of many things. If Ran Sect continues to send an envoy to the appointment, it would be like slapping the face of the other side.

In that case, this night in Da Xia would be tumultuous.

"Objectively speaking, the Evil Spear Emperor has also shown enough sincerity." Lu Ran slowly stood up, "Notify the soldiers to be on high alert."

[Sect Master, let me accompany you!]

"Sir is indeed handsome like a demon and androgynous, but I still want to bring a female companion~" Lu Ran suddenly blurted out.

Yu Changsheng: ???

"Haha~" Lu Ran rarely laughed out loud, his laughter quite bold, "Sir, you stay at the rear, I will personally go meet the Evil Spear Emperor!"

...

At midnight, Lu Ran arrived as promised.

He appeared directly in Chang'an City·Rust City's Inner City, standing in front of the Divine Worship Hall.

Lu Ran didn't bring a female companion, after all, the Evil Spear Emperor only invited him.

Since he had decided to keep the appointment, bringing a divine girlfriend along would feel like he was afraid and beneath the other person?

Despite that, Jiang Ruyi was firm in tossing the Evil Shadow Stone Sculpture into the Fiery Phoenix Patterned Gourd, and had the Heavenly Realm body of the Evil Shadow Guardian accompany Lu Ran.

[Master, the area around the hall is empty.]

[Mmm.] Lu Ran stepped forward, pushing open the heavy hall door with one hand.

"Ka cha~"

Through the door crevice, Lu Ran's gaze swept over countless neatly arranged prayer mats, and in the depths of the hall, he saw a several-meter-tall stone statue of Qiang Xiu.

Below the statue stood a tall figure wrapped in a Black Gold Emperor Robe.

He faced away from Lu Ran, standing with hands behind his back, quietly standing there.

Lu Ran: "..."

This scene is truly fantastic.

And extremely ironic.

The Evil Spear Emperor, as an Evil Demon, boldly appeared in the Divine City, even standing within the Divine Worship Hall belonging to the Divine Qiang Xiu.

"You've come." A deep and magnetic male voice came from the depths of the hall.

This must be the legendary male god's voice.

Quite pleasant~

Lu Ran stepped inside, closing the hall door behind him, casually saying: "If Lord Evil Spear Emperor dares to invite me, how could I not dare to come?"

Upon hearing this, the Evil Spear Emperor slowly turned, gazing at the human youth from afar.

Very young, very valiant.

Standing tall and upright, with an extraordinary aura, no trace of fear in those cold eyes.

The Evil Spear Emperor silently observed the youth, gradually, a faint smile appeared at the corner of his mouth.

Lu Ran was also observing the other.

The young emperor deep in the hall was naturally the Heavenly Realm body of an Evil God, a grandeur not comparable to any ordinary minion.

The Evil Spear Emperor had a handsome yet not lacking in heroic face, beneath the sword-like eyebrows were eyes as black as ink.

No whites in the eyes, eerie and terrifying.

Also deep like an abyss.

He wore a majestic Black Gold Emperor Robe, his long hair tied up, donning a dark gold crown, carrying the majesty exclusive to an emperor.

The Evil Spear Emperor just stood there quietly, his imposing presence already enveloping the entire hall.

Regarding the term "Dragon Chapter and Phoenix Splendor", Lu Ran had a tangible concept.

"Human clan, please." The Evil Spear Emperor slightly gestured downwards.

In the center of the hall, beside the left and right pillars, was a low table, all equipped with ancient wine pots and cups.

But there were no side dishes, not even a fruit or nut.

Is this to drink dryly?

Lu Ran secretly thought, stepping forward to the seat, kneeling behind the low table, and caught a faint whiff of alcohol.

Sniff~

In it, seemed to be a hint of plum fragrance?

Lu Ran couldn't help but lick his lips.

It's hard to imagine an Evil Demon appearing in the Divine Worship Hall.

Even harder to imagine an Evil God and a human clan member about to drink and talk freely in this divine temple, before the eyes of the Divine Statue.

Lu Ran suddenly turned, looking towards the Qiang Xiu Divine Statue in the hall's depths: "Not coming out for a drink?"

