

Old Gods 121

Chapter 121: Tigers fall into the sheep's mouth

The group had idled away the time in the Snow Alley cabin, the atmosphere growing warmer, dispersing yesterday's gloom.

The four-person team reached a unanimous decision, to forgo further trials this month and instead concentrate on intensive training.

Once they achieved Stream Realm Third Rank, Deng, Tian, and Chang would each be able to learn another Divine Technique, which would naturally greatly enhance the team's combat power.

Most Believers in the world could learn only 4 to 6 Divine Techniques in their lifetimes.

After all, those who could cultivate to River Realm were already excellent.

And those who reached River Realm, they were truly rare!

It's worth mentioning that after reaching River Realm, there were no two Divine Techniques to be learned.

Most God Demon factions had only one Divine Technique to learn at River Realm.

While fewer in number, the quality was exceptional!

The Spells suitable for River Realm were mostly of the earth-shattering kind...

There were also some gods who did not have Divine Techniques suitable for River Realm!

Unfortunately, Immortal Sheep was one of them.

However, Lu Ran, as an Immortal Sheep Believer, didn't care about that at all.

After all, he owned a God Demon Sculpture Garden and could take whichever type of technique he wanted.

In terms of techniques alone, Lu Ran was the undisputed "kaleidoscope".

And he was the only one in the world!

For that title, Lu Ran had to train hard too.

He was eager to equip himself with the Evil Technique suited for when he reached River Realm First Rank, from the Black Lantern Clan.

Evil Technique·Yin Fire Cage!

By then, Lu Ran's eyes would burn with Black Fire, and wherever his gaze traveled, all enemies would be controlled, forced to quietly stay in place...

Wouldn't Lu Ran be ecstatic?

After returning home, Lu Ran sat cross-legged in front of the shrine, and immediately entered training mode.

But the next afternoon, Lu Ran, deep in rigorous training, was disturbed.

"Knock, knock, knock~"

"Huh?" Lu Ran opened his eyes, puzzled.

A visitor at home?

Oh, right!

Lu Ran remembered that yesterday, while having a cold dessert, both Deng Yutang and Tian Tian had mentioned Aunt Si visiting his home.

He immediately got up and went to open the door.

Sure enough, there stood a mother and daughter outside.

"Aunt Si." Lu Ran smiled at the two, noticing the presents in the lady's hand.

"Good afternoon, little Lu." Si Caiqin smiled and nodded, "Auntie came to see how you're doing."

"Auntie is too polite, please come in." Lu Ran stepped back to make room.

"Meow?" The little tabby cat came to Lu Ran's feet, tilting its head curiously at the guests.

"Is your family home?" Si Caiqin asked.

"It's just me at home." Lu Ran took out two pairs of slippers and placed them on the floor.

"Meow~"

Lu Ran looked at the little tabby cat affectionately rubbing against his ankle and chuckled, "And one cat."

Si Caiqin, worried she had misunderstood, probed further, "Your family?"

Lu Ran smiled, "My mom lives in Beijing, my dad is gone."

Si Xianxian hesitated for a moment as she was about to put on the slippers.

Lu Ran, ever perceptive, noticed this detail.

And the observer was also being observed.

When Si Xianxian saw that Lu Ran smiled as he spoke, a faint smile, almost self-mocking, appeared on her delicate, fair face.

Si Caiqin, not wanting an awkward atmosphere, hastily said, "Is there a God Demon in the house?"

"Yes, in my room." Lu Ran led the mother and daughter to his small bedroom.

This world had its own rules.

Visitors, out of respect for the head of the household and reverence for the Divine, would first pay their respects.

Si Caiqin showed no odd reaction to the presence of Nine-level God-Immortal Sheep.

Before the shrine, she clasped her hands together reverently, uttering phrases like "I hope I'm not bothering you."

Si Xianxian also offered her respects, and since entering the house, she had been like any normal person.

"Auntie, please take a seat, I'll get you a glass of water," Lu Ran invited them to the living room.

"No need, little Lu. No need to trouble yourself," Si Caiqin said, sitting on the sofa and watching Lu Ran's departing back.

Si Xianxian looked around the house curiously.

From the outside, the building looked old and weathered, with peeling paint, but inside it was clean and tidy.

"Meow?" The little tabby leaped onto the armrest of the sofa, gazing curiously at the beautiful young lady.

Si Xianxian stretched out a slender finger and gently tapped its nose.

Just as Lu Ran came back with the cups of water, he caught this tender moment.

Honestly, he found it hard to reconcile this fair, quiet young lady with the violent and ferocious Fierce Heavenly believers in the Demon Cave.

"Thank you!" Si Caiqin accepted the plain water, "Sit down, little Lu. Don't fuss."

"It's no fuss." Lu Ran was slightly embarrassed, "It's just a glass of boiled water, I really don't have anything at home to entertain guests with, not even tea."

Si Caiqin shook her head, smiling, unconcerned, but inwardly sighed.

Look at this young man, self-reliant and strong, and already so capable at such a young age.

And then look at her own...

She didn't dare let Si Xianxian out of her sight, for fear her daughter might cause great trouble at any moment!

Lu Ran suddenly said, "Do you like eating canned food? We've got canned food at home."

"Pfft...Haha~" Si Xianxian first tried to hold back, then laughed unrestrainedly.

That haughty and indulgent demeanor finally allowed Lu Ran to glimpse a shadow of her behavior in the Demon Cave.

"Act your age," Si Caiqin said sharply to her daughter.

Si Xianxian ignored her mother, instead turning her head to look at the little tabby cat that had gone to eat.

Lu Ran brought over a stool and sat facing across the coffee table, "Auntie, you're too kind, bringing so much stuff."

"Auntie has a question," Si Caiqin said softly.

"What is it?"

"I've met other Immortal Sheep Believers before, and you seem a little different from them?"

Hearing this, Si Xianxian also pricked up her ears in interest.

"Are you referring to combat?" Lu Ran brought out his rehearsed story, "I haven't even graduated from high school yet, so I'm considered a newbie."

During this stage, Lord Immortal Goat allows His followers to train and grow."

Si Caiqin remained silent, neither agreeing nor disagreeing.

Clearly, this excuse was not convincing.

Even if Divine-Immortal Goat allowed newcomers to train and refine Divine Techniques...

It definitely did not resemble Lu Ran's actions, venturing alone into the lantern formation to rescue others at great risk.

Immortal Sheep Believers were also generally weak and cowardly.

Being disliked for this was an undeniable fact.

Even if a team was forcibly assembled at school, Immortal Sheep Believers would still be on the fringe.

But back in the Demon Cave, Lu Ran was the absolute leader of his team, and a very assertive one at that!

The combat prowess, leadership, and strong warrior presence Lu Ran exhibited...

Was well beyond what a high school student should possess!

At the end of the day, Lu Ran simply did not fit the profile of a 17-year-old student or an Immortal Sheep Believer.

"Maybe I'm just more devout," Lu Ran suddenly said.

"Oh?" Si Caiqin looked at Lu Ran.

Lu Ran shrugged, "Lord Immortal Goat might prefer me, indulges me, and allows me to fight."

Si Caiqin looked astonished, as if she had heard something incredible.

Si Xianxian suddenly spoke up, "He even managed to serve Evil Demon Yan Zhi, nothing is impossible.

His talents nearly exploding, isn't it normal to be favored by the Divine?"

The little Divine Sculpture in the house clearly limited Si Xianxian's impudence.

In her mind, a god at the very bottom, despised by everyone, would probably not attract a single good disciple in a thousand years.

Suddenly one day, Immortal Sheep hits the jackpot, scooping up such a treasure...

Of course, he'd pamper him extensively!

Reflecting on it, what were those higher-ranking gods doing!

It's understandable that they wouldn't want me, but how could they let a Believer like Lu Ran slip through?

Looking at Lu Ran's growth now, having pledged to the lowest-ranked god, and he becomes this formidable.

If it were a higher-ranked god, wouldn't he soar even higher?

Lu Ran was surprised, "You've heard stories about me?"

Si Caiqin, "These past few days, when visiting your teammates' homes, I heard some."

Lu Ran chuckled, "I was scared to death when I first saw Yan Zhi."

Si Caiqin put down her cup on the coffee table, looking earnest, "Little Lu, I have a favor to ask."

Lu Ran, "Hm?"

Si Caiqin, "My daughter has been spoiled rotten and she gives me a real headache.

When she was younger, she had two friends, but as she grew up, no one would be around her."

Si Xianxian sneered, not finding that appealing.

Si Caiqin, "She's a Fierce Heavenly believer, and after starting university, no teams wanted her, so she has been training alone."

Si Xianxian nonchalantly said, "Training alone is fine, you're free.

Saves the trouble of worrying about smashing fragile teammates when swinging my hammer."

"Stop talking!" Si Caiqin scolded, visibly aggrieved by her daughter's attitude.

Turning back to Lu Ran with a gentle, pleading expression:

"For years, I've never seen her willingly follow anyone's command."

Saying this, Si Caiqin extended her hands, grasping Lu Ran's, "During battles, I have to beg and coax her.

I had no idea she would listen to you like that."

Lu Ran, "..."

Si Xianxian, "..."

This time, it was Si Xianxian who looked unsatisfied.

Doesn't a goddess need face?

She looked at her mother, "He saved my life, shouldn't I be a bit nicer?"

Si Caiqin, "I gave birth to you, raised you for 18 years, and I've never seen you so nice to me!"

Si Xianxian became exasperated, "You... I... I..."

"Auntie," Si Caiqin turned her eyes back to Lu Ran, pleading, "My daughter is very strong, already River Realm Second Rank and you've seen her capabilities.

In the future, if you need external assistance during your trials, could you consider taking her with you?

Auntie's talents are limited, I can only reach Stream Realm in this lifetime, I can't accompany her any further..."

From the earnest and pleading expression, Lu Ran gleaned one message—such is the heart of a parent.

Lu Ran looked towards Si Xianxian.

The explosive output of the Fierce Heavenly believer had been witnessed by his own eyes.

If she could be controlled and used for his purposes, wouldn't she be a powerful asset?

What intrigued Lu Ran even more was that Si Xianxian didn't listen to others, only to him...

Didn't this count as a form of unusual "loyalty"?

"What are you looking at?" Si Xianxian felt uncomfortable under his gaze.

Lu Ran just smiled, "No one wants you?"

Si Xianxian's eyebrows shot up, "Who doesn't want me? It's that I don't care for them!"

Lu Ran nodded, "You talk tough."

Si Xianxian stood up abruptly, "What are you saying?"

"I am your lifesaver, you know. Be nice," Lu Ran gestured with his hand, "Don't be angry, sit down."

Si Xianxian trembled slightly within!

She opened her mouth, and looked at Lu Ran for a long time, but couldn't bring herself to say anything.

Si Caiqin was also slightly stunned, watching her daughter's demeanor, she remained silent too...

Chapter 122: Tool Immortal?

"No!" Si Xianxian finally spoke up, pointing at Lu Ran with one hand, "I'm of the River Realm, the Second Rank of the River Realm at that!"

Just a little lackey of the Stream Realm Third Rank like you, I could squash you with one hand!

How dare you?"

Lu Ran grinned, "As long as you don't bite the hand that feeds you, then the fact that I saved your life means I can own you for a lifetime."

"Hisss..." Si Xianxian sucked in a breath of cold air!

So bold, huh?

Not even going to put on a show?

Her delicate figure leaned backward, and she plopped back onto the sofa.

"Gratitude should be repaid like this!" Si Caiqin nodded vigorously in agreement, "Don't worry, Little Lu, your aunt promises you!"

Even if my daughter is a mess, at least she knows the difference between gratitude and grudges!"

Si Xianxian: ????

What... What is this?

Why am I being set up?

"Ha ha." Lu Ran couldn't help but laugh aloud as he saw Si Xianxian's widened beautiful eyes and her dazed look.

Praised by one's own mother, the effect is truly remarkable!

"Ugh." Si Xianxian covered her head with both hands, distressedly scratching it.

Lu Ran suddenly asked, "Got any plans coming up?"

Si Caiqin questioned, "Little Lu wants to?"

Lu Ran, "We've got a Demon Cave here in Rain Alley City, and I'd like to check it out."

Now, his three teammates were all cultivating hard at home, sprinting full force towards the Stream Realm Third Rank for the New Divine Skill.

Currently alone, Lu Ran could take this opportunity to cultivate Evil Sculpture.

The Evil Dog Evil Sculpture in his garden was currently only at Stream Realm Third Rank.

Having an explosive output like Si Xianxian around, of course, he wanted to make good use of it!

Ideally, he wanted to cultivate the Evil Dog Evil Sculpture up to the River Realm before the new moon next month.

That would save him trouble later on, from dragging his teammates to Evil Dog Village.

"Sure, I'll come with you," Si Caiqin immediately said, then added with some worry, "Little Lu, you've only rested at home for one day. Have you adjusted your condition?"

"Auntie, you don't need to come," Lu Ran suggested, "Si Xianxian and I will go practice."

I want to get used to her combat style and see how best we can coordinate."

Si Caiqin hesitated, "This..."

Lu Ran, "Auntie, you've gone through the battle at Black Grave Mound just like me."

You've been running around visiting these past two days and must be exhausted. You should rest in the city."

That was all Lu Ran could say.

This trip, he was after the River Realm's Evil Dog.

He couldn't just outright say... Auntie, your power isn't quite enough...

Si Xianxian suddenly said, "Did I say I was going?"

Lu Ran smiled, "Us as a pair, teaming up and trying it out, we might just have a blast?"

Si Xianxian glared at Lu Ran, puffing with anger, her fair and pretty face threatening to turn red.

"Xianxian, go with Little Lu," Si Caiqin finally decided, "You haven't teamed up with someone your age in a long time.

