

## Old Gods 171

Chapter 171: -day great opportunity?

Lu Ran truly widened his horizons!

Not every divine being is as magnanimous as Lord Beifeng.

After all, creating the Divine Ruins requires an immense amount of Qi.

Not to mention a visitor like Lu Ran, even the North Wind Believers living in the city have to wait for a decade or two to witness the birth of Divine Ruins!

Some devotees to other gods may never see a trace of Divine Ruins in their lifetime,

Like those Devine-Spiritual Sign Believers.

With Devine-Spiritual Sign voraciously hoarding the Power of Faith...

Lu Ran doesn't believe from the bottom of his heart that Spiritual Sign would bestow such a blessing upon his disciples.

"Ha! Ha! Ha!"

"Ha! Ha! Ha!" The uniform shouts were majestic and influential, stirring a fervor within those who heard them!

Lu Ran's eyes narrowed as he gazed toward the Inner City.

Was this cheering?

In the next moment, from among the more than ten North Wind Believers standing in the sky, a young man in pure white cape flew out.

He wielded the Yanyue Blade and charged directly at the entrance to the Divine Ruins!

Such a small being seemed like an ant shaking a large tree, using a similarly small blade to chop at the grand doors of a palace.

"Thud!"

A dull sound, earthshaking!

"Ugh..." The young man was blown back, even spitting out a mouthful of fresh blood.

It seemed he must have been injured by the shock.

The trembling sound of the gate could even cause earache to Lu Ran, who was far in the Outer City!

One could imagine the extent of the blow that the young man had received.

No sooner had the young man been repelled than another young man made his move.

He wielded a Horse-cutting Great Saber and rushed towards the gate with urgency.

"Thud!"

Another violent burst of trembling echoed.

This young man was also shaken and flew back, even losing his grip on the saber.

"Ha! Ha! Ha!"

"Ha! Ha! Ha!" The cheering from inside the city continued, growing more passionate.

More than ten North Wind Believers, arrayed high above, each charged at the gates of the Divine Ruins.

One after another, they were gravely injured, spitting blood, and returned without success.

"Yan..." Lu Ran caught sight of a familiar figure.

It was Yan Shuangzi's turn!

She showed no cowardice, nor the slightest hesitation, holding a Horse-cutting Great Saber identical to Deng Yuxiang's and struck at the gate.

"She's really courting death."

Lu Ran pursed his lips as Yan Shuangzi was also harshly repelled.

What was behind the palace doors?

A Divine Weapon?

A trace of sword intent?

Or perhaps a strand of the pure "Qi" unique to the North Wind Blade?

Whatever it was, Divine-Beifeng had placed the Divine Ruins here, waiting for his disciples to seek it.

Yet, the disciples couldn't even open the gates...

"Thud!"

"Thud!"

Amidst the echoing sounds, Lu Ran watched the North Wind Believers march forth one after the other.

The more he watched, the more apprehensive he became.

His understanding of the divine beings was still too shallow.

Just the descent of a Divine Ruin from Divine-Beifeng had reached such an intensity.

In the future, was he to vie for the right to live against such beings?

"Lu Ran?"

The room door swung open, and Si Xianxian from next door rushed in.

"What's up?" Lu Ran replied distractedly, his eyes glued to the sky.

"This time, we've really hit the jackpot to be able to witness the Divine Ruins!" Si Xianxian said excitedly.

She looked around, located two sabers on the table, swiftly picked them up, and approached Lu Ran.

"What for?" Lu Ran took the two sabers with a puzzled look at Si Xianxian.

Who would have thought, Si Xianxian said, "I don't know either, who knows what you perceived!"

This is the Divine Ruins of the Beifeng Sect!

Just hold on to the sabers, who knows if you might understand something?"

Lu Ran was bemused.

Sister Xian'er plays with hammers and knows nothing about this.

And Sister Xian'er is ill, not in the best state of mind.

But Sister Xian'er cares for me!

"Look at the Divine Ruins, not at me!" Si Xianxian reached out and gently patted Lu Ran's cheek, "Look, perceive!"

Lu Ran: "..."

What was there for me to perceive!

How to violently dismantle a door like the North Wind Believers?

What does this have to do with swords!

"Have you perceived it?" Si Xianxian gazed out at the Divine Ruins and couldn't help but ask after a while.

"I have."

"Ah?" Si Xianxian's face brightened, "What did you perceive?"

Lu Ran spoke poignantly: "Tearing down doors and breaking walls, the North Wind Believers really can't handle it.

They should have the Fierce Heavenly believers take hammers to it..."

Si Xianxian: ???

"You!" Si Xianxian almost burst out laughing, "That's what you perceived?"

Lu Ran: "Tell me if it makes sense!"

"Uh..." Si Xianxian scratched her head.

Seems right though!

"Good Lord." Another exclamation from Lu Ran.

In his view, Yan Shuangzi was repelled yet again.

Her snow-white cape was already soaked in blood, and she looked utterly miserable.

She had clearly sustained grave injuries and was barely able to stand.

The winds that swirled at her feet seemed as if they could dissipate at any moment.

"Thud!"

Another earthshaking dull sound.

Finally, one of the North Wind Believers could not take it anymore.

A young man with a large chopping saber, like a kite with its string cut, describing a parabolic arc in the sky, plummeted downwards.

Situations quickly took a dire turn!

One after another, the North Wind Believers were incapacitated with injuries, tumbling to the ground.