"Hahahaha!" From more than twenty meters away, the Evil Spear Emperor's hearty laughter echoed.

The Qiang Xiu Statue remained silent and motionless.

Lu Ran looked at the old man's blurry stone face, let out a cold snort in his heart, and withdrew his gaze.

The Evil Spear Emperor's smile gradually subsided, his slender fingers playing with a golden goblet:

"Human clan, is this peace tonight what you desire?"

Lu Ran was silent for a moment, shrugged: "What others give, is ultimately not as good as fighting for it yourself."

"Mmm." The Evil Spear Emperor nodded approvingly, holding the golden goblet, finishing the green plum wine in one go.

Lu Ran pursed his lips, seriously...

Didn't even know to leave some!

Lu Ran was not afraid of poison in the wine, he had the Healing Technique, and also the Purification Skill.

More importantly, he possessed the Divine Sculpture-Poison Bee, which had a Divine Technique – Immunity to All Poisons.

The skill lives up to its name!

Under the Divine Demon System, all kinds of poison were ineffective against Lu Ran.

But speaking of which, the Evil Spear Emperor's nature was clear, he probably wouldn't stoop to doing such lowly things.

"Did Lord Evil Spear Emperor hold back his troops and let Da Xia remain peaceful just to invite me for a drink?" Lu Ran spoke.

Gotta say, this drink was indeed incredible.

The common people benefited from Lu Ran's advantage.

"I wanted to see with my own eyes, the one who has killed Martial Monks, severed Blood Skulls, slaughtered First-class God Demons, what kind of person that is." The Evil Spear Emperor said with a faint smile.

Lu Ran picked up a golden goblet from the table, slightly raised an eyebrow:

"Doesn't seem like the Lord cares about the death of God Demons?"

...

Chapter 1069: The Mortal World in a Cup

The Evil Spear Emperor smiled faintly: "They will eventually fall, just not by the hand of the Jade Venerable."

Lu Ran nodded silently.

The God Demon Camp was indeed like a heap of loose sand, superficially united but inwardly divided.

If they continued to be devoured by the Faceless Jade Venerable, it seemed their downfall was only a matter of time.

However, Lu Ran's sudden rise caused significant damage to the God Demon Camp in a very short time, which disrupted the Faceless Jade Venerable's 'boiling frog in warm water' strategy.

"Human Clan, what is your goal?" Evil Spear Emperor asked.

Lu Ran's fingers repeatedly traced the exquisite golden cup, his muffled voice emanating from behind the Blood Crystal Mask:

"Cloud Sea Dust Clear, eternal peace."

"Cloud Sea Dust Clear..." Evil Spear Emperor gently nodded, raising the golden cup again, "Your mother is indeed a being worthy of respect."

Lu Ran was taken aback, raising his eyes to look.

Only to see the Evil Spear Emperor gulping down the Green Plum Wine, the clear wine trickling down his lips, dripping onto the Black Gold Emperor Robe.

"Gulp, gulp..."

Lu Ran quietly waited until the emperor set down the wine cup, then asked: "You paid attention to my mother?"

Evil Spear Emperor's face carried a touch of reminiscence as he sighed: "The collapsing sect hall, the tragic death of followers, swords shattering one by one.

An image stained with blood, staggering steps, a bowed head.

And those hands that once ruled life and death, now reduced to trembling and wiping away tears again and again..."

Lu Ran's eyes gradually widened!

With just a few words, a tragic image of his mother had already formed in his mind.

This, Lu Ran did not know.

About his mother's history of struggle, Lu Ran had only a vague concept, unaware of the specific battles.

The old members of Cloud Sea had never divulged these, and the Cloud Sea Sword had not mentioned a word.

The few gods and demons who defected to the Ran Sect might have been too worried to bring up that past.

"The scene of an emperor's end..." Evil Spear Emperor sighed lightly, picking up the wine jug, "If you saw it, you would also sigh."

Lu Ran clenched his fists tightly.

Different people view the world from different perspectives.

To the old members of Cloud Sea, Qiao Wanjun was the sect master they loyally followed; in the eyes of the Evil Spear Emperor, Qiao Wanjun might have been the emperor of the human clans of that world.