Being with me, you still have to look out for me, with Little Lu it's different..."

While the mother and daughter conversed, Lu Ran's mind became even more active.

A few days ago, during his trials in the Black Lantern Demon Cave, he had watched Chang Ying repeatedly bet and lose, unable to draw the sign she desired.

The saddest part was at a critical life-or-death moment, Chang Ying drew the worst possible sign from six options!

Was it really just a matter of probability?

Lu Ran felt he had seen a so-called divine being who would stop at nothing to scrounge for faith.

Spiritual Sign didn't care about the believers' lives at all, forcing Chang Ying to double down on her prayers in desperation.

At that moment, Lu Ran thought: Why not let Chang Ying join my sect?

To worship the Fake God-Spiritual Sign in my garden?

Once the idea took hold, there was no stopping it.

If you, Spiritual Sign, couldn't properly take care of your own believers, then I will!

Looking at your face, scavenging for faith...

You probably also shirk your duties when facing the Evil Demon Clan, right?

After all, only with constant invasions and killings by the Evil Demon Clan could the Spiritual Sign receive a steady supply of the Power of Faith from the Human Clan.

If the Evil Demon Clan were vanquished...

This uncomfortable truth existed, but upon closer consideration, it was an undeniable reality!

Chang Ying's behaviors, combined with the peculiar rules of the Spiritual Sign Sect, made it difficult for Lu Ran not to suspect.

With so many believers kneeling before you every day, nurturing and providing for you, and this is how you behave?

In that case,

My garden's Fake God·Spiritual Sign might just take your place!

Back to the current Fierce Heavenly believer.

Clearly, Si Xianxian was also deeply influenced by the divine!

Divine·Lie Tian didn't appear as greedy as Divine·Spiritual Sign.

At least Lu Ran hadn't seen it yet.

However, the fact that Lie Tian could drive the Human Clan believers towards destruction was a real situation.

Si Xianxian lived in a poor environment, despised and ostracized by others, and was on the path to "self-destruction."

Was it really the nature of Divine·Lie Tian, or was there a deeper meaning?

Annually, in the casualty reports, the number of Human Clan believers killed by "crazed" Fierce Heavenly believers were not few, and among them were some of exceptional strength.

Lu Ran frowned slightly, hoping that he was overthinking it.

No help for it; ever since encountering Divine·Spiritual Sign's true colors, he always thought the worst.

No matter, if Si Xianxian joined my Lu Ran Sect...

The Lie Tian God Sculpture in the Sculpture Garden, under my control, would naturally not continue to torment her.

To say nothing of making her temperament gentle, at least she could act normal, right?

Even if she remained as fierce... After all, as long as she listens to me, it's all good.

"Mm." Lu Ran pursed his lips.

My God Demon Sculpture Garden was undoubtedly shaking the very foundation of the God Demon species existence.

Naturally, I'd be willing to side with the deities against the Evil Demons.

But the saying "the bearer of the jade commits the crime" is well known to all.

In other words, some battles in the future were inevitable!

If so, should I start preparing? Building a foundation early on?

This kind of thing can't be accomplished overnight, so I should look further ahead and prepare early.

Si Xianxian's talent was indeed extraordinary, reaching the River Realm·Second Rank at the mere age of eighteen!

Such terrifying talent wasn't something a seventh-grade deity's believer should have.

But if this seventh-grade deity's name was Lie Tian, then everything made sense.

This deity was only "sitting" at the seventh row, but if one day he wanted to move up to the first row...

Then "One Immortal, One Saint, Two Martial Heroes" would presumably have no objections?

Even if there were objections, for Divine-Lie Tian to sit in the second row, on par with the "Four Directions Martial Heroes," would also be absolutely no problem!

Why not, give Si Xianxian a trial run?

Building a foundation may be a nice idea, but in practice, it is exceedingly difficult.

After all, not just anyone would have the guts to stand with me and turn this world upside down.

To find such comrades-in-arms, one must depend on luck and choose carefully!

"Ey, alright, alright," Si Xianxian impatiently said, "Stop nagging, I got it."

Si Caiqin's face was complex as she looked at her daughter.

Lu Ran stood up, "Shall we go?"

"Now?" Si Xianxian looked up at Lu Ran.

"Growth should not be delayed," Lu Ran turned to Si Caiqin, "Auntie, I can't keep you resting at home."

"Auntie understands," Si Caiqin quickly said, "With the god present, it is not appropriate for me to intrude, I'll go find a hotel."

After some thought, Lu Ran said, "Si Xianxian and I might stay in Evil Dog Village until the new moon.

Auntie, why don't you go back first?"

Si Caiqin said, "I'll stay in Rain Alley City for two days. If you don't come out and everything goes smoothly, then I'll head home.

I'll come back on the ninth or tenth to pick up Xianxian."

Hearing this, Lu Ran inwardly sighed.

How much trouble can this girl be?

She's already 18, yet her aunt dares not let her take the train alone?

Afraid that Si Xianxian would blow up the train?

Reasonably speaking, being at the River Realm·Second Rank, she shouldn't be that senseless.

From the moment Si Xianxian entered the household until now, she had a temper indeed, but her mind was clear.

"I'll get the knives." Lu Ran nodded to the two of them.

A few minutes later, dressed in a black training outfit, holding two knives, Lu Ran walked out.

Si Xianxian lifted her gaze and, seeing Lu Ran in this familiar attire, was fixated for a good while.

"Auntie will take you there," Si Caiqin stood up, her eyes full of tenderness as she looked at Lu Ran.

She, too, must have recalled Lu Ran's valiance on the battlefield a few days ago.

The three of them left the house and drove towards the outskirts west of the city.

On the way, Si Caiqin kept instructing her daughter what to do: "Listen to Lu Ran," "Don't be temperamental," and the like.

Lu Ran obviously knew that Si Xianxian was 18, anyone else might think she was 8.

"Enough, Auntie, stop," Lu Ran, sitting in the co-driver's seat, opened his mouth to persuade.

He turned to look at the back seat, seeing Si Xianxian on the verge of exploding in an effort to restrain herself.

"Mm." Si Caiqin pondered for a moment and said no more.

Si Xianxian then rolled down the car window, taking a deep breath.

Si Caiqin spoke again, "Little Lu, the Evil Dog Clan is different from Black Lantern. Evil Dogs have blood and flesh, it's easier to get lost in slaughtering.

When you're training in the Demon Cave, you must rest often.

When you encounter other training teams, be polite; everyone is killing, and tempers will be high.

Be sure not to clash with anyone..."

Lu Ran: "..."

Why is the fire being directed at me now?

Si Xianxian, listening to Lu Ran's "mmhmm" noises, suddenly felt much better.

As Lu Ran continuously nodded in agreement, that helpless look finally made Si Xianxian burst into laughter.

"Hahahaha~"

The girl's unrestrained laughter was distinctive.

Si Caiqin glanced at the rearview mirror, glaring ferociously at her daughter.

"Here we are, Aunt Si, that's enough," Lu Ran hurriedly said.

As the vehicle came to a halt, Lu Ran quickly got out of the car, turning to hang onto the window, "Auntie, you can leave now."

Si Caiqin started to speak several times but eventually said, "Be careful, call Auntie as soon as you come out!"

"Definitely!" Lu Ran patted the car window frame, stepping back two paces.

Watching the car drive away, Lu Ran took a long breath.

"Heh..."

Interestingly, Si Xianxian mirrored Lu Ran's reaction, their movements almost in sync.

Both naturally noticed each other's reactions, and they looked at one another.

After two seconds of eye contact, they both laughed.

Like they'd both just been released from prison...

Chapter 123: Let's wait and see

"Hello, we would like to undergo training in Evil Dog Village."

Lu Ran, accompanied by Si Xianxian, arrived at the registration desk.

Behind the computer desk, a male soldier sized up the two, "Where are the other two teammates?"

"She is a university student, my senior," Lu Ran blurted out, "This time she came with me... uh, to guide me."

"Not a high school student, huh?" the soldier realized, "What rank is she?"

"She is at River Realm·Second Rank."

"Hmm," the soldier eyed the young girl and nodded appreciatively, "To enter this Demon Cave, you need to pay a fee."

"Of course, that's only right," said Lu Ran immediately.

The soldier then looked at Lu Ran, "Since there's a River Realm believer in your team, we won't provide a soldier to accompany you for free."

"That's great!" Lu Ran nodded repeatedly, very happy.

The soldier: "..."

"No, I mean, that's too bad," Lu Ran quickly corrected himself.

"Give me your IDs." The soldier tapped the desk, taking both of their student IDs and identity cards.

However, just as he placed Si Xianxian's ID on the card reader, his expression changed drastically.

"A Fierce Heavenly believer?" the soldier looked up at the girl again.

Si Xianxian frowned slightly, speaking for the first time, her tone sharp, "What's wrong with being a Fierce Heavenly believer?"

Lu Ran placed a hand on Si Xianxian's shoulder and gently patted, "I'll talk, you don't speak."

Si Xianxian: "..."

The soldier, with a businesslike demeanor, turned to Lu Ran, "In that case, we suggest that you hire a soldier at your own expense."

Clearly, being a Fierce Heavenly believer carried a notorious reputation, synonymous with great risks.

If Si Xianxian had been a believer of any other deity, the soldier would certainly not have made such a remark.

"No need, no need," Lu Ran shook his head repeatedly, "The two of us can manage."

The soldier hesitated, "You..."

Lu Ran slightly turned, gesturing towards the girl behind him, "Look, isn't she stable?"

Si Xianxian's heart trembled slightly, but then she realized.

After all, she was at River Realm·Second Rank, her mental strength far surpassing Lu Ran's.

"You're something else!" Si Xianxian almost laughed with frustration.

How many words have you even spoken?

Count them yourself, how many "meh" have you hidden in them?

"Alright, alright," Lu Ran patted the girl's shoulder, "I'll 'meh' less in the future."

"Hmm..." Si Xianxian put her hand on her forehead, her figure swaying.

Damn, could you find an opportunity to 'meh' even here?

Other Immortal Sheep Believers were always polite and kind, fearing to provoke any trouble.

But you, you're just a disaster!

Si Xianxian suddenly realized, was the Divine Technique of the Immortal Sheep camp particularly strong?

It was only because the sect's purpose and ethos made the Immortal Sheep Believers appear pathetically weak.

Hmm... not quite right.

The Immortal Sheep recruited believers who were inherently weak and timid.

It was a mutual rush to the bottom, so to speak.

Was Lu Ran this "big leak," an outlier among the Immortal Sheep recruits?

The soldier insisted, "I strongly suggest you hire a soldier at your own expense."

Lu Ran: "Just take a look at my ID, I'm quite capable, not ignorant."

The soldier frowned deeply, picking up Lu Ran's ID, placing it on the card reader.

The next second, the soldier looked surprised, "You are Lu Ran?"

In foreign lands, Lu Ran was nothing.

But in his hometown of Rain Alley City, Lu Ran had made a name for himself.

However, the soldier's next sentence froze Lu Ran's expression.

"Then you really can't afford to have any mishaps!" the soldier immediately said, "I'll apply with my superiors to provide you with a soldier for free."

By the way, what's the number of your high school team? What's the name of the team instructor?"

Lu Ran: "..."

In the distance, another soldier's voice carried over: "His team number is 98, led by Dou Zhiqiang."

Lu Ran turned his head, realizing he didn't recognize the person.

But clearly, the person recognized him.

"Am I really that famous?"

For a moment, Lu Ran didn't know whether to feel miserable or happy.

"You haven't graduated from high school yet, so you can enter the Demon Cave for training for free," the soldier, having contacted his comrade, told Lu Ran, "She has to pay."

"I'll pay," Lu Ran immediately took out his phone, "She hasn't passed the River Realm-Third Rank, so the ticket is the five thousand tier?

And since she's a university student, I remember, isn't it half price for university students?"

"I have money," Si Xianxian stepped forward, "I don't need your help."

"Eating from someone's hand and taking their money can soften a person's resistance," Lu Ran said offhandedly, "If I pay for you, shouldn't you treat me a bit better?"

Si Xianxian: ??

"Haha," even the usually serious soldier, couldn't help but laugh.

Partly because of Lu Ran's frankness.

And partly, who doesn't know the characteristics of the Fierce Heavenly believers?

"Alright," Lu Ran swiped two thousand five hundred, then turned to Si Xianxian, "You better treat me well now."

Two thousand five hundred yuan might seem a lot, but actually, just killing five River Realm Demon Crystals would break even.

Lu Ran was also sure, during this trip to the Demon Cave, he could make a lot of money.

In the future, Li Hua the cat's food was secured...

Si Xianxian rolled her eyes: "Then I suppose I'll reluctantly protect you."

As a mighty River Realm warrior, she indeed had the credentials to say so.

However, Lu Ran was serious, "I don't need your protection, I just hope you will follow my command."

Though he said this, Lu Ran thought to himself:

If you could, with your immense talent, become a devotee under my guidance...

That would be truly wonderful~

Of course, all this depended on her passing Lu Ran's selection.

"Depends on my mood," Si Xianxian snorted.

"It can't depend on your mood, you must listen!" Lu Ran said sternly, "Aunt Si entrusted you to me because she saw hope with me.

If you don't cooperate, I'll just have to return you to Aunt Si.

In the future, you'd have to enter the Demon Cave and train together with her..."

"Stop, just stop!" Si Xianxian quickly said, "I'll listen to you."

"Oh?" Lu Ran slightly raised his eyebrows, surprised by the effectiveness of Aunt Si's influence.

Hmm... Well, it makes sense.

Just then in the car for that moment, Lu Ran was already struggling.

"Are you here alone?" A familiar voice suddenly spoke.

Lu Ran turned around and immediately said, "Hello, Instructor Dou, this is my senior. We're here together."