In the blink of an eye, only four Believers were left hanging in the sky.

And as their number dwindled, the rotation frequency increased, leaving even less time for the few remaining believers to catch their breath.

"Ugh..."

Once again, Lu Ran witnessed Yan Shuangzi being shaken back.

Her body was bloody, her hair disheveled, and she was in a state of extreme disarray, bearing no resemblance to her former Unrivaled Charm as a Heavenly Pride.

For her, stepping through the air had always been trivially easy.

Yet at that moment, she stumbled, seemingly at risk of falling from the sky, hundreds of meters high, at any moment.

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In this round of attacking the gate, the North Wind Believers had lost another general.

Only three figures remained high in the sky.

Lu Ran, with a heart unable to bear the sight, suddenly realized a problem and asked,

"What if, after all this, the gate doesn't break?"

Si Xianxian answered as a matter of course, "If it doesn't break, then we can't get the opportunity inside."

Lu Ran: "..."

He suddenly realized he was wrong.

Divine-Spiritual Sign might have created the Divine Ruins, content to prevent the believers from obtaining the treasures within.

"Crack!!"

Suddenly, a shattering noise exploded in the heavens.

Lu Ran immediately looked up and saw a crack had spread across the palace gates!

The one who had achieved this feat was the gallant young man wielding the Azure Dragon Yanyue Blade!

"Ah!!!"

The young man's roar also thundered across the skies.

That impassioned cry completely ignited the entire Beifeng City!

Inside and outside the city, countless people who looked up in awe burst into incredible cheers.

Amidst these heart-stirring shouts, Yan Shuangzi's eyes were firm with resolve, gripping her Night-slaying Great Saber tightly as she fiercely attacked the gates.

"Crack!!"

Another crack appeared!

Another figure was sent flying.

Another spray of blood misted the air.

"No, no..." Lu Ran's heart was suspended in worry, watching Yan Shuangzi sway, close to falling.

While Lu Ran was still anxious, the queue of North Wind Believers didn't allow for a moment's delay.

Another young man stepped forward with his saber.

That strike was deafening!

Palace gates crazily crawled with cracks, but what also "broke" was that young man who forgot death in his sacrifice.

He didn't even have the privilege to sway before falling; his eyes turned white, dropping to the ground like a cannonball.

Now, only two bloodied figures were left in the high skies.

"Junior Sister Yan, this brother can't be... \*cough cough\* no, cough, polite anymore."

The young man holding the Azure Dragon Yanyue Blade was covered in tattered clothes, coughing blood, his face deathly pale.

But his eyes, like those of a tiger, bright and full of spirit, were fixed on the crack-laden palace gates.

Yan Shuangzi wiped the blood from the corner of her mouth with a smile.

Though her voice was weak, it carried an air of splendid freewill, "Brother, please!"

"Ha!" The young man lifted the Azure Dragon Yanyue Blade, with fierce wind and waves churning beneath his feet.

Inside the guesthouse of the Outer City, Lu Ran's gaze sharpened.

He had developed a very intuitive understanding of the Third Realm·Heart and Sword Unity.

The gallant young man and the Azure Dragon Yanyue Blade seemed to become one!

In that fleeting flash of the bladelight and shadow, a real Azure Dragon seemed to roar, clawing furiously at the palace gates.

Lu Ran seemed to grasp the intention behind the sword:

Dominating mountains and rivers, sweeping away thousands of troops!

Imposing!

Truly f\*cking domineering... Huh?

"Thump!!"

Amidst the terrifying thud, the gallant young man was sent flying.

Along with his soaring ambition, he was beaten back.

Silence fell upon the world.

Only at the palace gates did the sound of the cracking continue to echo.

second, 2 seconds... 10 seconds.

The gallant young man finally steadied himself, and in his expectant eyes, the palace gates, still stood defiantly.

Immediately, sighs of disappointment followed.

The gate was already full of cracks, so close yet so far!

"Ha ha! Ha ha ha ha ha ha!" Suddenly, loud laughter burst from high above.

The young man laughed uproariously, blood flowing freely from his mouth.

The seemingly valiant laughter seemed to have a hint of bitterness, a touch of helplessness.

Yan Shuangzi's expression was somewhat complex, "Brother..."

"Rules, are the rules," the young man waved grandly, "Junior Sister Yan, please!"

His spirit was as unyielding as that of Yan Shuangzi.

Yan Shuangzi remained silent, gazing at the nearly shattered gate.

The young man's voice was stern, "In the name of the Divine, under the eyes of all! Yan Shuangzi, display the elegance befitting of our Beifeng Sect!"

"Yes," Yan Shuangzi lifted her slender Big Horse-cutting Saber, with her wide coat billowing in the wind.

There was a fleeting moment when Lu Ran thought he saw Deng Yuxiang.

No,

To Lu Ran's reluctant admission, Yan Shuangzi seemed even more distinguished.

These two close friends had chosen two completely different paths of growth.

The consequences of personal choice must be borne by the individual...

A gale suddenly rose, snow swirling in the sky.

Her figure in blood-soaked white robes graceful as a startled swan, her slender blade fierce as a dragon.

A woman and her saber, puncturing through the facade!

Yan Shuangzi brutally pierced through the palace gate that had barred countless Heavenly Prides!

Amidst the piercingly harsh sound of shattering, the figure in white robes charged valiantly into the Divine Ruins.

"Crack!!"