But to Lu Ran, Qiao Wanjun was his mother.

"I thought you came to discuss cooperation." Lu Ran said in a deep voice.

If one wanted to negotiate, they should have softened the major issues and sought common ground while reserving differences, rather than putting sharp contradictions on the table.

Making a son listen to his mother's history of suffering.

And the Evil Spear Emperor's deep impression of the 'emperor's end' clearly indicated that he had been present at the time, one of the gods and demons besieging Qiao Wanjun.

"Cooperation?" Evil Spear Emperor laughed, his grin extremely carefree, "With the way you act, would you really be willing to share Da Xia with me?"

Lu Ran slowly nodded: "Then why did you invite me here, after all?"

As the Evil Spear Emperor poured more wine, he replied: "Since only one of us is destined to exist, let this victory and death be decided between you and me."

Lu Ran's expression froze.

What did he mean?

A duel?

Can I just say, is it possible that I'm only on the Second Level of the Heavenly Realm?

The Evil Spear Emperor filled his cup with wine, flicking his sleeve: "Human Clan, you previously sent an envoy, saying that the struggle between our forces should remain on the Heavenly Realm battlefield.

It should stay at the level of gods and demons.

I wholeheartedly agree."

Lu Ran felt a bit uncomfortable.

The Evil Spear Emperor didn't just 'wholeheartedly agree'.

He elevated it to a higher level, gambling all the forces on a direct confrontation between leaders...

As expected, the Evil Spear Emperor continued: "All beings are but ants, gods and demons are just minions beneath our feet.

Why not bypass the complexity and leave one sovereign between you and me?

If you win, all the gods and demons under my command will submit to you, Da Xia will be yours to rule.

If you lose, I will treat your subordinates well."

Lu Ran was silent for a long time before speaking: "My side is strong, it seems I have no need to take this risk?"

The Evil Spear Emperor remained calm: "Human Clan, you have exposed a weakness."

"Oh?"

"This path of climbing upward has not eroded your humanity; your actions indicate you still care for all living beings."

Lu Ran's expression remained unchanged, but his heart sank.

The threat was already very clear.

Even now, there were still a large number of human followers worshipping the gods of the northwest powers.

Qiang Xiu, West Desolation, Qian Gu, Poison Bee, Huang Que, Spiritual Fortune...

Truly, All Gods have the ability to pile human corpses into mountains.

Lu Ran slowly said: "You have agreed to keep the struggle between our forces at the Heavenly Realm battlefield and the god demon level, so why say such a thing?"

The Evil Spear Emperor laughed, his eyes as dark as ink, softly gazing at Lu Ran:

"Am I not the sly and deceitful Evil Demon?"

"Ha." Lu Ran scoffed, "I thought you had your own pride, disdainng such means."

The Evil Spear Emperor continued to smile, a hint of amusement in his tone: "I also thought you wanted to end this chaotic world soon, to let all beings live out their lives in peace sooner."

Lu Ran raised his tone somewhat: "You want me, a Second Level Heavenly Realm, to engage in a life-and-death battle with you, a first-class Evil God?"

The Evil Spear Emperor was indifferent: "You, a mere small Heavenly Realm human, first killed the Martial Monk, then beheaded the Blood Skull, and even left India's Fire Goddess in Da Xia, didn't you?"

Lu Ran: ???

Wasn't that done by me alone?

The countless devoted followers under my command, who aided the cause of the Ran Sect in so many ways, do you not know about them?

Lu Ran remained silent, and the Evil Spear Emperor was in no hurry, once again raising his head to drink.

"Gulp, gulp..."

Seeing him drink so heartily, Lu Ran just wanted to step forward and give him a hard kick!

By the time the Evil Spear Emperor put down the wine goblet, Lu Ran's expression had already turned as cold as stagnant water.

"Hahahahaha!" The Evil Spear Emperor looked at the "human emperor" forced to the end of the road, his smile unrestrained, "Human clan, as long as you care about those ants, you have no other choice."

Lu Ran's voice was ice-cold and piercing: "After you die, how can you guarantee your subordinates will obediently submit to me?"