"Alright, let's go," Dou Zhiqiang, as always, stern and cool, turned to leave.

"Wait a moment, Instructor Dou, let me store my phone first."

...

Ten minutes later, Lu Ran and Si stood outside of Stone City Gate Number 1, facing several torch-lit paths.

"Go ahead and train," said Dou Zhiqiang, about to transform into a crow.

"Instructor Dou, wait!" Lu Ran suddenly spoke.

Dou Zhiqiang: ??

What do you mean, are you planning to slaughter me?

"No, just don't go yet," Lu Ran hurriedly said, "I have something cool to show you~"

Dou Zhiqiang, expressionless, silently watched Lu Ran.

Lu Ran: "Instructor Dou, activate your Water Flow Armor first, I'm worried you might get hurt."

Dou Zhiqiang, puzzled, covered his body with a layer of Water Flow Armor.

"You too," Lu Ran looked at Si Xianxian, ordering, "Armor up."

Si Xianxian, without complaint, donned the Water Flow Armor as well.

"Not bad," Lu Ran looked at the Fierce Heavenly believer, nodding his head appreciatively.

A good start is half the success!

Lu Ran suddenly lifted his foot, and with a puff of fog, his leg transformed into a thick goat leg and he stomped down forcefully.

"Bang!"

The ground shattered, and the air waves churned!

While Immortal Fog filled the air, there were more air waves, and less white fog.

Both River Realm warriors were pushed back, their feet moving rapidly to regain their balance.

"What is this?" Dou Zhiqiang finally changed his expression.

Lu Ran grinned cheekily, "How is it? My Immortal Sheep Divine Technique·Immortal Hoof, what do you think about its effects?"

Dou Zhiqiang furrowed his brows, "This is Immortal Hoof?"

Lu Ran shrugged, mumbling to himself:

No, this is Demon Hoof.

Soul-splitting Demon Hoof!

He had already decided to demonstrate this technique to others, and he had also asked for and received Lord Immortal Goat's permission.

In the future, when Lu Ran inevitably found himself surrounded in battle, this technique would surely save his life.

Si Xianxian: "Isn't Immortal Hoof supposed to dart around annoyingly like a pestering fly?"

"What kind of talk is that!" Lu Ran glanced at Si Xianxian sideways, looking at Dou Zhiqiang, "I thought I'd report my training progress in advance.

It would save you the trouble of asking during the training."

Dou Zhiqiang, silent, had naturally witnessed Lu Ran's unique interpretation of Divine Techniques.

Lu Ran continued to boast: "I have a lot of ideas, and Lord Immortal Goat has given me quite a few pointers, allowing me to make this breakthrough."

"You... okay," Dou Zhiqiang nodded, "Anything else you need to report?"

Lu Ran shook his head, regrettably saying, "Nothing else, I haven't figured out the other marvelous uses of my Immortal Sheep Sect's Divine Techniques just yet.

Alas, I'm still quite dense."

Dou Zhiqiang: "..."

Si Xianxian: "..."

Is this even human speech?

"Flap flap flap~"

Dou Zhiqiang didn't speak further, directly transforming into a crow and flying away.

Si Xianxian, her expression bizarre, kept staring intensely at Lu Ran.

"Not bad, right?" Lu Ran said with a smile.

Si Xianxian pouted slightly: "Being pampered by your own deity sure is grand, huh?"

Ordinary believers can't even interact with their deity!

You not only receive meticulous guidance from the deity, but you also dare to recklessly alter his Divine Techniques?

Indeed, those who are favored are fearless...

"No, no," Lu Ran waved his hands dismissively, "It's because my Lord Immortal Goat has such a good personality!"

Kind and benevolent, both gentle and friendly..."

As he spoke, even Lu Ran couldn't continue!

However, Si Xianxian quite believed him.

After all, Divine-Immortal Goat is known to show this kind of demeanor.

"Alright, let's get going," said Lu Ran, plunging two knives into the ground.

Then, under Si Xianxian's curious gaze, he pulled out a red scarf from his pocket.

When she saw Lu Ran blindfold himself with the red scarf, Si Xianxian was stupefied...

She had indeed seen Lu Ran in this guise before in the pitch-dark Demon Cave.

Si Xianxian's heart stirred: "What kind of Divine Technique is this?"

Lu Ran, having tied the red scarf: "This is not a Divine Technique."

Si Xianxian, disbelievingly, lifted her delicate palm and waved her slender fingers in front of Lu Ran's face.

Lu Ran drew out his knife and gently pushed the girl's hand aside with the hilt: "This is a talent."

Si Xianxian: "..."

"Let's go," urged Lu Ran.

"Hmph, you sure know a few tricks," Si Xianxian walked ahead.

Lu Ran stepped up beside her, flipping his knife.

To get a strong, fierce believer like Si Xianxian to follow orders, it couldn't just be through favor.

Lu Ran had spoken frankly once, and he didn't plan to bring it up again.

That one reminder had set a tone, which was sufficient.

In this cold, harsh world, strength was the foundation for everything!

And indeed, the best solution for all problems!

Lu Ran believed that as long as he gave himself enough time, he could surely make her willingly follow commands.

As for this talented and universally despised young girl, whether she would qualify to join his side in the future and become a weapon in his hands...

Hmm... we'll see as we go.

...

Chapter 124: Dog Village Double Row

Seven days later, Evil Dog Village.

On a desolate ridge, torches wavering in the dark.

A tall, slender figure stood at the edge of the torch-lit path, gazing at the battle not far away.

"He truly is a madman."

Muttered Si Xianxian, her voice laced with strands of admiration.

In her view, Lu Ran was fighting up close with a pack of evil dogs, each step thrilling.

Si Xianxian was certain that Lu Ran had the capacity to escape from the battlefield.

And the Divine Technique-Immortal Hoof, a gift from the Lord Immortal Goat to his believers, was specifically created for the purpose of escape.

Yet, Lu Ran, this anomaly, charged into the fray like a reckless brute!

He had the attitude of a brute, but his combat skills were exquisitely fine.

Hmm... even finer than these slender dogs!

Retreating step, side step, shoulder forward with a horizontal slash of the blade.

Tilting his head, blocking, his dual blades whirling like a disc.

Surrounded by 7 or 8 evil dogs, Lu Ran was entangled in a ferocious mauling.

Amidst the pack of slender dogs, that even more slender man seemed like a prescient deity!

Always predicting the enemy's moves, repeatedly turning peril into safeness.

Four characters came to mind: A feast for the eyes!

Si Xianxian found herself enjoying the scene more and more...

She also had a hunch that while Lu Ran formally revered the Immortal Sheep, in secret, he must have also pledged allegiance to the Second-class God·North Wind Blade!

Of course, this was pure fantasy.

The gods of the world were exclusive and would never allow a "follower to serve multiple masters" scenario to exist.

Si Xianxian finally confirmed that during their time in the Demon Cave, Lu Ran hadn't relied on luck to pass through the lantern array.

"Whimper~"

"Whimper..." The pack of slender dogs let out a series of whines.

It signified injury, but also cowardice.

As one evil dog after another met their end, the survivors recognized the reality and turned tail to flee.

Eight against one, with four killed in retaliation...

They'd been outplayed!

How could they possibly fight back?

Si Xianxian casually gripped a hefty hammer.

With a forward toss, the hammer with a 3-meter handle rotated and flared with layers of flames, illuminating the pitch-black wilderness.

Fierce Heavenly Divine Skill-Fierce Burst Sky!

Such imposing Divine Skill, when used to slaughter dogs, seemed overkill.

"Boom!"

The hammer's point of impact wasn't precise, and with the evil dogs' nimbly darting around, they naturally dodged the hammerstrike.

However, they could evade the hammer but not the rolling flames!

The hammer exploded into a sea of fire, engulfing three evil dogs within it.

Lu Ran even smelled the scorched scent of dog flesh...

The cooking skills of the Immortal Master were atrocious; a rush of flames left no good meat from the dog carcass.

"Meh~~~"

Lu Ran turned his head, looking at the lone surviving evil dog.

Its survival was solely because it fled in a different direction from its three companions.

However, under the call of the Enchanting Demon Sheep, how could there be any survivors?

If the dog had been of River Realm, it might have had a chance to survive.

But it was from Stream Realm, which made things difficult.

The terrifying Enchanting Demon Sheep forcibly twisted the will of the evil dog.

The creature that should have fled in panic turned back, eyes blood-red with fury.

Seeing this scene, Si Xianxian's face revealed a complex expression.

She hadn't heard Lu Ran's soft moans, but she had experienced them herself a few days ago.

Regarding Lu Ran's possession of a special version of the Divine Technique·Voice of Compassion...

A thousand questions of "Why him?" had popped in Si Xianxian's mind!

It seemed Lord Immortal Sheep overly doted on this disciple...

Divine Technique·Immortal Hoo's modified version could be somewhat linked to fleeing the battlefield, but a unique application of Divine Technique·Voice of Compassion?

The effects of this technique were completely contrary to the Immortal Sheep faction's philosophy!

If this wasn't divine favoritism, what else could it be?

"Slash!"

The blade's edge sliced flesh, Lu Ran's dual blades piercing through the dog's belly, and then violently carving an X-shape in front of him.

The fresh blood, nourishing the sharpness of his blades.

A shower of blood rained down, staining the red bandana on his face.

Lu Ran panted heavily, having fought for a long while now, he was indeed a bit tired.

Si Xianxian approached step by step, her tone teasing, "You always tell me to take it easy, yet when it comes to yourself, you bathe in a blood rain?"

Lu Ran, "Dog corpses are also resources that shouldn't be wasted.

Your hammerstrike didn't leave any remaining energy, just crisped and fragrant."

Si Xianxian, holding the Fierce Sky Hammer ablaze with flames, like wielding a three-meter-high torch, stood next to Lu Ran,

"Do you only have words for training me, every single day?"

Lu Ran murmured softly, "I am the commander, after all."

Si Xianxian suddenly reached out with her palm, moving not swiftly, as if deliberately allowing Lu Ran time to prepare.

"You... Hmm?"

Lu Ran's eyebrows slightly furrowed.

Si Xianxian's lips curled into an almost imperceptible smile, her fingertip writing a single character on Lu Ran's bloodstained face:

Fine!

Of course, without an exclamation point.

Lu Ran, "... "

Is she insulting me?

In the past four months, Lu Ran had grown 1 centimeter taller, reaching 178cm.

Yet his weight had only increased to 68 kilograms.

As a martial artist, Lu Ran was indeed skinny.

Perhaps it was because he was 17, an age when the body grows, or maybe due to his daily training consuming too much energy.

Either way, Lu Ran's weight refused to increase.

"Hehe~" Si Xianxian stepped back and held out the hammer forward.

The flame's light cast upon the character on Lu Ran's face, and she nodded in satisfaction.

Lu Ran wiped his cheek with one hand, removing her masterpiece, "You'd better collect the bodies! The hammerstrike just now must have cost quite a bit of your Divine Power, right?"

Si Xianxian, "I rarely praise you, and you still get an attitude?"

Lu Ran, "Carry out the orders, or I'll 'meh' you!"

"Ugh." Si Xianxian held her forehead with one hand.

Was this a warning?

You've already 'meh'd it out!

Darn it...

"Be obedient and go, I'll stand guard," Lu Ran's tone softened a bit.

"Hmph!" Si Xianxian stomped her foot and walked toward the charred dog corpses with her hammer-torch in hand.

Divine Technique·Voice of Compassion had one terrifying hidden property—familiarity with the victim!

Humans are emotional creatures.

Setting aside levels of strength, the better and closer one's emotional connection is with Lu Ran, the more effective the Voice of Compassion would naturally be.

And at the outset of the Divine Technique's effectiveness, the starting point was also higher!

Since starting their adventure, the relationship between Lu and Si had indeed undergone numerous changes.

This was apparent from their conversations.

Firstly, the two had always been training in the pitch-dark Demon Cave.

As combat comrades, their relationship had naturally improved greatly.

Secondly...

Admiring the strong is human nature, nothing to be ashamed of.

As a strong believer of River Realm·Second Rank, Si Xianxian indeed once looked down upon Lu Ran of Stream Realm Third Rank as an insignificant minion.

Now, she no longer felt that way.

Previously at Lu Ran's home, she had said things like "I could squash you with one hand."

Now, she had to weigh her words carefully.

"Huff..."

Lu Ran took a deep breath, adjusting his state.

On the third day into the Demon Cave, within the Sculpture Garden, the Evil Dog Evil Sculpture had been nurtured to Stream Realm·Fifth Rank.

As Lu Ran and Si ventured deeper into the Demon Cave, facing stronger evil demons in greater numbers, the Evil Sculpture naturally received more nourishment.

Logically, the Evil Dog Evil Sculpture should have progressed to River Realm·First Rank by now.

Yet it remained at Stream Realm·Fifth Rank...

Advancement in the smaller realm ranks for Evil Sculpture had clear soul quantity requirements.

But there weren't specific numbers for breaking through the major realm boundaries.

Could it be that Lord Immortal Goat was skimming off the top again?

Previously, the Black Light Evil Sculpture had impressively advanced, reaching River Realm from Mist Realm in a very short period of time!

Was it because time was too short that Lord Immortal Goat didn't manage to embezzle anything?

"My god," Lu Ran muttered, "let the Evil Dog Evil Sculpture reach River Realm first, then I'll have a baseline.

Anyway, I won't be leaving Evil Dog Village until the tenth day, and after completing my goal, I'll still be here for Soul Binding."

"What are you muttering about?" Si Xianxian approached.

Lu Ran casually replied, "Praying to the gods for a barg... cough, I was praying to the gods."

Si Xianxian looked skeptical, feeling as though she might have overheard some irreverent remarks.

Then, she looked at the dog corpses around Lu Ran, irate, "I've dealt with the bodies outside.