"Damn!" Si Xianxian's sweet voice was doubled over, hands covering her ears as they threatened to burst.

"Rumble!"

The city was still rejoicing, the Divine Ruins violently shattered.

Lu Ran's eyes widened suddenly—where was Yan Shuangzi?

She had shattered the palace gates, entering the Divine Ruins alone, and then...

The person vanished?!

Don't tell me that Yan Shuangzi ascended in the daytime!

She was just at the River Realm Fifth Stage... Surely not...

The majestic and solemn palace crumbled into pieces of broken brick and tile, scattering in every direction.

Lu Ran was searching for Yan Shuangzi's figure when he happened to notice a piece of illusory rubble hitting the young man with the Azure Dragon Yanyue Blade.

But instead of causing any harm, the rubble seemed to meld into the young man's body?

"Quick, grab it, hurry! A grand opportunity!"

Si Xianxian was overjoyed, flipping out the window to climb to the roof.

Lu Ran snapped back to reality, filled with countless doubts, and quickly followed.

At the same time, many climbed onto rooftops, and all over the city, North Wind Believers soared into the sky, vying for the broken bricks and tiles.

Lu Ran watched a large rock fly towards him, and he instantly leaped up to meet it.

"Whoosh~"

As expected, an immensely pure, vast energy surged into his body!

Lu Ran only felt his body bursting at the seams, a bad premonition flooding his thoughts.

"Gag~"

Lu Ran heaved, as if trying to vomit out the energy.

It was only because everyone was scrambling for the pieces that no one bothered with Lu Ran.

Had anyone been free, they likely would have rushed over to kick him several times!

What do you mean by that?

Our Divine Lord bestows mercy indiscriminately and showers all living beings with blessings.

Does such an act make you feel sick?

Lu Ran... indeed felt a bit nauseated.

Because he was of the Stream Realm-Fifth Rank.

If one were to compare the body to a container, Lu Ran's bucket was already full.

Pouring more water would only result in overflow.

"Hum~"

"Hum!" Suddenly, the paired sabers in Lu Ran's arms trembled.

Lu Ran's expression froze, not expecting the Silent Night Blade and Dawn Blade to react so intensely.

Divine Power, of course, is universally usable.

The energy absorbed in the Demon Cave and in front of the godly shrine are essentially the same.

However, the Divine Power bestowed by the Divine-North Wind God Sculpture seemed to carry an extra attribute in the mystery?

Nurturing both the person and the saber?

Worthy of the Divine Sect that specializes in saber arts!

Lu Ran hugged the dual blades tightly, feeling their intense reactions.

The Dawn Blade had always trembled slightly, so why such a commotion today?

"Right now! Right now, gag~"

Lu Ran didn't care about his nausea, aimed for a large patch of illusory rubble and shot towards it.

Divine Technique·Immortal Hoof!

For his sabers to become Divine Weapons soon, the Immortal Sheep Believer was utterly shameless!

A certain little lamb, using the Immortal Sheep sect's Divine Technique, was competing fiercely with North Wind Believers for this chance...

In the midst of contention, Lu Ran also thought of Yan Shuangzi's point.

The Second Realm·Heart and Sword Unity!

The saber is an extension of the swordsman's thoughts.

Lu Ran's forward rushing figure came to a sudden stop, standing atop the roof, looking up to face the onslaught of broken bricks and tiles.

"Hum~"

"Hum!" His hands shook continuously with the tremors of the blades.

Lu Ran tightened his grip on the sabers, his mind tumultuously surging.

We shall ensure peaceful, silent nights in this world,

Each time ushering in the golden light of the rising sun to dispel the mists.

Then, gifting the resplendent dawn behind the mists, to the countless souls of this world, to those who have endured suffering...

Chapter 173: Riverside Enlightenment

The Silent Night Blade and the Dawn Blade were satiated.

As Lu Ran continually collected pieces of the Divine Ruins, the vibrations of the pair of Tang swords grew more intense.

Especially the Dawn Blade!

After all, it was his father's sidearm, and in terms of growth, it had a head start over the Silent Night Blade.

When the grand blessing ceremony ended, the Dawn Blade buzzed as if it might slip from Lu Ran's grasp if he wasn't careful.

Lu Ran was ecstatic!

He even had the illusion that at this moment, the Dawn Blade was as responsive as the Night-slaying Great Saber that Deng Yuxiang wielded to slay the Yin flower dan that night!

On the path to developing an Artifact Spirit, the Dawn Blade was making great strides.

This domain exclusively of the "North Wind Blade" sect had truly benefited the Dawn Blade!

Like Lu Ran, the Dawn Blade also needed an opportunity to advance to a Divine Weapon.

The difference was, Lu Ran didn't know where his opportunity for advancement lay.

But he was very clear about the Dawn Blade's opportunity:

It must be on a day after the 15th of the lunar month, at dawn when the rosy clouds meet the morning sky...

Then its name would be established, and its achievement completed!

Lu Ran was really happy, this journey to Beifeng City was totally worth it!

But soon, he became a bit worried.

Because Yan Shuangzi had disappeared!

A living person had vanished along with the broken Divine Ruins, disappearing from this world.

Could it be that she also exploded?

Lu Ran couldn't help but speculate in his mind whether the remains of bricks and tiles he absorbed contained Yan Shuangzi's bones.

Hmm... Probably not.

Would the gods make such a spectacle of mobilizing armies to create these once-in-a-decade Divine Ruins, only to sacrifice the only disciple who successfully broke in?