"Hmm?" The Evil Spear Emperor raised an eyebrow and looked at Lu Ran.

"What, you really think I'm afraid of you?" Lu Ran also raised an eyebrow, confronting him head-on.

I possess a plethora of Divine Weapons and have countless skills at my disposal!

Invisibility, Instant Teleportation, and the fire that kills beyond its level...

Are they all just for show?

Seeing the young man's strong stance, the Evil Spear Emperor slowly nodded, seemingly approving, or perhaps admiring.

There was even a hint of appreciation in his tone: "If I were defeated and killed by you, the gods and demons kneeling at my feet would naturally submit and pay homage to you."

He downed the remaining green plum wine in the golden goblet with a flourish.

Very dashing.

Lu Ran suddenly felt something was amiss.

Listening to the other party's tone, and looking at the other person's demeanor, he couldn't help but feel an anomaly in his heart.

The Evil Spear Emperor is...

Lu Ran pondered for a moment, then said coldly: "You, a dignified first-class Evil God, even if you kill a heavenly realm person like me, can win my brothers would not submit to you."

With a "thud".

The Evil Spear Emperor placed the gold goblet on the table and waved his hand casually: "No matter!

If you perish, the Ran Sect would naturally disband as well."

Lu Ran's eyes locked onto the Evil Spear Emperor's eyes, as if trying to read something from those dark pupils.

The Evil Spear Emperor felt something, and looked up.

The emperor of the God Demon Camp, and the newly risen human emperor in his eyes, their gazes intertwined.

The Divine Worship Hall fell into a dead silence.

After an unknown period, Lu Ran slowly raised his hand and removed the Blood Crystal Mask: "I once imprisoned the Divine Soul of the Jade Talisman. He had something I wanted and attempted to negotiate with me.

Do you know what the Jade Talisman asked for?"

The Evil Spear Emperor's sword eyebrows slightly raised.

"He said he wanted me to give his Divine Soul to the Evil Spear Emperor." Lu Ran stared directly into the Evil Spear Emperor's eyes, "I've dealt with too many Gods and Demons to know how despicable they are.

So, when the Jade Talisman proposed this condition, I asked him if he wasn't worried about his Divine Soul being devoured by the Evil Spear Emperor.

It seems now, I was overthinking."

The Evil Spear Emperor quietly watched Lu Ran.

Lu Ran observed his reaction and continued: "Later, the Rou Paperman told me that the Evil Spear Emperor was different from other Gods and Demons, that he was a true ruler.

He possesses so many excellent qualities that a leader should have.

Apparently, that's indeed the case."

The Evil Spear Emperor spoke: "Human clan, what do you want to say."

Lu Ran sighed inwardly at his own lack of experience, still uncertain if the Evil Spear Emperor, due to the decline of the Northwest Camp, wanted to find a way out for his followers in such a manner.

Looking back at Ran Sect's journey, of all the Gods and Demons they faced, few survived.

If the Ran Sect and Northwest forces engage in a full-scale war, the Northwest Gods and Demons are bound to suffer heavy casualties.

It might even be like the forces of the Martial Artist and Jade-faced Snake, completely annihilated!

However, if not engaging in full-scale war, but deciding victory or defeat through a battle between leaders, subordinate Gods and Demons could directly follow Lu Ran and submit to the Ran Sect, likely ensuring a large number survive!

Lu Ran's deduction was naturally based on the Evil Spear Emperor's true nature, and his unique reputation among the God Demon group.

It was also based on the Evil Spear Emperor's atypical threatening means that night.

Since the probing led nowhere, Lu Ran simply said: "One battle is not enough, change the life-and-death battle to three!

I cannot accept Spiritual Fortune and Lie Tian submitting to Ran Sect."

The Evil Spear Emperor squinted slightly: "You talk tough, so you want two out of three."

Unexpectedly, Lu Ran shook his head and said: "Those two life-and-death battles can be disregarded, victory or defeat lies solely between you and me.

Even if I'm killed by you, before I die, I want to see the two of them die first!"

The Evil Spear Emperor's expression was quite colorful: "Such hatred?"