You want me to take care of these few dogs at your feet too?"

Lu Ran spoke softly, "I left them there for you on purpose.

My Divine Power Pearl is nearly full, and you cast spells like they're free, so absorb their energy."

The trace of annoyance in Si Xianxian's heart dissipated.

She pouted, and while the words "Thank you" reached her lips, they ultimately remained unspoken.

Si Xianxian quietly knelt down and used her Divine Power Pearl to absorb the dog corpses.

Lu Ran advised, "I've told you before, don't use a sledgehammer to swat a fly.

To handle Stream Realm evil dogs, you can decrease the Divine Technique's intensity, use the least Divine Power for the most output."

Si Xianxian was nonchalant, "As long as it's satisfying, why fuss about the details? It's too bothersome."

Lu Ran tapped the girl's head with his blade, "Not listening again?"

Si Xianxian's eyes widened as she lifted her gaze to Lu Ran, "You..."

Lu Ran, "What's up?"

Si Xianxian's body shuddered slightly.

Lu Ran pursed his lips and smiled, reminiscent of a certain classic emoji from a letter.

Gradually, Si Xianxian stood up with a serious face, "I'm genuinely going to go insane."

Only a believer proficient in Spirit Defense Techniques could achieve complete immunity.

Lu Ran's 'Meh' sound couldn't penetrate such believers' "Spiritual Firewall."

But for most believers, they would be affected first and then have to rely on their mental strength to forcibly remove the influence.

In other words, as soon as Lu Ran 'Meh'd out loud, the Divine Technique would take effect!

As for whether the effect lasted for 5 seconds, 8 seconds, or 0.01 seconds, that was a topic for another discussion.

Lu Ran, "If you follow commands, you won't go insane."

Si Xianxian fumed, "Aren't I already obeying you enough?

I'm almost 'Meh'ed into a passionless mud man by you, and you still want more from me?"

The more she spoke, the angrier Si Xianxian became, resulting in a heavy stomp.

"Thud!"

Dust surged up.

The ground beneath the girl's boots cracked with lines.

Lu Ran immediately took a step back.

My, my...

Pushing the child too far, she's nearly mastered the Soul-splitting Demon Hoof...

"Alright, alright," Lu Ran interjected, "from now on..."

Si Xianxian suddenly stepped forward, covering Lu Ran's mouth with her hand.

Had she been a moment slower, that phrase might have slipped out again!

"No! Talking!" Si Xianxian enunciated each word sharply, teeth clenched.

Her fair and pretty face showed the distinctive distortion of a Fierce Heavenly believer.

Lu Ran nodded gently, his muffled voice emerging from beneath her palm, "Mhm, okay."

"Hmph!" Si Xianxian irritably flicked her hand away and, leaving the dog corpses behind, walked towards the torch-lit path.

Lu Ran, "That's enough training for today. Let's head for the next Stone City to rest."

Si Xianxian kept silent, as if deaf to his words.

Lu Ran took off the Divine Power Pearl from his neck and crouched down to absorb the dog corpses, "I'll catch up in a bit."

In the distance, Si Xianxian slowed her pace.

She took a few more steps and eventually came to a halt.

Without turning back, that might have been her final display of stubbornness.

Lu Ran smiled softly, judging by the standards of a Fierce Heavenly believer, she had indeed performed very well these past few days.

Whether she was 'Meh'ed into it, gradually acknowledging her teammate, or just didn't want to be sent back to recite scriptures dungeon-crawling with her mother...

In any case, Si Xianxian was really well-behaved.

Hmm... I should treat her better from now on.

...

Chapter 125: Unrestrained Heavenly Pride

"Flap, flap, flap~"

As the two approached Stone City, a black crow descended from the night sky.

"Coach Dou?" Lu Ran turned slightly, facing the direction of Dou Zhiqiang.

"This is the fifth Stone City you've reached," Dou Zhiqiang said.

"Hmm," Lu Ran nodded.

He had come to Evil Dog Village for training several times, but this time he had traveled the farthest and in the shortest amount of time.

Dou Zhiqiang suggested, "You can start heading back from here."

"Is half the time already passed?" Lu Ran sighed inwardly.

This time, he had entered the village late, and now a week had passed since it was already the beginning of the tenth lunar month.

Dou Zhiqiang explained, "On one hand, time is limited; on the other, you can no longer move forward."

Lu Ran raised his eyebrows slightly, "The area ahead, is it off-limits to trainees?"

Dou Zhiqiang replied, "It's off-limits to Stream Realm students."

Lu Ran: "..."

"Haha!" Si Xianxian, who had been sulking, finally showed a slight smile upon hearing this.

Dou Zhiqiang led the two toward the grand city gate: "Personally, I acknowledge your strength.

But there's a rule inside Evil Dog Village, Stream Realm trainees cannot go beyond the fifth Stone City.

Beyond that is the city wall."

"City wall?" Lu Ran's spirits lifted. "Is that the front line?"

"No," Dou Zhiqiang shook his head, "The real frontline of the battlefield is still very far away.

The walls ahead are used by our side to filter out Evil Demons."

"Oh," Lu Ran nodded.

This relatively stable training environment was naturally crafted by the military.

Dou Zhiqiang said, "Beyond the fifth city is a buffer zone, and beyond the sixth city is the filtering area.

Only River Realm Believers can enter there for training, and moreover, we cannot guarantee the trainee's safety.

As for the real frontline, it's beyond the ninth city. I believe one day, you will see it with your own eyes."

"Thank you for your encouragement, Coach Dou," Lu Ran smiled politely. "Shall we go together then?"

Dou Zhiqiang shook his head, "My strength is not up to the task, I can no longer serve as your accompanying instructor."

"Ah?"

"You don't have to wait until the ninth city; by the time you move toward the sixth and seventh cities, I will no longer be able to accompany you."

"Not possible to hire with money?"

"You can hire, but there's no need," Dou Zhiqiang's serious expression became a bit strange, "and it might not be allowed by the team."

Lu Ran was perplexed, "Why?"

Dou Zhiqiang glanced at Lu Ran, "I am a novice instructor, just a River Realm·First Rank in strength."

Lu Ran: "..."

In Lu Ran's eyes, Dou Zhiqiang, the stern instructor, had always been very formidable.

Only now did Lu Ran suddenly realize!

Was Dou Zhiqiang's level of strength even lower than Si Xianxian's?

But he was already around thirty years old... Well, perhaps his talent had reached its limit.

Thinking about it, if Dou Zhiqiang's qualifications were high enough, he wouldn't have been recruited by the Seven-class God-Witch Crow.

In this world, where is there fairness?

Si Xianxian, only 18 years old, was already River Realm-Second Rank.

Big Nightmare, also explosively talented, only twenty years old and was already at River Realm-Fifth Rank!

She was even always on the verge of breaking through to the Jiang Realm, poised to become a powerhouse in human society!

Lu Ran followed Dou Zhiqiang into the city, watching his back, and whispered softly, "I hope Coach Dou can break through to the next level soon."

"Hehe," unexpectedly, Dou Zhiqiang laughed.

He turned around to look at Lu Ran, his expression not as stern as usual.

For some reason, seeing Lu Ran again this time, Dou Zhiqiang had an illusion: this young man was about to graduate.

Perhaps, Lu Ran's official realm rank was still lacking.

But in terms of mental state, tactical literacy, and personal combat strength, Lu Ran's true level was far beyond the Stream Realm!

Dou Zhiqiang, aware of his own limitations, knew well that a Heaven's Chosen like Lu Ran, moving forward, he would no longer have the ability to protect him.

In fact, this journey had the most significant impact on Dou Zhiqiang, namely the teammate Lu Ran brought along—Si Xianxian!

This young, yet immensely strong Fierce Heavenly believer, should have been arrogant, lawless.

Dou Zhiqiang was constantly on edge, always ready to lend a helping hand, making sure to ensure Lu Ran's safety.

He even worried that if Si Xianxian truly went berserk, whether he would be able to survive from her hands.

After all, she was River Realm-Second Rank.

Her Divine Technique was meant for slaughter!

A true Fierce Heavenly believer cares about nothing, driven only by the rage in their heart.

However...

This girl, following beside Lu Ran, became more docile day by day.

Even just now, when the girl was annoyed, she merely stomped her feet.

For a Fierce Heavenly believer, that hardly counts as "annoyed".

Over seven days, Dou Zhiqiang witnessed how Lu Ran gradually tamed this fierce and violent being.

It involved Lu Ran's own strength, which was admirable and stunning.

It also involved Lu Ran ingeniously using Divine Technique, continuously manipulating the girl's body and mind.

Moreover, Lu Ran repeatedly, not minding any grievances or any past unpleasantness, took care of her as always.

Even two normal believers teaming up for training would inevitably experience friction.

Not to mention having an Explosive Barrel in the team?

Yet, Lu Ran, with his tolerance and forbearance, smoothly handled it all.

Only then could Dou Zhiqiang see the traits a believer of the Immortal Sheep should have in Lu Ran.

Now, a week had passed, and the team had stabilized.

The result of this male and female duo's adjustment also made Dou Zhiqiang sigh once more.

Immortal Sheep Believer, Fierce Heavenly believer.

These two despised beings could really work together!

And even, match quite well?!

That's really unbelievable...

"Coach Dou?" Lu Ran looked at the daydreaming instructor, saying, "I hope the next time we meet, Coach Dou has entered the River Realm·Second Rank."

"Thank you," Dou Zhiqiang came back to his senses and continued moving forward.

This was Lu Ran's first time reaching the fifth city.

He looked around, only to find, it was no different from the previous Stone Cities.

Under Coach Dou's lead, the two went to the Stone Inn.

After opening two rooms, they agreed to have dinner together in one hour, then each went to their own room.

Lu Ran hurried to take a bath and wash his clothes, and also prayed to the divine beings during his shower.

The approximate meaning was something like, "Lord Immortal Goat, keep quiet for now, don't be greedy, wait until the Evil sculpture is cultivated to River Realm then eat," and so on.

Of course, while that was the gist, the words Lu Ran spoke were quite understated...

An hour later, downstairs dining hall of the inn.

Lu Ran, wearing slippers and camo shirt and shorts provided by the inn, walked into the dining hall.

Just as he entered, Lu Ran was stunned.

In front of a square table, Lu Ran saw several familiar figures.

Ma Tianchuan, Wu Shanshan?

They were here too... Well, right, Rain Alley City only had this one Demon Cave.

It was indeed a team led by Ma Tianchuan to penetrate so deep into the Demon Cave!

He should know, reaching here, one could encounter River Realm Evil Dogs.

"Yo?" Lu Ran's voice was light, as he slightly raised his eyebrows.

The name of the other girl in the team, Lu Ran had already forgotten.

But that last boy... Kou Yingquan?

How did he mix into this team?

Lu Ran stood at the doorway, and facing the dining hall door, seated Ma Tianchuan also saw Lu Ran.

"Lu Ran?" Ma Tianchuan was somewhat surprised and waved his hand.

"Huh?" Wu Shanshan suddenly turned her head, looking towards the dining hall door.

Sure enough, she saw that familiar figure again.

Involuntarily, Wu Shanshan's face looked a bit ugly.

Since their last parting, Lu Ran was still the bright and shining one.

He had always been at the top and even participated in the Divine People Bureau's special test.

Meanwhile, Wu Shanshan, having tried every means to escape the team, finally had the teammates she wanted, but her results were not ideal.

She had tried her best, wanting to prove her choice.

However, Rain Alley had experienced two special events in a row. The school had not allowed the students to participate in the semester fifteen evaluation.

Everyone's scores surged, which was equivalent to no one gaining any ground...

Now, meeting old teammates privately, Wu Shanshan indeed felt a bit awkward.

"Coincidence," Lu Ran smiled and nodded.

"Not really a coincidence," Ma Tianchuan also smiled and nodded, "If you can walk this far, you will meet."

Hearing this, Lu Ran nodded in agreement.

This time, Evil Dog Village had only opened the west gate, and although there were many paths marked by torches, they all converged at each Stone City.

Kou Yingquan turned his head and looked at Lu Ran, the pair locking gaze once again after months.

With a hint of teasing, Lu Ran said, "Changed teammates again?"

Wu Shanshan's unhappy expression finally darkened.

Since her forceful entry into the team had effectively ousted Tian Tian, this statement was particularly harsh to her ears.

Ma Tianchuan remained unflappable, pushing his rimless glasses: "Previous teammates transferred schools."

"Transferred schools?" This response was somewhat unexpected for Lu Ran.

Ma Tianchuan sighed lightly, "His family moved away from Rain Alley City."

Lu Ran fell silent.

Rain Alley City was indeed like a cursed city.

He had also witnessed firsthand the crowds hastily leaving with big and small bundles in front of the train station.

"Why are you blocking the door?" Behind him, a pleasant female voice spoke.

Si Xianxian came to Lu Ran's side, following his line of sight to see a table of young people.

She scrutinized them and casually said, "Your classmates?"

For this newly appeared girl, Ma Tianchuan and the others were all taken aback, also a bit puzzled.

As far as they remembered, there was no such student at school.

The girl's physical attributes were excessively superior, definitely able to compete with Jiang Meiren.

That being said, for martial artists, being fair-skinned and beautiful couldn't be eaten as food, so they could dismiss it.

Yet her haughty and aloof demeanor almost had the words "Heavenly Pride" written on her face...

Clearly, this girl could not just be a decorative vase!

"Got any grudges?" Si Xianxian suddenly spoke up.

"Ah?" Lu Ran looked at her, quite surprised.

"Heh," Si Xianxian scoffed coldly, "I am a Fierce Heavenly believer.

In my life, hostility fills everywhere."

As she spoke, she turned to look at Lu Ran's profile: "It might take me a long time to confirm if someone genuinely shows goodwill towards me.

But I can instantly tell who harbors malevolence."