After the ceremony, Lu Ran asked some North Wind Believers, but nobody knew where that radiant sister had gone.

Lu Ran even called Deng Yuxiang to tell her everything that happened in the city.

The response from Big Nightmare finally put him at ease.

She said that Yan Shuangzi was really lucky.

Even though Deng Yuxiang didn't know where her close friend went, Yan Shuangzi must have received her reward.

At the very least, she would have gotten an opportunity for a trial!

Lu Ran understood in his heart, so, was Yan Shuangzi transported by the gods to an otherworldly space?

Lord Beifeng, what a trick!

Deng Yuxiang's convincing words greatly relieved Lu Ran.

Because he really worried that Divine-North Wind had torn Yan Shuangzi to pieces and gifted her remains to heroes inside and outside the city...

Normal people wouldn't think the way Lu Ran did!

But Lu Ran was all too aware of the true colors of the gods' lineage, so he always carried a heavy heart of caution.

After another week of waiting in the city with Si Xianxian without Yan Shuangzi's return, Lu Ran dragged the wildly playful Si Xianxian and set off for home.

On the 8th day of the twelfth lunar month, Lu Ran first sent Si Xianxian back to Jinchuan City, and at the station, handed her personally to Aunt Si.

Amid Aunt Si's repeated thanks and Si Xianxian's reluctant goodbyes, Lu Ran boarded the train and began his journey home.

By the time he returned to Rain Alley City, it was nearly evening.

"Phew..."

Outside the exit of the station, Lu Ran took a deep breath, looking at the deserted train station.

In this small station at Rain Alley City, only a dozen people disembarked.

The cold wind blew mixed with bits of frost and snow, smacking against his face.

Lu Ran felt even more desolate.

In the morning, he was beneath the feet of the gods, in Beifeng City.

The bustling and lively scene, contrasted with the desolation before him, created a great sense of disparity in Lu Ran's heart.

He stood silently for a while before heading to a nearby supermarket.

After buying milk and bread, Lu Ran took a taxi to the banks of the Wu Lie River.

Once again, Lu Ran climbed up to the rooftop of the abandoned apartment building.

"Dad, it's been a long time since I last visited."

Lu Ran spoke softly, coming to a corner of the rooftop, placing the milk and bread he bought on the stone railing.

"I'm at the Stream Realm Fifth Rank now, almost at the same major realm as you."

Lu Ran took a few steps back, holding the twin blades in his left hand, and drew the Dawn Blade with his right.

"Your old comrade is about to become a Divine Weapon."

For some reason, Lu Ran's expression turned a bit peculiar.

"Do you think, once the Dawn Blade develops an Artifact Spirit, I should call it 'uncle'?"

"Hmm... I suppose I could keep to my own titles."

"I'll call it 'uncle,' and it will call me 'master.'"

The young man in black looked like a lunatic,

Standing alone on the frigid rooftop in the cold December, talking to the air.

After a while, Lu Ran turned to look southward, gazing at the rolling waters of the Wu Lie River.

In this vast white world, everything was silent, the land frozen over.

Only the Wu Lie River flowed stubbornly.

Mists rose above the river as if the waters were seething hot.

No matter how cold the earth, I still surge tumultuously.

"Crunch, crunch..."

Lu Ran's footsteps on the snow made an odd sound as he approached the stone railing.

His gaze became blurry, as if entering a trance.

The setting sun cast its glow,

Leaving a dark golden outline on the black-clad young man, incredibly beautiful.

As dusk approached,

The beautiful outline faded, and frost and snow had already accumulated on the young man's head.

Yet he continued to gaze, mesmerized at the river.

It seemed,

All that tried to hinder its flow were swept into the roaring currents.

Or they turned into mists upon the surface of the river, eventually vanishing without a trace.

"Buzz!!"

Powerful energies surged from within Lu Ran.

Yet he seemed unaware, still lost in his inebriation, enchanted by the river amidst ice and snow.

The passing of seasons, the transition of years.

None of it affected its relentless surge forward.

The river's name was Wu Lie.

Fierce, defiant, perhaps with a hint of heroism.

"Whoo!!"

The roiling energies stirred up winds that lifted snow from the rooftop.

Amid the spreading frost and snow, the drunken-eyed person's expression gradually changed, his gaze growing more intense.

How many times had he advanced atop this rooftop?

"Heh..."

Lu Ran took a deep breath, slowly closing his eyes.

About the sense of belonging,

This Wu Lie River, this Rain Alley City, didn't need to give Lu Ran more.

He knew he belonged here.

Yet this land still looked after him, time and again,

As if fearful of his departure.

Lu Ran suddenly thought of Deng Yuxiang; her experiences must be similar to his.

That's why she gave up staying in Beifeng City, gave up an express path to the heavens, to return alone to Rain Alley.

If Big Nightmare stayed under the gods' feet, would her old friend outclass her?

Would she be the one to enter the Divine Ruins?

At least there was a chance.

In the eyes of others, Rain Alley City, shrouded in perpetual haze, resembled Demon Cave purgatory.

But to Lu Ran and Deng Yuxiang, the wavering sound of wind and rain seemed more like the soft weeping of home.

"Whoo!!"

In the fading light, a formidable energy unfurled atop the dilapidated rooftop.

The young man in black finally opened his eyes.

Within them, brilliance swirled, resplendent as if divine.

River Realm·First Rank!

"Dad, it's done."