"Quite ironic, hah~" Lu Ran shook his head with a smile, "You invade the human world every month on the fifteenth, and yet I have drinks with you. Those two granted gods' Divine Technique to the human clan, yet I cannot coexist with them."

The Evil Spear Emperor's tone was playful: "You're so sure you can win both battles?"

Lu Ran shrugged, the meaning obvious.

The same casual air.

With strong confidence.

"Hahahahaha!" The Evil Spear Emperor laughed heartily and boldly, "Good, good, good! In that case, then match your generals, king against king!"

The final battle should have some opening accompaniment.

I accept it on their behalf!"

Lu Ran said: "This is a life-and-death battle, can you ensure Spiritual Fortune participates?"

The Evil Spear Emperor poured wine into the golden goblet and said lightly: "No one can disturb the battle between you and me."

"Alright!" For the first time Lu Ran picked up the gold goblet and toasted from afar.

"Please!" The Evil Spear Emperor also raised the gold goblet, smiling at the young human.

"Gulp, gulp..."

Lu Ran raised his head and drained the goblet in one go.

A strong taste of wine.

A faint scent of plum.

Chapter 1070: Double Third Festival

December 15, 2023, is a day worth remembering.

As the people of Da Xia were either anxious, ecstatic, or full of anticipation, time passed by the second.

Until the sky turned light, the Evil Demon still hadn't arrived.

Throughout Da Xia and indeed the whole world, people celebrated this historic night, naturally attributing the Evil Demon's reluctance to invade to the descent of All Gods of the Ran Sect.

Quite a few extremists even attributed everything to Lu Ran.

Strictly speaking, such an assertion is correct.

The peacefulness of this night was precisely because in a certain Divine Worship Hall, the God Demon Emperor and the Master of Ran Sect were drinking together.

In Jade Lonely City, snowflakes scattered leisurely.

In the back garden of a residence beneath the Divine Sculpture of Xian Mo, a young woman stood in an octagonal pavilion, quietly admiring the snow.

Suddenly, a figure appeared outside the pavilion.

Dressed in snow-like robes, ethereal as an immortal.

The woman in the pavilion turned her head to look, seeing a certain someone safe and sound, she secretly breathed a sigh of relief.

"How did the negotiations go?" Jiang Ruyi had just spoken when her vision blurred.

The youth in snow-like robes didn't even bother to take a step, directly flickered before her, reaching out to his side to pick up a wisp of Smoke and Mist Silk.

The Smoke and Mist Silk struggled lightly, helplessly saying: [You've grabbed the wrong one.]

"Uh?" Lu Ran was indeed a bit dazed, he looked down, only then released the ribbon and grabbed another piece of smoke-like mist, the green gauze.

Jiang Ruyi smelled the strong scent of alcohol, she couldn't help but frown slightly: "How much did you drink?"

"A few cups...perhaps they should be called goblets?" Lu Ran said as he folded the Smoke Green Gauze into a strip.

Looking at the youth so close, Jiang Ruyi only felt his eyes were hazy with intoxication.

She couldn't tell his emotions or deduce how the banquet went.

The body strength of the Majestic Heaven Realm is beyond ordinary understanding, getting drunk is very difficult.

When he says a few cups, it's probably far more than that!

Thinking about it, Lu Ran went to the banquet at midnight, only to return now when the sky is grey...

Jiang Ruyi internally complained about "liars," but also closed her eyes obediently with the youth's movements, letting him cover her eyes.

Gradually, she not only smelled alcohol but also faint fragrance.

Jiang Ruyi restrained herself repeatedly, yet she still asked: "What kind of fragrance is this?"

Lu Ran was momentarily stunned, looking at the cold immortal's face, her eyes covered, she exuded a unique charm.

Even more deadly, this cold as ice immortal, her small mouth slightly pouted.

Very interesting~

Tsk, another jar of vinegar opened?

"It should be the plum fragrance in the wine." Lu Ran said with a smile, "Rest assured, no maids or dancers, it was purely drinking."

Jiang Ruyi, her little mind uncovered, felt a bit embarrassed and annoyed, tightly pursed her lips.