Lu Ran: "..."

Si Xianxian turned her head to look at the group, her eyes boldly sizing them up:

"Tell me, which one?"

...

Chapter 126: Prisoner Demon under the command of

Si Xianxian's beautiful eyes scanned over the group. "Tell me, which one is it?"

Lu Ran's heart "thudded" as he clasped her wrist. "What are you trying to do?"

"Hmm?" Si Xianxian's expression turned a tad peculiar as she looked down at her wrist.

The two had been traveling together for quite some time, side by side in battle day and night, yet this was the first time Lu Ran had "touched" her.

He had always been particularly proper around her.

She once reached out her hand and waved it in front of his face, which was covered by a red scarf, and Lu Ran brushed it away with the hilt of his knife.

That action encapsulated how the two interacted with each other.

But now...

Si Xianxian's lips curved into a slight smile, her sweet laughter ringing out, "Are you that worried about me?"

After her bath, her skin was fair with a rosy tinge, her damp shoulder-length hair added a certain allure combined with her bright smile, which was indescribably charming.

However, Lu Ran was not one to appreciate flirtation. "You're like a ticking time bomb, who could withstand that?"

Si Xianxian frowned slightly. "Watch your language."

Lu Ran was startled!

How could such words come from your mouth?

Annoyed, Lu Ran retorted, "You curse way more violently than I do."

Si Xianxian huffed, as if it were the most natural thing in the world. "I'm of age."

Lu Ran: ???

So what if you're of age?

You can get a driver's license when you're of age, you can get married—but I've never heard that it entitles you to a "license to curse."

"You'd better hurry up and get some food."

Holding onto her wrist, Lu Ran pushed her forward without any politeness, steering her toward the self-service buffet.

Si Xianxian pouted, her slippers soaking wet, making "plop plop" sounds as she walked.

It was unclear whether she was deliberately expressing her dissatisfaction.

The dinner provided by the Stone City Inn included seven or eight dishes, balanced between meat and vegetables, which was not bad at all.

Adhering to the principle of bulking up, Lu Ran piled his plate high and headed with Si Xianxian to a corner of the dining room.

"As soon as you sit down, start talking. What exactly is going on?" Si Xianxian asked immediately after sitting down.

Lu Ran buried his head in his meal, mumbling through mouthfuls, "Eat more, talk less."

"Oh, come on, just tell me!" Si Xianxian was dying of curiosity.

In her eyes, Lu Ran had a maturity that didn't match his age.

Even a Fierce Heavenly believer like herself had to restrain herself around him.

Moreover, Lu Ran possessed a terrifying Divine Technique, capable of reversing the will of living beings.

Hence, Si Xianxian really didn't understand. How could such a person, well-equipped both internally and externally, have a mortal enemy?

"High school students, what else could it be?" Seeing Lu Ran remain silent, Si Xianxian began to guess on her own. "Is it because of a girl?"

Lu Ran continued to eat in silence.

Si Xianxian observed Lu Ran's expression. "Or did they think you were easy to bully and started picking on you?"

As she spoke, Si Xianxian's expression darkened.

During her first visit to Lu Ran's home, he had mentioned that his father had "left."

Si Xianxian never believed in the notion that "all men are born good."

Especially the malice of the young, which is totally irrational.

Suddenly, Lu Ran lifted his head. "How do you think you've been behaving these past few days?"

"Huh?" Sure enough, Si Xianxian's attention was diverted. She rated herself, "Pretty good, I guess?"

"I think so too," Lu Ran agreed. "We should team up more often in the future."

A smile spread across Si Xianxian's face as she leaned back. "Ah, finally I can get away from her."

Suddenly, Lu Ran said, "If you don't perform well, I can return you at any time."

Si Xianxian's smiling face froze, and she leaned forward. "Say that again?"

Unflinchingly, Lu Ran asked, "Ever heard of a seven-day no-questions-asked return policy?"

Si Xianxian's eyes widened slightly.

Lu Ran pursed his lips and smiled. "You're the 'lifetime return without a reason' kind."

Si Xianxian propped her elbow on the table, and her face suddenly approached Lu Ran's, hissing through clenched teeth, "You wouldn't dare!"

Lu Ran: "..."

What a waste of a good appearance.

With such a master, even the prettiest face often becomes fiercely twisted.

"Eat, eat..." Lu Ran's words came to an abrupt halt as his eyebrows tightened.

"What's wrong?" Si Xianxian watched as Lu Ran's face grew somber.

She seemed to realize something and quickly looked toward a nearby table.

The few students whispered something to each other, which Si Xianxian naturally couldn't hear clearly.

But she knew that Lu Ran could.

At that moment, Lu Ran indeed quite agreed with what Kou Yingquan had just whispered under his breath—it damn well was ominous.

Yeah, running into you again, I feel pretty bad luck myself!

"Damn, you still dare to provoke?" Si Xianxian sweetly retorted and stood up at once.

"Zzzap—"

Her chair furiously slid backward, the legs screeching against the floor.

"Si Xianxian!" Lu Ran was alarmed and quickly reached out to grab her.

This was Stone City!

Starting a fight here could lead to a loss of believer points and expulsion from the city.

In serious cases, you could be blacklisted by the Demon Cave and banned for life!

"Damn, you're really asking for it!" Si Xianxian's sweet voice carried on.

She caught Lu Ran's hand in a backhand move and gave a strong push.

With that great force, Lu Ran and the chair were knocked over and sent flying.

Lu Ran: "Hey? Isn't that... hey?"

Kou Yingquan's complexion changed drastically as he promptly stood up and retreated.

Si Xianxian, fuming with rage and striding forth, immediately locked onto her target!

The one at risk of loss or imminent harm is the one who reacts the most fiercely.

Within just two or three steps, Si Xianxian had already disregarded the other three.

Only Kou Yingquan, who was the first to jump up and the one showing the most guilt!

His robust build... fitting, he was the one!

Kou Yingquan quickly donned his Blood Evil Clothes. "What are you trying to do? Stay away!"

"Heh." Si Xianxian scoffed coldly, quickening her pace.

She wasn't laughing out of agitation but rather revealing a fierce smile amidst the rage.

The Fierce Heavenly believers... were just her type!

A female soldier in the restaurant yelled, "Stop it, right now! I will deduct your believer points!"

How many years had it been since someone dared cause trouble within Stone City?

Didn't people understand how severe the consequences could be?

The points you worked so hard to accumulate could be deducted by hundreds with one fell swoop, limiting what you could do—how could you stand in society?

"Believer points?" Si Xianxian cursed. "I'm a damn Fierce Heavenly believer, you're talking to me about points?"

The female soldier: "..."

Everyone else: "..."

Oh, so you're a Fierce Heavenly believer; then it's okay.

Everyone knows the notorious temperament of Fierce Heavenly believers.

Those believers living within society, it's good enough if their points aren't in the negatives!

Uh... wait, it can't be okay!

You can't fight!

"A Fierce Heavenly believer?" Kou Yingquan panicked completely.

For fuck's sake!

Fierce Heavenly???

This girl, as beautiful as Jiang Ruyi... a Fierce Heavenly believer?!

I should have known—when she looked over the group before, her gaze was so haughty...

"Whoosh—" Kou Yingquan, feeling an immense threat, didn't hesitate any longer, retreating rapidly while lifting one hand.

Stream Grade Divine Skill·Prisoner Demon Chain!

A blood-colored chain appeared directly in front of Si Xianxian.

"Crack!!"

Si Xianxian smashed the Prisoner Demon Chain with a single slap.

"River... River Realm..." Kou Yingquan stuttered, hastily releasing another part of his robe.

"Crack!!"

The snapping sound echoed again.

Si Xianxian, with another slap, shattered even the Blood Evil Clothes, known for their defense!

Could a River Realm believer tear apart a Stream Grade Divine Skill with bare hands?

Most likely.

But when it comes to Fierce Heavenly believers, the answer is: of course they can!

Because at the Stream Realm Third Rank, Fierce Heavenly believers are fitted with a Divine Technique named—Fierce Heavenly Power!

This technique can greatly enhance a believer's strength attribute.

The godly skill system of the Fierce Heavenly Sect is very specialized, focusing only on offense or amplifying offense!

Simply put, the Fierce Heavenly Sect exists solely for "killing."

"Whoosh—"

Si Xianxian burst forward, catching Kou Yingquan's neck in an instant, fury surging in her heart!

The so-called "Explosive Barrel" was not just talk.

Or perhaps, she had been cooped up by Lu Ran's stringent control over the past week...

The towering Kou Yingquan was lifted off his feet, terrified, gazing into Si Xianxian's blazing eyes.

"You..." He barely got out one word before Si Xianxian's soft palm struck his face.

"Slap!"

The sound was incredibly crisp.

A vivid red handprint immediately appeared on Kou Yingquan's cheek.

"Ah!" Kou Yingquan screamed, sent reeling by the slap, spitting blood, and several teeth were knocked loose.

Si Xianxian demanded angrily, "What did you just say?"

Kou Yingquan's face throbbed with hot pain, as if his jawbone was about to be shattered.

Si Xianxian had held back after all, or else... well, okay, regarding Fierce Heavenly believers, you can't make such optimistic speculations.

More likely, the Fierce Heavenly believer didn't want to finish it in one blow but rather vent her anger further...

Kou Yingquan staggered, dazed: "I... Ah!!"

He cried out again as Si Xianxian's pale hand rose for another slap.

"Slap!"

Now both sides of his cheeks bore bright red handprints, somewhat symmetrical, no?

Si Xianxian: "Do I need your answer?"

Clearly, she didn't care what Kou Yingquan had said.

Asking was merely a one-sided notification to you why I'm hitting you!

As for what you said, I'm not interested in listening, just be aware of it yourself!

"Stop!"

"Don't hit him anymore!"

"Fierce Heavenly believer! Calm down! Calm down immediately!"

"Slap!" Si Xianxian ignored everything, delivering another harsh slap.

"Gurgle..." Kou Yingquan's consciousness blurred, his mouth full of blood, he no longer had the ability to speak.

"Whoosh!!"

A gale swept in—another set of Blood Evil Clothes?

But this time, Si Xianxian failed to shatter the clothes and was instead blown away by them.

Amid the tumultuous air, furniture in the restaurant tossed chaotically.

A soldier stormed into the eatery, barking loudly, "Do you know where you are?"

As he questioned, the man glanced to the side.

Kou Yingquan, forcibly split away by the robe, now lay prone on the ground, unmoving as if he had passed out.

His mouth was a bloody mess, and he looked dreadful!

The man was both shocked and angry. "Do you have any idea what you're doing?!"

"I'll be damned..." Si Xianxian slapped the ground with her palm, rapidly getting up with an aggressive stare ahead.

"Alright." A familiar voice came from behind her.

However, she didn't even register the most familiar voice.

This Fierce Heavenly believer was clearly beyond reasoning!

With a "snap," Lu Ran grasped Si Xianxian's wrist.

"Hmm?" Si Xianxian turned her head, as if she saw something unthinkable.

Attempting to break free, she was stunned to discover that she couldn't match Lu Ran's strength.

How could that be?

Si Xianxian was completely flabbergasted.

I'm at the River Realm. Second Rank... am I... am I really in the River Realm?

Just now, I flipped him like playing around, and now how... how is he holding me back?

"Alright," Lu Ran said softly.

His hand, still holding Si Xianxian's wrist, was shaking ever so slightly.

This River Realm Fierce Heavenly girl was really damn wild!

He was almost at his limit holding onto her while using the Evil Technique-Soul Splitting Power.

If she activated the Divine Technique-Fierce Sky Power, he'd be flung away by her!

"Xianxian," Lu Ran looked at her earnestly, whispering softly, "Calm down."

Si Xianxian stared blankly at Lu Ran.

Her anger, now overwhelmed by shock and confusion.

Of course, others weren't aware of this, but to ease this Explosive Barrel's mood, the eatery fell dead silent!

"If you don't calm down, I'm really going to return you to your aunt," Lu Ran said softly.

Si Xianxian finally came back to her senses.

No, I'm going to have to ask about this!

She pushed her doubts aside for the moment, her face struggled for a bit, but ultimately, she loosened her grip.

Then, Si Xianxian turned her head, looked toward the pitiful Kou Yingquan, and huffed coldly:

"Hmph!"

...

Chapter 127: Prison Fairy

Dou Zhiqiang immediately rushed to the first-floor restaurant upon receiving the notice and encountered a disastrous scene.

The injured had been carried away, but the scattered teeth on the ground, along with the large patches of blood, still attested to someone's impressive combat achievements.

"What happened?" Dou Zhiqiang frowned deeply, looking towards a pair of a man and a woman.

"Somebody ran their mouth, so I helped them fix it," said Si Xianxian, shaking her hands.

Her usually fair palms were now vividly red.

One could only imagine how miserable the person she slapped had been.

"Fix it?" Dou Zhiqiang was not pleased.

Before entering the city, he had admired how well matched this young couple seemed.

Si Xianxian was fortunate to have found such a good commander, and by Lu Ran's side, she had grown more gentle day by day.

If she could maintain this positive momentum, she would naturally avoid causing major trouble in her future life.

But this? Right after entering the city, you pull this stunt?

Dou Zhiqiang had indeed been deceived by Si Xianxian's good behavior.

She was still a Fierce Heavenly believer, her essence unchanged.

She only appeared docile and obedient in front of Lu Ran.

"Take this girl to the jail, lock her up!" commanded a soldier standing nearby.

Jail?

Lock her up?

Lu Ran tensed up internally, looking towards Si Xianxian.

However, he realized that the girl seemed completely indifferent, as if she hadn't heard a thing!

Could it be... she's used to this?

Lu Ran guessed silently. Given Si Xianxian's terrible temperament, it was very likely!