Lu Ran turned to look at a corner of the rooftop.

The milk and bread on the railing had long been blown away.

Hmm... No big deal.

He had been advancing for so long, his late father must have already partaken.

Low muttering suddenly echoed in his mind, "You don't seem very happy."

Lu Ran jumped in surprise!

He thought his dad had spoken.

After a moment, he said, "Lord Immortal Goat."

Immortal Goat: "I thought you'd be jumping for joy."

"I'm quite happy," Lu Ran grinned, "I can finally don armor made of water streams, activate a new Divine Sculpture.

And I can even learn a new Divine Technique from our Immortal Goat sect."

As he spoke, Lu Ran actually became happier, his voice rising, "Can I turn my enemies into sheep now?"

Immortal Goat: "Of course, but after casting the spell, you will be no different from a lamb.

Extremely weak and vulnerable."

Lu Ran nodded, "I still need to learn it!"

Divine Technique-Sheep was indeed quite special.

To cast this technique, Lu Ran would have to pay a price in almost every way!

Not just with a weakened body and depleted Divine Power, it would also leave his spirit extremely fatigued.

Another aspect, the trickiest of all!

Each time the technique was used, the caster's own soul would also suffer a certain degree of damage!

Until the number of times the caster used it was sufficient, and the soul became increasingly fragmented, the person would eventually become an empty shell.

That's why believers in the world were not eager to follow the Immortal Sheep sect.

Divine Power can be absorbed, Qi can be replenished, and the spirit can rest, but the soul...

How do you mend it?

Such a BUG-level Divine Technique, ruthless to the point of not recognizing kin, killing even the user!

This is also why believers of the Immortal Sheep sect rarely use this technique.

The moment you deploy the Divine Technique-Sheep, you are committing suicide!

But for Lu Ran, the soul-level difficulty could actually be solved!

The Black Fire Sheep Head was an expert at soul manipulation; if it could nourish so many Evil Sculptures in the garden, would it hold back from its owner, Lu Ran?

Moreover, Lu Ran still had a piece of Rebirth Money.

Perhaps, that's also why Lord Wang Quan gave Lu Ran the Magic Artifact?

In any case, the stronger Lu Ran's enemies were, the more he would have to give.

Until the enemy was strong enough that no matter how much Lu Ran paid, the technique would not work.

Lu Ran had studied this technique in detail; with his current River Realm·First Rank, as long as the opponent was River Realm·Fifth Rank or below, the technique would work!

Which means, if Lu Ran wished, he could turn Big Nightmare into a little lamb right now.

Hmm... it does sound tempting?

If the enemy was of the River Realm level, Lu Ran's Divine Technique would fail.

Then, no matter how much Lu Ran gave, he might only suffer backlash, and the enemy would not become a lamb ready for slaughter.

Even if Lu Ran was River Realm·Fifth Rank, it would be difficult to overcome the level gap to turn a River Realm believer into a sheep.

The gap between the major realms is like a chasm!

Not something "tricks and cleverness" can overcome.

But once Lu Ran enters the River Realm...

Whether you're River Realm Fourth Rank or River Realm Fifth Rank, facing Ran Shen, you all have to bleat for me!

A bit of "unrivaled within the same realm"?

Hmm... it's hard to say.

After all, Lu Ran would be almost useless after casting the spell.

He could only rely on teammates.

In the future, Lu Ran could actually manipulate Evil Demons, essentially bringing his own teammates.

Lu Ran was silent for a long time before saying, "Lord Immortal Goat, can we activate the Night Charm Evil Sculpture here?"

"You want to..."

"I wish to start the Evil Technique·Night Dance."

As he spoke, Lu Ran placed a hand on the railing, looking down from the building,

"I want to stand in midair, I want to step down from this high place!"

Chapter 174: 156 Lu Mei

Lord Immortal Sheep could sense that Lu Ran was truly excited and immensely looking forward to this day.

However, the divine being still admonished Lu Ran a few words.

Even though it was already dark and this was a desolate area, deserted and no one to be seen, the district had long been abandoned.

But still, Lord Immortal Sheep wanted Lu Ran to be careful in his actions.

Lu Ran was amenable to good advice and suppressed the eagerness in his heart, quickly picked up his twin blades, and bade farewell to his deceased father.

Returning home, Lu Ran immediately came before the Divine Shrine Divine Sculpture and sat down cross-legged to meditate.

Under the guidance of Lord Immortal Sheep, without falling asleep, Lu Ran arrived in the spiritual world, standing before the Night Charm Evil Sculpture.

"Night Charm," Lu Ran murmured to himself.

My Night Charm.

He looked up at the massive Evil Sculpture and became increasingly excited.

Although she was a Stone Sculpture, her grace lost none of its charm.

That tight-fitting Night Clothes outlined her seductive body curves.

The bamboo hat and veil hid her face, making her seem even more mysterious and powerful.

"Buzz~"

Suddenly, the Night Charm Evil Sculpture began to shudder lightly.

"Yes, growing..." Lu Ran had long coveted the Evil Skills of the Night Charm Clan!

Now, at last, his dream was about to come true.

As expected, the Night Charm Evil Sculpture gradually grew bigger.

The sculpture that was originally ten meters in size expanded a full two circles as it advanced to the Stream Realm.

"Buzz!!"

The Night Charm Evil Sculpture, now nourished, naturally wouldn't stop at the Stream Realm.

First Rank River Realm, Second Rank River Realm, River Realm Third Rank...