Lu Ran lowered his head, his forehead resting on her shoulder, the whole person leaning on her, mumbling discontentedly: "So pure that I want to curse!"

Not even a fruit platter, let alone a dish to accompany the drinks, at least bring a plate of peanuts..."

"Hehe~" Jiang Ruyi couldn't hold back for a moment, letting out a soft laugh.

Lu Ran continued muttering: "Using Sister Xian'er's hometown dialect, the Evil Spear Emperor is just a drunken fool.

Absolutely a big drunkard, just drinking..."

Jiang Ruyi regretted she couldn't hold it together, immediately put on a serious face and stopped laughing: "Aren't you his dish?"

"Eh?" Lu Ran's mind opened up, suddenly he realized.

Seems like that's the logic, huh?

"Hmph." Surrounded by a strong scent of alcohol, Jiang Ruyi gently snorted.

"A feast for the eyes?" Lu Ran muttered softly, "Embarrassingly, it has to be said, I'm indeed quite good-looking."

Jiang Ruyi: ?

She was both angry and amused, but before she could say anything further, the one leaning on her, lips already landed on her neck.

Trying to push him away to discuss serious matters, Jiang Ruyi, fearing this mess would fall to the ground, reluctantly patted his back:

"You discussed... well, what did you discuss?"

"Discussed quite a bit." Lu Ran sighed lightly, recounting the content to the Lady of the Ran Sect.

When Jiang Ruyi heard that the Evil Spear Emperor wanted to decide the Three Realms' dominion through a duel, her expression turned peculiar.

And when she heard that Northwest forces would have Spiritual Fortune and Lie Tian battle, she immediately realized this must be Lu Ran's demand.

Jiang Ruyi knew very well how much Lu Ran loathed these two deities.

When she heard the final showdown would be king vs. king, Jiang Ruyi immediately frowned tightly.

Heavenly Realm vs. First-class Evil God?

"Ran Sect has many soldiers, no need for redundancies." Jiang Ruyi commented.

Lu Ran sighed again, recounting the bargaining chips in the Evil Spear Emperor's hand, hearing it made Jiang Ruyi's face grow colder.

This is the soft spot of Ran Sect, to be precise, it's Lu Ran's soft spot.

He still cares.

As for the rest of the Ran Sect warriors, they almost have no such vulnerability.

What they care about may be just a few family members, others would be classified under the category of "all living beings."

The Gods of Ran Sect are of course exceedingly respectful in front of Lu Ran.

Whether it's heartfelt awe, unwavering loyalty, or camaraderie born from living through life and death together...

Regardless of the reason, the warriors are "alive."

Yet when facing the world, the Gods of Ran Sect are uniformly solemn and dignified.

What's even worse is the cold cruelty.

The higher one stands, the smaller the beings below.

This is not just a problem for individual soldiers, but a flaw in the God Demon cultivation system.

This upward path is one that erases humanity. Delving deeper, it makes the beings within the cultivation system acutely aware of their hierarchy and status.

The strict hierarchical system rewards God Demons with obedient servants, ruling over the Three Realms' beings.

On the other hand, this cultivation system also disciplines the God Demons themselves.

Before in Beifeng City, the scene where Lu Ran slowly descended upon the crowd was something almost impossible for Ran Sect soldiers or the Cloud Sea's former subordinates.

Under the guidance of the Master of Ran Sect, the soldiers are indeed saving all living beings.

But for most Ran Sect soldiers, this is a macro concept, difficult to implement concretely on any specific person or group.

"What day?"

"What?" Lu Ran, like a puddle of mud, leaned on the Lady, mumbling incoherently.

"When is the battle between Ran Sect and the Evil Spear Emperor set for?" Jiang Ruyi raised her delicate jade hand, supporting Lu Ran's back.

"March 3rd."

Jiang Ruyi's heart eased slightly; the time is quite ample, still two and a half months from now. Thus, Lu Ran can attempt to break through and upgrade to the Heavenly Realm-Third Level!

The Second Level and the Third Level differ by a Great Realm!

More crucially, once Lu Ran advances to the Third Level of the Heavenly Realm, could he transform into a Divine Sculpture and ascend to the God Realm?