Since becoming a Fierce Heavenly believer, she had probably stayed in every detention facility from human cities to the military jails of Demon Cave.

"You bunch of cowards." Si Xianxian ignored the soldier and turned to look at the students.

Your team member was hanged up and beaten right in front of your eyes!

And from beginning to end, no one dared to help?

Si Xianxian's expression was haughty, her eyes filled with scorn, showing her disdain for these bloodless folks.

"You..." Wu Shanshan's face looked extremely unpleasant.

Ma Tianchuan was also gloomy and silent.

The other girl in the team quickly averted her gaze under Si Xianxian's aggressive stare.

"Move!" At the entrance of the restaurant, a group of soldiers gathered, and two female soldiers quickly stepped forward to grab Si Xianxian's arm.

"I can walk on my own!" Si Xianxian snapped, then strode off confidently.

Afterward, everyone present was taken away for investigation.

It was Lu Ran's first time entering a "station"...

And it was the military "station" at that...

Inside the interrogation room, Lu Ran explained the situation thoroughly, and finally, with the corroboration of the restaurant staff, he was let go.

Si Xianxian wasn't so lucky.

The military acted swiftly and decisively, quickly deciding her punishment:

Si Xianxian was detained for 5 days, docked 50 Believer points, all her earnings in the Demon Cave confiscated, and she would be expelled from the country after five days.

At the same time, she also made her way onto Evil Dog Village's Believer blacklist.

She could get off the list and re-enter Evil Dog Village for training only if she committed no offenses for six months.

If she reoffended within six months, the ensuing punishment would be more than just an extended ban.

Judging solely from the perspective of fighting, this punishment might seem a bit harsh.

Although... it can't really be considered a mutual fight; it was Si Xianxian unilaterally abusing someone.

But the main reason was, the Demon Cave-Stone City area was a key military site!

Causing trouble in such a place was truly serious!

If not for the Demon Cave being locked down on the tenth day of the lunar month, perhaps Si Xianxian's detention would have been longer...

Those involved in the incident received the necessary education and punishment.

Lu Ran also went to the jail that same afternoon.

The so-called jail was just another stone building, indistinguishable from the others from the outside.

Lu Ran waited for a while in the visiting area and eventually saw Si Xianxian behind the iron bars.

She was still dressed in the camouflaged shorts and slip-ons provided by the inn, clicking her way towards him.

"Why the long face?" Si Xianxian sat down, looking through the iron bars at Lu Ran.

This detention facility was different from the outside world, with each sector separated by iron bars without any glass.

"Don't look so glum," Si Xianxian said carelessly. "The conditions here are pretty good, better than a single room at the inn."

Lu Ran sighed softly, "I talked to the soldiers, wanted to come in with you.

After all, as the team leader and commander, I feel responsible when a team member is in trouble..."

"You sick or something?" Si Xianxian interrupted Lu Ran directly.

Lu Ran replied, "After all, this started because of me."

"Bullshit!" Si Xianxian said sharply. "I kept asking you about the situation, and you kept quiet like a mute.

You're not the instigator, nor did you incite anything.

If I don't like someone and decide to hit them, what the hell does it have to do with you?"

Lu Ran was silent for a while, then spoke softly, "The military wouldn't let me in; they just gave me a verbal warning."

"Why the hell would they lecture you?" Si Xianxian was getting heated again. "What did you do?"

"Exactly because of that."

"What?"

"Because I didn't do anything, couldn't stop you, that's why I was lectured."

"I'm really laughing now," Si Xianxian huffed. "I could've flung you out easily!

With your skinny frame, you couldn't stop me..."

Si Xianxian suddenly leaned forward, speaking quietly, "Wait, you did stop me. Tell me, how did you do it?"

Lu Ran: "...."

Si Xianxian whispered, "Don't tell me you were able to summon Lord Immortal Goat in the Stream Realm!"

Or maybe, Lord Immortal Goat secretly taught you some Divine Technique?"

Lu Ran scratched his head: "No, no, perhaps it was just adrenaline.

It's one thing for you to fight Kou Yingquan, but it's entirely different if you start a conflict with a soldier.

All I could think about was stopping you, fearing one misstep would lead to lifelong regret..."

"Really? Are you fooling a naive girl?" Si Xianxian totally believed Lu Ran's subsequent reasoning.

For a trainee in the Demon Cave, engaging soldiers in combat could have very, very serious consequences!

But as for Lu Ran being able to stop her...

Adrenaline?

You might as well say that you summoned the Divine-Immortal Goat, that would be more believable.

After all, considering how much Lord Immortal Goat dotes on you, it just might be possible!

Lu Ran hurriedly waved his hands: "Let's not dwell on this right now, we can talk more after you get out."

"Mmm, alright then," Si Xianxian pondered for a moment, then suddenly asked, "By the way, how come you are allowed to visit me?"

It was clear that Si Xianxian was a regular here.

She obviously knew the rules of the detention facility.

In the Demon Cave, short detentions like this generally did not allow visitors.

Lu Ran replied: "I pleaded with Teacher Dou, and he negotiated for me.

After all, you're a Fierce Heavenly believer, and it's good for me to come in and persuade you not to start trouble here."

"Get lost," Si Xianxian spat at Lu Ran. "There's not a single troublemaker here, so even if I wanted to start a conflict, there's no target."

Lu Ran blurted out: "Isn't there still the prison guard?"

Si Xianxian thoughtfully nodded: "Oh right."

"What do you mean 'right!'" Lu Ran was exasperated, "It's just 5 days, big sister, can't you just bear it? Just 5 days!"

"That sounds awful, who's your big sister?" Si Xianxian's brow furrowed slightly.

Who knows how this girl's mind works.

Rather than being concerned about being detained, she's more upset about a trivial title?

Lu Ran suppressed his frustration and suggested, "Then... Sister Si?"

"That sounds distant."

"Sister Xian'er?"

"You're laying the diminutive too thick," Si Xianxian was still unsatisfied, "Sounds like some shaman."

Lu Ran helplessly said: "Si Xianxian, my visiting time is limited, we don't have time to squabble over this!"

"Hehe~" Si Xianxian smiled softly, her tone suddenly gentler, "Don't worry about me.

This place is the Demon Cave, where energy abounds, a great spot for cultivation.

That solitary cell, it's just like a training room, so I'll treat these five days as a private retreat."

Lu Ran felt slightly relieved and nodded gently: "Good, it's best to think that way."

He hesitated for a moment, then still advised, "Next time, you can't be so impulsive."

"Look at you, you little ingrate, get lost!" Si Xianxian made a motion to rise, intending to return to the training room.

Lu Ran said: "From the perspective of a team commander, it's my duty to advise you."

"Oh?" Si Xianxian had just gotten up, but she sat back down, "And from a different perspective?"

Lu Ran leaned forward, speaking quietly across the iron bars: "From a personal perspective, you're too domineering!"

Those slaps, one after another, felt so satisfying to me."

Before this incident, Lu Ran had always thought that he was accompanied by a Fierce Heavenly believer.

Turns out, she was a Pachirisu?

Goodness~

Those rapid-fire slaps, crackling away.

Si Xianxian's expression turned mischievous as she suddenly reached her fair hand through the bars and gently patted Lu Ran's cheek:

"If you like it, I can keep slapping you after I get out."

Lu Ran: ? ? ?

No!

Your slap, when it lands on that gossipy Kou Yingquan's face, feels great.

If it lands on my face, wouldn't I end up seeing my dad straightaway?

"Hehe~" Si Xianxian's lips curled up slightly, her hand moving slightly upward as if searching for just the right angle.

"Let's leave it at that!" A guard's voice suddenly came from behind.

It seemed they couldn't stand watching anymore.

Lu Ran quickly said: "Don't cause trouble inside, reform yourself, start anew!"

"Hmph." Si Xianxian rolled her eyes and turned to follow the guard.

Lu Ran watched her retreating figure and continued: "I'll come to pick you up in five days!"

Si Xianxian didn't respond, continuing on her way.

As Lu Ran watched her moving further away, he suddenly said, "Thank you."

Si Xianxian's steps paused.

Even the guard escorting her couldn't pull her forward.

Si Xianxian turned her head slightly, showing her charming profile as she glanced back at Lu Ran with a faint smile, twinkling her eye.

Her unconstrained air tinged with a bit of playfulness...

Absolutely stylish!

Lu Ran's mouth fell open, genuinely struck by the sight.

That's my Sister Xian'er!

Does she always have to be so cool?

Chapter 128: Released from Prison and Passed Inspection

October 9, under the witch's crow feet,

A squad of soldiers escorted a young man and woman, like prisoners, out of the central building of the military camp.

The sky over Rain Alley City was gloomy, as usual.

In the continuous rain, a middle-aged woman holding an umbrella eagerly approached as her daughter was escorted out, saying,

"I'm sorry for the trouble, sorry for the trouble..."

Si Caiqin apologized to the soldiers with full remorse on her face.

The soldiers, all business, gave a few instructions to the family member and then turned and left.

Lu Ran and Si Xianxian, left behind, stood in the cold curtain of rain, facing Si Caiqin who had come to pick them up.

Si Xianxian remained indifferent, her gaze wandering away, not even looking at her own mother.

Lu Ran was full of apologies, "Aunt Si."

"Get in the car first, we'll talk in the car," Si Caiqin stepped forward, holding an umbrella for Lu Ran, leading him to the parking lot.

Si Xianxian pouted, drenched alone in the rain, following behind the two.

Who knows whose real mother you are!

As the trio got into the car, Lu Ran explained, "Auntie, it's not what you think, and it's mostly my fault."

"Don't make excuses for her," Si Caiqin said with a wry smile, shaking her head, "I know what my daughter is like."

"What am I like?" Si Xianxian caught fire from the back seat.

"What do you think you are?" Si Caiqin looked into the rear-view mirror with a disappointed expression, "Look at yourself, fighting again!

How many times have you been punished, and you still haven't learned your lesson?

If you lose any more Believer points, you won't even qualify to enter the Demon Cave!"

Si Xianxian huffed carelessly, "So what if I don't enter? Isn't there still training?

On the night of the fifteenth, I will still slaughter!

They can't keep the Evil Demon from invading the city on the fifteenth even if they stop me from entering the Demon Cave."

Si Caiqin was quite irritated, "You... you!"

Lu Ran suddenly turned around, looking back, "You, be quiet for now."

Si Xianxian turned to Lu Ran, opening her mouth as though about to protest but then shut up.

"Hmph!" Eventually, she angrily turned her head away, looking out the car window.

Si Caiqin was shocked!

Knowing one's child is a mother's grace, she clearly understood that her daughter, having been imprisoned for several days, had long been harboring resentment, now erupting.

In such a situation, even as a mother, she likely couldn't stop her volatile daughter.

However, it seemed Lu Ran had some magic, able to calm the emotionally charged Si Xianxian with just a few words.

"Auntie, Xianxian has always been very obedient and well-behaved," Lu Ran turned to the woman beside him, continuing apologetically, "Let's first go home and talk in detail."

"Okay... yes." Si Caiqin started the car, glancing again in the rear-view mirror.

Si Xianxian then opened the car window, letting the cold rain spray over her face as she took a deep breath.

Twenty minutes later, at Rain Alley residential complex.

Lu Ran opened the door to his home, inviting the guests inside.

"Meow?" A Li Hua immediately rushed out, curiously looking at the people.

Unlike her first visit, this time Si Xianxian made herself at home, walking directly to the couch and sitting down.

"Get up, go to the room and Worship God first!" Si Caiqin scolded.

"No need, Auntie, let's not disturb the gods," Lu Ran quickly entered, closing the door to the small bedroom.

He returned to the living room, observing Si Caiqin, who looked displeased, then glanced at Si Xianxian's listless appearance...

Leaving the mother and daughter together would surely end in an argument sooner or later.

"Sister Xian'er."

"What?" Si Xianxian was in a bad mood, her tone sharp.

Since two days ago, when she had been released from jail, she had been watched and escorted by soldiers.

Anyone would be in a bad mood under such circumstances.

"The cat feeder is running low on food." Lu Ran approached the sofa.

Si Xianxian impatiently replied, "So?"

Lu Ran pointed toward the kitchen, "Top cabinet, the first one has the cat food."

Si Xianxian paused, then incredulously pointed at her own nose, "You're asking me?"

Lu Ran smiled, "Go on, and the water is also low, remember to top it up."

Si Xianxian stared blankly for a long while, then suddenly grabbed Lu Ran's collar, pulling him close.

Her lips near his ear, she whispered fiercely, "I'm your teammate, not your servant!"

Lu Ran whispered, "You don't want to always be training with Auntie, do you?"

Si Xianxian's breath caught slightly!

Lu Ran continued softly, "You've fought again, from now on, Auntie will only keep a closer watch on you.

Wherever you go, Auntie will always be by your side."

"Mmm..." Si Xianxian frowned slightly, closing her eyes.

After a brief moment, she pushed Lu Ran away to stand up, carefully smoothing out the wrinkles in his collar:

"Is the cat food in the first cabinet?"

"Yes." Lu Ran responded softly.

One could tell, Si Xianxian was trying hard to smile gently.

Sadly, her expression was too stiff, clearly struggling with something, "I'll go get it."

"Clap! Clap! Clap!"

Si Xianxian's slippers slapped noisily as she walked.

"Sit, Auntie." Lu Ran gestured to the sofa, "You see, she really is obedient."

Si Caiqin: "..."

"That's how it is." Lu Ran sat across from Auntie at the coffee table, recounting the entire incident in detail.

After listening, Si Caiqin finally realized that her daughter had fought to defend Lu Ran.

"I'm sorry, Auntie." Lu Ran indeed felt very guilty.

She had entrusted him with her daughter, yet he had caused Si Xianxian to end up in jail, losing points.

"In that case, there was indeed a reason," Si Caiqin's tone softened significantly.