Only when it reached River Realm-Fourth Rank did the Evil Sculpture gradually stabilize.

Lu Ran looked at the Night Charm sculpture, feeling completely satisfied.

Ah, that feels good~

"Whoosh!"

A thick misty line emerged from the Night Charm statue, enveloping Lu Ran.

As the mist connected the person and the sculpture tightly together, Lu Ran drew knowledge of Evil Techniques from the Evil Sculpture.

He studied for a full hour.

By the time Lu Ran, who had been meditating before the Divine Shrine, opened his eyes, his house was pitch-black.

Lu Ran headed straight for the bathroom!

To bathe?

Yes, but more than that, Lu Ran wanted to see the shape of the wind in the water stream.

"Splash~"

The shower turned on, and a warm cascade fell.

Lu Ran mobilized the Divine Power within him, rapidly gathering it at his feet.

"Whoosh~"

The feeling of the breeze entwining around his feet was fascinating to Lu Ran!

Slowly, Lu Ran stepped up.

His right foot stood in mid-air!

To be precise, he stood on the wind.

Evil Technique-Night Dance!

Splashes of water scattered from beneath his feet, crudely outlining the wisp of the wind.

"Tsk tsk~" Lu Ran couldn't help but admire inwardly, climbing higher step by step.

In the blink of an eye, he was half a meter above the ground tiles, standing in the air.

Actually, this wasn't flying.

It was walking on the wind!

The Divine Technique·Breeze Dance of the North Wind Believers was the real flying.

Take Deng Yuxiang, for example, her legs didn't need to move to soar freely with the help of wind waves.

Lu Ran couldn't do that.

Evil Technique·Night Dance could summon invisible wind waves, cushioning beneath Lu Ran's feet, providing support.

But if Lu Ran wanted to move in the air, he would need to run and jump as required.

Hmm... even cooler~

"Snap~"

Lu Ran discontinued the Evil Technique·Night Dance and landed steadily on the ground.

He was delighted, returning under the shower and relishing a hot bath.

With this technique, he no longer had to worry about having nothing to leverage.

This technique could naturally be concealed within the Divine Technique·Immortal Hoof, making his movement technique even more agile in battle!

Lu Ran quickly washed up, and when he came in front of the clothes hamper, ready to change clothes, his movements suddenly stopped.

It seemed like...

I have new clothes to wear?

"Ha~" Lu Ran wore an odd expression, heading towards the bathroom mirror.

He wiped the misted mirror with one hand, gazing at his reflection.

Accompanied by a surge of energy, a bamboo hat suddenly appeared on Lu Ran's head, with a layer of black veil hanging from its edge.

His body, too, was cloaked in a pitch-black Night Clothes.

Evil Technique·Night Charm Robe!

"Nice one~"

Lu Ran's voice came from behind the black veil.

Finally, I have reached this step.

It is said that with crossdressing, you either do it zero times or endlessly!

Well... never mind, it's unimportant.

The main thing is, don't the Night Charm Clan use their eyes to see people?

With the mysterious black veil covering him, Lu Ran's vision was significantly obstructed!

Immediately, he lifted the black veil, seeing in the mirror, a figure with the air of an ancient swordsman.

"Wow!" Lu Ran exclaimed in admiration.

This is so cool!

Lu Ran felt the Night Clothes and savored the texture of the fine fabric.

In essence, the Night Charm Robe was an illusion of energy, soft to the touch, but with strong defensive power!

Lu Ran enjoyed his new outfit thoroughly, feeling an urge to step out on the night of the fifteenth, cosplaying as Night Charm.

"Click."

More than ten minutes later, Lu Ran exited the bathroom.

What greeted him was a sharp cat's meow.

"Meow!!"

The tabby cat, seeing a foreign figure emerge in strange attire, immediately puffed up its fur.

"Don't be afraid, it's me."

Behind the mysterious and beautiful veil, a familiar voice was heard.

"Meow?" The tabby cat was still on guard.

"Come."

Lu Shi's Night Charm crouched down, beckoning the tabby cat over.

However, the tabby cat was not swayed by beauty.

Of course, "Lu Mei" would not be so easily defeated!

He softly spoke, as if mimicking the cry of a lamb: "Me~"

Tabby Cat: "Meow~"

The poor tabby cat, played with at the palm of someone's hand, plunged straight into the dark, charming embrace.

"Let's go, I'll take you to play with the blade," Lu Ran stepped towards the small bedroom.

The scene was particularly eerie!

It was as if a real Evil Demon-Night Charm was living openly in a human dwelling.

Even daring to invade the room where the Divine Shrine Divine Sculpture stood!

Everything was as Lu Ran expected; as a resident of the River Realm, his strength soared!

The list of Evil Skills attributed to the Night Charm Clan was quite formidable.

Apart from Night Charm Robe and Night Dance.

There was the Night Charm Blade that could assemble Wind Blades, the Night Wind Assault that stirred up gales.

And the Evil Technique·Night Shadow Charm Trace, a powerful single-target assassination skill comparable to the strongest of the Beifeng Sect!

Unfortunately, Lu Ran cannot "split into three" just yet.

Evil Technique·Night Charm Shadow, he has to wait until he reaches River Realm·Third Rank to synchronize.

That night,

Lu Ran sat cross-legged before the Divine Shrine, practicing the Evil Technique·Night Charm Blade.

He gently swayed his fingers as if drawing the Wind Blade with an invisible string, making it dance lightly in the air.