Then, would the Immortal Sheep...

At this thought, Jiang Ruyi felt a bit conflicted inside.

Who knows, when that moment truly arrives, what will happen between Lu Ran and the Immortal Sheep.

"The day set by the Evil Spear Emperor." Lu Ran slowly stood upright, rubbing his eyes, "I wonder if it has any special significance."

Lu Ran realized that the lunar calendar March 3rd is a holiday for some minority ethnic groups, most famously celebrated by the Zhuang people.

But it doesn't seem to have any relation to the Evil Spear Emperor?

Last night while drinking, Lu Ran was striving hard to fathom the thoughts and purpose of the Evil Spear Emperor.

When discussing which day the final showdown would be on, Lu Ran aimed to persuade the Evil Spear Emperor to set it one month later.

Lu Ran dearly wished to advance!

Desiring to face that first-class Evil God with a stance of peak Heavenly Realm.

Unexpectedly, the Evil Spear Emperor, with a casual flick of his sleeve, set the date for March 3rd.

Lu Ran certainly had no objections!

This had already far exceeded his expectations, but after secretly rejoicing, Lu Ran realized another issue.

Might the Evil Spear Emperor be deliberately allowing sufficient time?

Considering what was mentioned at last night's banquet, Lu Ran inevitably made many associations.

Isn't the Evil Spear Emperor aware that the great situation is gone, unwilling to fall into decline and tragedy like Qiao Wanjun, ending the emperor's path, so he proposed this confrontation?

To Lu Ran's proposal of adding two life-and-death battles, the Evil Spear Emperor readily agreed.

Through Lu Ran's brief words, the Evil Spear Emperor clearly realized that Ran Sect definitely cannot tolerate these Spiritual Fortunes, Lie Tian.

In the conflict between the two forces, sacrifices and compromises are inevitable.

The death of Spiritual Fortune and Lie Tian also paved the way for the former northwest remnants to submit.

"Sigh..." Lu Ran let out a long sigh, feeling more poignant with each thought.

If all these aren't just self-indulgent fantasies, then the Evil Spear Emperor had already arranged everything for after his demise last night at the banquet.

Not compromising himself.

Letting the new God Master send him off on his final journey, with a grand funeral and a graceful exit.

Simultaneously, as a leader, the Evil Spear Emperor arranged for his subordinates' future as well, ensuring he did not let down those followers to the greatest extent.

"I found a possible related theory." At some point, Jiang Ruyi had slightly pulled down the Smoke Green Gauze in front, picking up her phone to look.

"Oh?" Lu Ran became interested, rubbing his eyes again.

"March 3rd, the Human Emperor's birthday."

Jiang Ruyi continued, looking at the information on the phone screen: "According to the 'Five Emperors Chronicles', Xuanyuan was born on this day."

Lu Ran slightly mouthed open.

Could this be a coincidence?

"Do you think it's related?" Jiang Ruyi's gentle silence blended into the tiny details, and she pulled the Smoke Green Gauze upwards again, covering her eyes.

Lu Ran paused for a moment, recounting everything he had seen and felt, along with his self-indulgent analysis.

Listening carefully for a long time, Jiang Ruyi too fell into contemplation.

She had been anxious all along, and the same story, through the clues Lu Ran found, pointed to another version.

"The Evil Spear Emperor might be lulling us; no matter what, we must prepare well." Jiang Ruyi supported Lu Ran's slightly swaying figure, "You take a rest for a while, then return to the Heavenly Realm for cultivation.

Don't linger on the Human World. I'll handle the Divine Worship matter on New Year's Day."

"Mm." Lu Ran responded, not completely obedient.

With one arm around her back, he leaned forward, sliding one hand beneath her knees, lifting the Lady in his embrace.

Jiang Ruyi pursed her thin lips, her cold and enchanting face eventually buried against his neck, letting him carry her out of the garden towards the house.

She knew well that Lu Ran would enter seclusion and cultivate diligently for the coming one or two months.

March 3rd...

Could it be the Human Emperor's birthday?

Or perhaps the day the Evil Emperor ascends or the Master of Ran Sect falls?

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