"Huh?" Si Xianxian, crouching in front of the automatic feeder, turned towards her mother upon hearing this.

Surprise filled her face—had her mother finally come to her senses?

Si Caiqin spoke seriously, "If every fight is for a teammate, I will never blame you."

Si Xianxian pursed her lips, her beautiful eyes looking towards Lu Ran.

Indeed, it's different when you're the favored one!

"Meow~" The Li Hua trotted to the beautiful sister's feet, looking up curiously at Si Xianxian.

Si Xianxian huffed.

Well, at least there's someone in this world who likes me.

She reached out to grab the Li Hua to hold it in her arms.

"Meow~" The cat agilely turned and ran off.

Leaving Si Xianxian standing alone by the feeder in disarray.

The next moment, Si Xianxian stood up abruptly: "You come here!"

"Si Xianxian!" Si Caiqin scolded, "How old are you, quarreling with a cat?"

Si Xianxian's chest heaved with irritation, "That damn thing is taunting me, treating me like a fool!"

"Meh~~~"

Suddenly, the sound of a sheep bah-ing struck.

Si Xianxian steadied herself with a hand to her forehead, her form swaying slightly.

"Meow~" The little Li Hua ran back, jumping back into Lu Ran's arms.

"Here!" Lu Ran approached Si Xianxian, holding out the Li Hua to her, "Be gentle."

"I don't want it," Si Xianxian turned and walked towards the living room window, sulking as she gazed out at the rainy view.

Lu Ran, holding the small cat, stood there, smiling helplessly.

On the sofa, Si Caiqin was also gradually coming to her senses, her eyes full of affection, "Lu Ran, don't bother with her, come over and sit."

"Auntie, I will often seek out Xianxian for missions to the Demon Cave in the future."

As he spoke, Lu Ran walked towards the window, passing the Li Hua into Si Xianxian's arms, "Go on, play with your sister."

Si Xianxian pursed her lips until Lu Ran persisted, then she reluctantly stretched out her hands to hold the little creature.

Lu Ran turned to Si Caiqin, his expression earnest, "I assure you, this won't happen again!"

"Thank you, Lu Ran," Si Caiqin expressed her gratitude, "sorry for the trouble."

Although things had gone awry, Si Caiqin did not blame Lu Ran, she was rather worried about whether her daughter would "pass the test."

Deep down, she hoped Lu Ran could take Si Xianxian under his wing.

Besides this powerful, exceptionally special young man, Si Caiqin really couldn't think of any other martial artist who could keep up with her daughter.

As she had stated earlier, she was no longer capable of keeping pace with Si Xianxian and could not accompany her on further adventures.

Si Caiqin also knew that once she let go, her daughter, free from discipline, would only cause more trouble.

Until someday...

Her daughter might end up like those Fierce Heavenly believers, meeting the same fate.

"It's no trouble at all, Sister Xian'er takes good care of me too, it's not just polite talk, she is also capable of looking after me."

Speaking, Lu Ran sighed deeply, "This world is becoming increasingly dangerous, the survival environment grows harsher by the day, everyone is on edge.

To meet her, and to grow stronger together, facing all kinds of dangers in the future...

It's also my privilege."

Si Xianxian remained silent, gently stroking the cat in her arms.

Listening to Lu Ran's words, the irritation and anger in her heart gradually dissolved.

"Alright, Auntie understands," Si Caiqin was somewhat moved.

"Look at me." Lu Ran suddenly changed the subject, slapping his forehead, "I've even forgotten to serve you water."

"No need, no need, we won't impose any longer," Si Caiqin stood up, "I'll take Xianxian home.

After the fifteenth, if Lu Ran is free, he can contact Xianxian."

Now that Lu Ran had stated his position clearly, Si Caiqin had a lot of things to discuss with her daughter in private.

The long-silent Si Xianxian suddenly looked at Lu Ran, "Do you live alone?"

Lu Ran: "Ah?"

"Xianxian, don't be ridiculous," Si Caiqin naturally understood her daughter's implication.

Si Xianxian matter-of-factly said, "He just said that I am capable of protecting him, so let it start from the night of the fifteenth."

Si Caiqin: "..."

I only asked Lu Ran to team up with you for training, and you want to move into his house?

How much do you want to stay away from me, not even wanting to come home?

Lu Ran spoke, "I have a mission on the night of the fifteenth."

"Not welcome, then forget it," Si Xianxian huffed, placing the Li Hua cat on the windowsill.

Lu Ran realized the misunderstanding, speaking again, "I really do have a mission."

"Lies!" Si Xianxian's beautiful eyes blazed as she looked at Lu Ran, "Last month, your Rain Alley City just experienced the descent of the Demon Lord."

What kind of defense mission would a high school senior have?"

Lu Ran smiled, "The school indeed doesn't have defense duties.

But I will be patrolling with the Divine People Bureau from Yunshan City, Moon Watching Division."

"Oh?" Si Xianxian raised an eyebrow.

This response was completely unexpected.

This guy... actually has a mission?

Si Caiqin was also quite astonished, having thought that Lu Ran was making up excuses.

It turns out this young man is so outrageous!

A high school student at Stream Realm Third Rank, executing a mission with members of the Divine People Bureau's Moon Watching Division?

And it's a patrol?

To have encountered this young man in the black-lit Demon Cave, how much virtue must I have accumulated...

"You..." Si Xianxian was about to speak but paused, reassessing Lu Ran.

This kind of "reassessment," she had already done many times during previous adventures.

Lu Ran pursed his lips and smiled, sending her a classic emoji: "You can also apply to try, it's quite simple.

Anyway, I got approved as soon as I applied~"

Si Xianxian: ???

Chapter 129: The wind howls, alas, the autumn rain is cold

Si Xianxian was still dragged away by her mother.

Just before leaving, she gave Lu Ran a glare...

A glare that made Lu Ran scratch his head.

Had it been their first encounter, Lu Ran would have tensed up, fearing that the Lie Tian Girl might erupt in anger.

But now, Lu Ran was somewhat fearless.

At the same time, he was muttering in his heart, "That's the patrol duty for the night of the fifteenth, how could I take you along?"

You know full well how infamous the Fierce Heavenly believers are, don't you?

Look around the whole Da Xia, how many Fierce Heavenly believers can you find within the Divine People Bureaus of different regions?

I'm afraid they could be counted on one hand!

After all, the Divine People Bureau is meant to protect the city, not slaughter it...

The duty of the Moon Gazers is to protect the lives and property of the people, not to kill and abuse them.

The mutterings in Lu Ran's heart eventually turned into a "thinly-smiled" expression on his face as he watched the mother and daughter leave the apartment building.

With the departure of the irascible Sister Xian'er, Lu Ran's life returned to normal.

He meditated in front of the shrine all day, deeply immersed in his spiritual practice.

People say that reaching Stream Realm Third Rank is like coming out of the novice protection period.

To further progress in cultivation is truly a tribulation at every step.

However, Lu Ran didn't see it that way.

In front of peerless talent, these so-called tribulations were nothing but a matter of a few extra days of cultivation.

The night of the fourteenth, or rather, at three o'clock in the early morning of the fifteenth, pleasant snoring sounds could be heard from Lu Ran's small bedroom:

"Mmm..."

Lu Ran sat on the floor, his body shaking slightly.

Thick fog filled the room, constantly converging into his body and being forcefully compressed by him into rivulets.

"Meow." On the computer desk behind him, the tabby cat looked at Lu Ran curiously.

In the pitch-dark room, the cat's eyes shone with a bizarre luster, which was rather eerie.

"Huff!"

A wave of air burst forth suddenly, and the room was instantly filled with a cacophony of sounds.

The tabby cat was startled and zipped out through the crack in the door.

Lu Ran, however, was lost in his own world, feeling dizzy and utterly content!

This sensation of overflowing Divine Power and Qi deeply captivated him.

Stream Realm Fourth Rank!

After a while, Lu Ran sighed deeply, leaned back, and lay on the cold floor.

He cast his gaze upwards behind himself and saw the clock hanging on the wall in his upside-down view.

Three o'clock and three minutes—had he been cultivating for so long?

"At three in the morning, the night when I wake up, I remember you whom I've lost~"

Humming a tune, Lu Ran slowly got up.

However, having just advanced, his well-nourished body could only feel endless joy and was utterly incapable of conveying any emo vibe.

"We used to say we'd be together forever, now we no longer keep in touch..."

Humming softly, Lu Ran went to the bed, picked up his phone, and unlocked it casually.

Sure enough, there was no contact.

It wasn't just from that someone—throughout the whole day, besides a message notification from the Divine People Bureau, Lu Ran hadn't received any other messages.

Even the normally bustling chat group had gone cold for several days.

Clearly, everyone was diligently cultivating.

The closer it was to the fifteenth of the lunar month, the more acute the sense of crisis became.

In fact, when Lu Ran and Si Xianxian were teaming up in Evil Dog Village, the rest of the team had consecutively advanced to Stream Realm Third Rank.

Now, if his teammates wanted to improve their cultivation, it was not only about hard work but also about fate.

To be honest, Lu Ran really hadn't felt any obstacle in advancing to Stream Realm Fourth Rank.

The indisputable fact, however, was that it took more time.

He had become Stream Realm Third Rank on the eleventh of the lunar month in September, and it had taken over a month to advance since then.

Such a duration had never occurred before.

"Eight in the morning, Riverview Street, we'll gather at Wu Lie Bridge Head," Lu Ran read the message and mumbled, "I can sleep for another four or five hours."

As he spoke, Lu Ran flopped onto the little bed.

However, after just a short lay, he got up again and headed straight to the bathroom.

In front of the bathroom mirror, a surge of energy coursed through his eyes.

His round human eyes gradually transformed into horizontal pupils.

Eerie, terrifying.

Deathly still!

Divine Technique·Immortal Pupil!

Gazing at his pupils in the mirror, another wave of energy surged through his eyes.

Evil Technique·Caged Fire (Illusion)!

A sinister technique from the black flame clan.

"Huff~"

Black flames suddenly ignited in Lu Ran's Dead Sheep Eyes.

This made his eyes look even more bizarre and, at the same time, cooler!

The problem was, being cool doesn't put food on the table.

Lu Ran murmured, "Get in there, hide in there, make it smaller, hide it deeper..."

The black flame, a technique from the black flame clan that typically summons flame, naturally could be hidden within the eyes.

The only thing to note was that the black flame should not be hidden too deeply; it must be able to shine upon the target's eyes to take effect.

Luckily, those Dead Sheep Eyes, being pitch-black, gave Lu Ran some room to operate.

To better survive, Lu Ran had no choice but to be cautious about hiding it.

After all, if he wanted, he could easily burn the Cage Fire (Illusion) in the palm of his hand or smear it on a blade.

One could kill while causing mayhem.

But then, that would be a bit too showy...

Immortal Sheep, where did you get the black flames?

That would be a joke!

So, when would Lu Ran dare to toss the Cage Fire (Illusion) high into the sky, allowing the black flame to recklessly illuminate all beings?

The answer was...

When he decided to confront the world!

"Ha~" Lu Ran touched his chin and issued a sound akin to an MC villager.

He suddenly thought of something.

Could he actually cast the black flame onto the moon?

Goodness gracious!

A Tsukuyomi?

Well, that was a pipe dream.

It's hard to imagine just how large an amount of black flame would be needed to set the entire moon ablaze.

However, Lu Ran could indeed create his own "moon" and raise a ball of Cage Fire on the battlefield.

As long as he had sufficient power and confidence, as well as enough intent to kill, it wouldn't be necessary to wait until "confronting the whole world."

As long as Lu Ran could ensure that every creature that had seen the black flame on this battlefield was utterly eradicated by him!

This way,

the secluded Cage Fire could possibly rise to the heavens!

Dead people naturally won't divulge secrets.

As for the Dead Souls...they're even less likely to divulge secrets.

But none of those Dead Souls could escape Lu Ran's Pupil of the Dead World.

"Meh~" After musing for a long while, Lu Ran emitted a soft sheep bleat.

In no time, a tabby cat slipped in at the bathroom door: "Meow?"

Lu Ran turned his head to look, and the tabby cat instantly froze in place.

One of its little paws was still raised, yet to touch the ground, and the eyes that were supposed to be spirited had become extremely dull.

"Heh heh."

Lu Ran smiled with satisfaction.

A smile that should have been happy became sinister because of those pupils.

Lu Ran turned his head to look at the mirror again, making sure the tiny black flames were hidden within the thick black horizontal pupils.

Come to think of it,

would casting a spell on myself in the mirror affect me?

As this thought crossed his mind, Lu Ran wore a peculiar expression.

"Meow~"

The tabby cat meowed softly, rubbing its head with a little paw, seemingly not quite understanding what had happened.

Since Lu Ran was no longer casting the spell, its dream naturally shattered.

The tabby cat was still pondering how to tease the "Smirking Fairy" that suddenly appeared before its eyes.

The girl disappeared without giving it a chance?

"Meow." The tabby cat felt engulfed by a shadow.

In the next moment, it was already held in its owner's arms, walking out of the bathroom.

Because tomorrow he had to perform the patrol duty, Lu Ran did not dare to use the Evil Technique·Caged Fire excessively lest he became worn out.

Taking the restless critter with him, he crawled directly into bed...

The rest of the night passed without further incident,

and the morning was gloomy and rainy.

With only a little over four hours of sleep, Lu Ran still felt relatively alert.

He let go of the tabby cat that was sound asleep in his arms and climbed out of the warm bed with some difficulty to stand in front of the wardrobe.

The closet door opened and an expensive, yellow raincoat came into view.

Unfortunately, the garment had been stored in the house for too long and had lost its camellia fragrance.

But no matter,

he should be able to smell it soon.