One Night Charm Blade, two Night Charm Blades...

Lu Ran played delightedly, though the technique was quite unsightly.

The Wind Blades dancing in the air always clashed.

"Ding ding dang dang" sounds of collision persisted until late into the night when Lu Ran managed to summon all eight Night Charm Blades and control them altogether.

No wonder that in Beifeng City, when he sparred with Bu Qingfeng, the opponent's Wind Blades always clashed.

This was too hard to control!

It also shows how exquisite the skills of Big Nightmare were!

In the following days, Lu Ran stayed at home training and mastering one Evil Skill after another.

Not just the Evil Skills of the Night Charm Clan!

The Evil Skills adapted for River Realm·First Rank of the Evil Dog Clan, Soul-splitting Demon Clan, and Black Lamp Clan could now be equipped by Lu Ran.

Evil Dog Evil Skill·Evil Bark, a provocation skill.

With constant dog barking sounds, it disturbed and infuriated the target to the extent of drawing their blade against the caster.

This skill was of little use to Lu Ran.

After all, Lu Ran had Divine Technique·Desolate Sound, which was much more advanced than Evil Technique·Evil Bark.

Soul-splitting Demon Evil Technique·Soul Fire!

It allows for confinement of souls and using flames to burn and torment the soul.

This technique was quite cruel!

If a vicious and malevolent person possessed this technique, they might indulge in the pleasure of tormenting living beings all day long.

Thus, this technique was also of little use to Lu Ran.

Hmm... I'll equip it anyway.

Who knows, maybe one day someone will seek torture?

Black Lamp Evil Technique·Yin Fire Cage!

This technique was useful.

Very useful!

Yin Fire Cage could control a single target, using Cage Fire to illuminate the enemy and slow their movements!

What's the concept here?

On the battlefield, life and death happen in a blink of an eye!

If an enemy's movements were just a bit slower, it would be enough for Lu Ran to exploit greatly.

And in everyday life, this power was even more remarkable!

When Lu Ran learned this technique, his first action was to experiment with the tabby cat.

As the Cage Fire burned in his eyes, focused on the tabby cat, the little guy's movements froze on the spot.

Yes, the tabby cat was immobilized!

If Human Clan believers were affected, they would only have restricted movements.

And the stronger the target's realm, the lesser the impact they would feel.

But the tabby cat...

It was utterly powerless to resist.

Not just cats, but ordinary people would basically be immobilized by Lu Ran too!

No kidding!

Ordinary humans could do nothing but succumb to Lu Ran's will!

Next time Lu Ran went to the supermarket at the entrance of the district and saw that beautiful cashier...

He could just grab bread, milk, lunch meat cans, and run!

The cashier would just have to stare blankly, unable to even call out~

Oof,

That would be really wicked.

Lu Ran gained a deeper understanding of himself:

He was purely a calamity!

Of course, other believers also regarded all beings as ants, able to do as they pleased.

It was just that Lu Ran's means were too damn sinister...

Soon, time came to the thirteenth day of the twelfth lunar month.

A phone call interrupted Lu Ran, who was playing with the blade.

"Buzz~ Buzz~"

Lu Ran held one hand in front of him, looked up at the rotating Night Charm Blades, and controlled them to spin a circle, then picked up the phone by his side.

"Sister?"

"Feeling good?" A pleasant voice came from the other side of the call.

"Hehe, taking off~"

Lu Ran raised his hand and grabbed the Night Charm Blades.

"Oh?" Deng Yuxiang perked up, "Tell me, how do you fly?"

Of course, I fly with Night Dance!

But, those words couldn't be shared with a North Wind Believer.

Thinking about it, Lu Ran suddenly felt a bit of a thrill?

Communicating with a North Wind Believer while toying with a Night Charm Blade...

That was purely looking for trouble!

"I have reached River Realm," Lu Ran twirled a blade.

"River Realm?" It was clear Big Nightmare was pleasantly surprised.

"I advanced on the eighth day." Lu Ran scattered the Night Charm Blades, "Unfortunately, I won't be able to join Sister Yuxiang in battle on the fifteenth."

"It's fine, focus on your final exams," Deng Yuxiang said with a smile, "Have you mastered the sheep yet?"

"I did learn it." Lu Ran felt a little embarrassed, "But the final exams are coming up, I don't dare to experiment, scared..."

"Hehehehe~" Deng Yuxiang laughed uproariously, teasing, "Scared you'll turn into a shrimp?"

Lu Ran: "..."

Just you wait!

I'm going to slap this divine trick on you one day and make you bleat like a sheep!

"It's better not to use it." Deng Yuxiang's laughter didn't subside, advising, "It's harmful to the body."

"Oh." Lu Ran responded absently, asking, "Sister, why are you looking for me?"

Deng Yuxiang: "I'm feeling twitchy."

Lu Ran's face darkened: "I have my final exams the day after tomorrow!"

Deng Yuxiang's voice was rarely so gentle:

"I can go easy."

Chapter 175: River Realm?!

Half an hour later, on the banks of Wu Lie River.

On the rooftop, there were silhouettes and marks of swords.

"Easy there, eh? Could you take it easy!" Lu Ran yelled, his feet stirring the Immortal Fog beneath him as he rapidly darted about.

But the North Wind Believer, like a persistent ghost, entangled himself with Lu Ran once more.

Wherever Lu Ran fled to, there would always be a Nightmare enveloping him.