A dozen minutes later, with a yellow raincoat draped over him and a pair of slender blades in hand, Lu Ran stepped out of his home.

Old residential buildings stood in the cold drizzle.

Once in a while, the silhouette of a citizen could be seen behind the windows of various households.

No longer would anyone throw open a window and holler at Lu Ran, telling him to hurry home.

Only wary or well-wishing gazes saw him off as he disappeared around the building corner, walking out of the Rain Alley home.

"Hey, kid, where are you off to?" A voice suddenly came from the guardhouse at the gate of the complex.

"Huh?" Lu Ran turned his head to look, only to see a familiar figure.

Believer Chen Jing?

"How is it, don't recognize me?" Chen Jing cracked a smile.

"Uncle, it's you guarding our complex again?" Lu Ran smiled back, "Why aren't you shirtless today?"

Chen Jing looked at Lu Ran as if he were looking at a fool: "With the cold wind and rain this early, what do I need to go shirtless for?"

"Oh, so you're not foolish." Lu Ran murmured softly and continued on, "I'm off."

"Where are you going to play?" Chen Jing apparently didn't plan to let Lu Ran leave and stepped in his way, "In this weather, wandering around is not a good idea."

Last month on the fifteenth, Rain Alley City had just experienced the special event of the Demon Lord's descent, and the massive shadow of that sinister event was still vivid.

This month on the fifteenth, schools wouldn't let students participate in the defense duty.

Lu Ran looked up at the burly man: "I'm going to play with the Moon Gazer's team."

"Yo?" Chen Jing might look careless but his response was quick, "You've been called up to the patrol team?"

Lu Ran shrugged his shoulders: "Not called up, I applied on my own."

"Good lad, haha!" Chen Jing slapped Lu Ran on the shoulder, "Courageous!"

Lu Ran grinned: "Better than having the patrol team knocking on my window in the middle of the night."

Chen Jing's smile stiffened: ???

With a blade in each hand, Lu Ran couldn't lift his arms, so he took a step forward and touched his forehead against the burly man's chin.

"Hey?" Chen Jing immediately stepped back to the side.

What's with this kid, acting like a real sheep?

As Lu Ran passed by Chen Jing, he said, "Uncle, call for help if there's trouble.

No matter how far, I'll come to rescue you."

"Shoot!" Chen Jing couldn't help but curse with a laugh.

He watched the retreating figure of the yellow-clothed youth, seeing him off as he walked away and gradually disappeared into the chilly fine rain.

Chapter 130: Slash the Night! Slash the Night!

Cold rain continued, at Wu Lie Bridge Head.

From afar, Lu Ran saw a tall woman clad in a yellow raincoat.

In this gloomy scene, she appeared as the only vibrant color in the world.

She stood on the stone railing of the bridge, gazing into the distance at the Wu Lie River rushing southward.

In her naturally hanging right hand, she held a long and slender Night-slaying Great Saber.

The cold rain drenched the saber, shimmering with cold light, and flowed down the blade tip to the ground.

"Goodness." Lu Ran couldn't help but grin.

This was rather imposing.

He quickened his pace, calling out from afar, "Sister?"

Deng Yuxiang stood motionless, lost in her thoughts as she watched the river, seemingly oblivious to Lu Ran's voice.

Lu Ran hastened his steps, coming up beside her, resting his elbow on the bridge railing and tilting his head up to look at the woman under the hood:

"Sister?"

His only response was the rushing sound of the river.

Lu Ran grimaced, looking under the hood at the woman's cold yet strikingly beautiful face:

"Not speaking, playing the master, huh?"

"Hmm?" Deng Yuxiang finally snapped back to reality, looking down.

"Feeling down?" Lu Ran asked, leaning against the stone railing.

"Heh." Seeing it was Lu Ran, a trace of a smile finally appeared on Deng Yuxiang's otherwise expressionless face.

She shook her wrist slightly and gently tapped Lu Ran's head with the cold saber blade, "Here now."

Lu Ran: "..."

So I'm not here then!

How exactly are you a North Wind Believer?

You couldn't hear my approaching footsteps, nor my calls?

If your god knew, wouldn't they kick you out of the sect!

"What's that expression?" Deng Yuxiang shook her wrist again and tapped Lu Ran's head with the blade.

Lu Ran pushed the blade aside, "What are you so engrossed in thinking about?"

Deng Yuxiang's eyes lifted again, looking afar, "Wondering what tonight will bring to my hometown."

"Ah?" Lu Ran's heart tightened, "What do you mean?"

Deng Yuxiang, in Lu Ran's eyes, had always been an imposing figure, with extraordinary combat prowess!

Faced with danger, her character should be to confront difficulties.

Yet now, she seemed somewhat melancholic?

Deng Yuxiang sighed, "For this coming fifteenth, another big figure has come to Rain Alley City."

Lu Ran furrowed his brow, probing, "Someone like last month, who battled the Sea Realm-Yin Hua Dan?"

Deng Yuxiang gently hummed a confirmation.

Her nasality was shallow, but to Lu Ran's ears, it was deafening.

In this world, there were many Believers capable of divination, such as Spirit Sign Believers, Caster Believers, etc.

Since Deng Yuxiang spoke thus, it was likely that something had been foretold for Rain Alley City.

"Then I... does the Divine People Bureau still want me on the team?" Lu Ran inquired.

He wasn't avoiding battle, but was amazed at the decision the bureau had made.

Deng Yuxiang quietly said, "Your talent is recognized by all.

After the events of the previous fifteenth night, we reported your performance.

The bureau also ordered us to patrol tonight, and depending on the situation, be ready to send you to the nearest shelter immediately.

But before the situation spirals out of control, you need to utilize your talents and help us save more lives along with us."

As she spoke, Deng Yuxiang looked down at Lu Ran again, "Are you scared?"

Lu Ran silently turned and looked out at the Wu Lie River vanishing into the mist.

Deng Yuxiang reminded him, "You're not a Moon Gazer, you can go home now.

This is also specially instructed by the bureau; it's all up to you."

But Lu Ran said, "I didn't say I was scared."

Deng Yuxiang raised an eyebrow slightly, "Hmm?"

Lu Ran casually said, "Isn't it because you are here!"

Deng Yuxiang quietly watched Lu Ran, and after a moment, her face again lit up with a smile.

In the chill autumn rain, her smile seemed exceptionally warm.

Lu Ran's words were not amiss, but Deng Yuxiang herself harbored a different view.

If other Brook Realm Believers joined the patrol, they obviously would be the ones heavily protected by the Moon Gazers.

However, the reason Lu Ran was specially approved to join was that in some capacity, he could protect this patrol team!

This might sound unbelievable, but this was the truth.

Last month on the fifteenth, when a group of Moon Gazers were at a loss against the sinister Yin Hua Dan,

Until Deng Yuxiang brought Lu Ran, who under everyone's gaze, precisely identified Yin Hua Dan.

Such was the terrifying value of Lu Ran!

Hence, the phrase "Isn't it because you are here!" had a dual interpretation in Deng Yuxiang's ears.

One was that Lu Ran trusted her, believing she could protect him.

The other...

Because she was part of this team, potentially facing danger at any moment, that's why Lu Ran insisted on staying in the team.

Deng Yuxiang didn't think she was being narcissistic.

To know that last month on the fifteenth, when she sought his help...

Lu Ran hadn't even asked for specifics before he simply replied with a "yes."

"So that means, next month, the school won't let us guard the city again?" Lu Ran said in a casual tone.

He waited a while, but did not get a response from the woman.

"Sister?" Lu Ran looked up, just in time to see Deng Yuxiang quietly watching him.

Lu Ran was a bit worried, "Look, you can't be in this state!

Always daydreaming, standing here stiff like a Straw Demon.

How are you going to patrol like this?"

"Thump~"

The cold blade touched Lu Ran's head lightly.

Lu Ran covered his head with a hand, almost bursting into laughter, "Stuck in dialogue, but your swinging is pretty smooth?"

Deng Yuxiang frowned, "Did you just say I resemble a Straw Demon?"

Lu Ran: "..."

Ah, women.

Completely deaf to everything else.

But say she doesn't look good? Hmm, then those ears are quite sharp!

Deng Yuxiang still answered the question, "It might not necessarily lead to something special, just possibly."

Lu Ran took it in stride, "Don't comfort yourself, those truly powerful Believers are usually right on point."

"Hmm..." Deng Yuxiang pondered for a moment, then nodded, "Indeed, special incidents within Da Xia have become increasingly common."

Lu Ran nodded in agreement.

This past month, he had also seen some news on the internet.

Last month on the fifteenth, many places in Da Xia experienced special events like "Night of Ghosts" and "Descent of the Demon Lord."

But cities like Rain Alley City, that had suffered special incidents twice in a row, were rare.

People always say, the world is becoming increasingly dangerous, and the living conditions are getting harsher.

When special events no longer remain special, but increasingly become the norm, that's quite telling.

Deng Yuxiang suddenly asked, "How is your cultivation going?"

Lu Ran: "Stream Realm Fourth Rank, progressed just this morning."

Deng Yuxiang: "Seems smooth."

"You?" Lu Ran asked in return.

Deng Yuxiang shook her head, "Stuck."

As she spoke, she slowly raised the Night-slaying Great Saber, letting the rain wash the blade: "Both she and I are stuck."

Lu Ran timely encouraged her, "Maybe you'll break through tonight, it's all uncertain."

Deng Yuxiang suddenly remembered something, "After I killed Yin Hua Dan last month, the Night-slaying Blade reacted violently."

"Oh?" Lu Ran perked up, "Is it happening?"

Deng Yuxiang licked her cold lips, her voice very soft, "At that time, my emotions were very turbulent, and I didn't pay special attention to it."

Now that I think about it, it seems I missed a chance."

Hearing this, Lu Ran also lamented.

Such events indeed can't be forced.

To accumulate an Artifact Spirit requires the master and the Divine Weapon to work together.

Especially at the critical moment of the Blade Spirit forming, the guidance of the Sword Master is crucial.

And after the battle with Yin Hua Dan, when Deng Yuxiang, having settled her vendetta, was indeed emotionally unstable.

Lu Ran even remembered, she kissed her raincoat hood and then hurriedly rushed him home.

"Yin Hua Dan, right?" Lu Ran spoke, "Alright, I'll find you another one tonight!"

Deng Yuxiang was a bit annoyed yet amused, and she gave Lu Ran a look.

Lu Ran in an expectant manner, "Best if both of you level up!"

I heard when your Beifeng Sect was in River Realm, you could summon a particularly huge saber.

One slash could split a residential building?"

"Yes," Deng Yuxiang gently nodded, a flicker of longing passing through her eyes.

She had been stuck in River Realm-Fifth Rank for far too long!

The intense desire to advance was beyond Lu Ran's comprehension.

Though Lu Ran didn't understand, he could read her expression.

Seeing Deng Yuxiang no longer annoyed and staring with increased fervor at the Night-slaying Saber, Lu Ran also smiled, "How about this, sis?

Tonight, for you and Night-slaying, I'll find a Yin Hua Dan to offer as a sacrifice, helping you guys recapture that night's feeling!

How about it, confident?"

Deng Yuxiang murmured lowly, "That night's feeling, I've also tried to recall it, but just..."

"Buzz!"

Deng Yuxiang's expression froze, feeling the Great Night-slaying Saber suddenly vibrate in her hand.

Droplets splashed everywhere, the cold raindrops scattering from the trembling blade.

Deng Yuxiang's eyes, already fiery, now shone even brighter.

She slowly lifted the saber, her face increasingly joyous.

"Buzz!!"

The Night-slaying Great Saber trembled intensely again, nearly slipping from Deng Yuxiang's grasp.

Misty clouds continually surged towards the Wu Lie Bridge Head in the dim sky.

For a moment, Lu Ran was completely enveloped in mist.

Even the woman within reach began to blur.

"Buzz!!"

Another anomaly!

The speed of fog supply could not keep up with the blade's absorption.

Lu Ran's surrounding environment grew more defined.

Suppressing his excitement, he quietly stepped back.

The scene before him was indeed captivating.

Below the bridge, the Wu Lie River continued to flow forcefully, like a surging symphony of music.

The woman in the yellow raincoat stood tall on the bridge railing, raising the Night-slaying Great Saber, pointing it towards the gray heavens.

The sky's rushing fog bizarrely began to swirl.

Like several "fog tornados" densely descending from the sky, all enveloping that diminutive Human Clan.

Each fog tornado was like a pathway to the heavens.

minute, 2 minutes... 5 minutes... 10 minutes.

Many Moon Gazers had now gathered at Wu Lie Bridge Head.

People were drawn here by the aerial anomaly, witnessing with their own eyes, in this old small city, the birth of a Divine Weapon!

"Heh..."

Deng Yuxiang suddenly let out a soft sigh, her eyes radiating an exceptionally brilliant glow.

The Night-slaying Great Saber buzzed and vibrated, its energy absorption speed suddenly accelerating!

"Buzz!!!"

Energy surged and air billowed.

A massive apparition spread from the Night-slaying Great Saber, then vanished without a trace.

Although it was only a brief moment, Lu Ran saw it clearly... well, her appearance.

The Night-slaying Blade Spirit appeared strikingly similar to its master, Deng Yuxiang?

She also had a graceful figure, bright and beautiful.

But her gaze was even more piercing than that of a Big Nightmare, her demeanor even more ferocious by a third!

Silence pervaded the world, with only the rain drizzling and the river churning.

The group of Moon Gazers exchanged glances, all wearing smiles yet dared not speak loudly, fearful of disturbing Deng Yuxiang.

After a long while, Deng Yuxiang broke the silence:

"Little Lu Ran."

"Ah?"

Deng Yuxiang's eyes, unusually gentle, looked at the ice-cold Night-slaying Great Saber, feeling the terrifying energy swirling within:

"Come here, she wants to meet you."