"Ding!"

The Dawn Blade clashed heavily with the Wind Blade, the noise screeching.

Lu Ran only felt numbness in the base of his thumb and could not help but mutter,

"They coax you out here with gentle words, presenting everything so nicely!"

And then the moment we meet, it's straight to torment, isn't it?"

Deng Yuxiang said nothing, her face expressionless.

She was clearly chasing to kill Lu Ran, but looking at her expression, did she seem dissatisfied?

Swiftly dodging, Lu Ran ignited the Immortal Hoof beneath his feet once again.

Deng Yuxiang was surrounded by a storm, shadowing him closely.

After several more rounds, Deng Yuxiang suddenly shouted, "I just can't believe this!"

With those words, her assault grew even fiercer.

Lu Ran was stunned!

Weren't you the one chasing me in a panic?

So why are you not happy now?

It had to be admitted, Deng Yuxiang was getting a bit worked up.

As the peak existence of the River Realm and a North Wind Believer known for her speed and blade skills,

how was it that she could not take down Lu Ran who had just entered the River Realm?

This spar was different from before.

Lu Ran had ascended to the River Realm, learning the Stream Divine Skill, which served as a life-saving talisman.

Thus, Deng Yuxiang no longer held back and targeted Lu Ran's Stream Divine Skill specifically.

But the more serious she got, the more she couldn't save face!

The lively Lu Ran was like a slap in her face.

"Oh my goodness! Oh my goodness, oh my goodness..."

Lu Ran was terrified, amidst the dense gleam of blades, he defended and dodged with difficulty, clearly stretched to his limits.

It seemed that before Lu Ran entered the River Realm, Deng Yuxiang was indeed very gentle.

Was she carefully nurturing a growing sprout?

Now, the little lamb was fattened, ready to be slaughtered!

"Whoosh!"

The woman wielded the Wind Blade with terrifying speed, slashing straight at Lu Ran's face.

Lu Ran sharply dodged to the side, once again invoking the "Touch" decision.

The Immortal Sheep Believer sounded the horn for a counter-attack!

He was determined to let this relentless North Wind Believer taste what it was like to be hunted by a Dead Soul.

"Zzt!"

That was the sound of the Silent Night Blade chopping against the woman's Stream Divine Skill.

"Pop!"

That was the sound of Big Nightmare grabbing Lu Ran's neck.

Lu Ran: "..."

In a way, the siblings shared similar fates.

They dreaded being serious!

Once you get serious, you realize... you're really not up to it!

Deng Yuxiang held Lu Ran aloft by the neck, lifting him high into the air:

"You're pretty fast, huh?"

"What kind of question is that." Lu Ran dropped his dual blades and grasped his neck, holding onto her cold, cold hands.

Deng Yuxiang tilted her head back to look at Lu Ran, squinting her eyes, "How are you so fast?"

Lu Ran: "..."

Indeed, he was excessively speedy.

Even Lu Ran himself was a bit overwhelmed!

Firstly, Lu Ran had ascended to the River Realm, and his physical fitness had dramatically improved.

Secondly, Lu Ran's Evil Technique·Evil Sensitivity had also advanced in grade, from Stream to River Grade!

That was the true culprit for the discomfort of both Deng Yuxiang and Lu Ran.

Just how fast was Lu Ran?

Even he couldn't control himself!

The fight ended abruptly because, at the moment, Lu Ran was also a bit dazed!

To say it out loud would surely be laughable:

I was caught because I was too fast.

I lost the spar because I became too strong.

"Little Lu Ran?" Deng Yuxiang gently shook Lu Ran by the hand as he remained unresponsive.

And so, Lu Ran, suspended in mid-air, swayed along with her motion.

"Can you put me down first?" Lu Ran patted her hand.

From her actions and tone, Lu Ran could clearly sense a slight change in Deng Yuxiang's attitude.

When Lu Ran was at the Stream Realm, Deng Yuxiang was more nurturing towards him.

Now that Lu Ran had ascended to the River Realm, sharing the same major realm as Deng Yuxiang,

his display of formidable strength made Deng Yuxiang begin to view him as a worthy opponent!

Under the subconscious influence, this made her more aggressive in facing Lu Ran.

"Mm..." Deng Yuxiang released her grip, also realizing her actions were abnormal.

As Lu Ran deactivated his Stream Divine Skill, Deng Yuxiang stretched out her hand, as if to make amends, and tidied up his wrinkled clothing.

The rooftop was silent.

The tense atmosphere gradually dissipated.

"No wonder Yan Zhi took a liking to you. Such physical talent is indeed what a First-class God Believer should have," Deng Yuxiang said softly, looking at Lu Ran.

She suddenly realized he had grown a little taller.

On the night of the fifteenth day of winter, when they faced each other, they were at eye level.

Looking at him now, he must have gained another centimeter, about 1.79 meters tall now.

"It's alright," Lu Ran said, seemingly modest but actually telling a frank truth.

"Just wait until I get used to the River Grade-Evil Sensitivity, until I utilize it to its extreme.

Then, I'll show you what it means to be truly fast~

And it's not just the Evil Dog Evil Technique-Evil Sensitivity, but also the Soul-splitting Demon Evil Technique-Soul Splitting Power.

In this spar, Lu Ran didn't even dare to use Soul Splitting Power!

Although it was possible to actively adjust the grade of a skill when casting, Lu Ran was new to the River Realm, already in a state of surging bodily attributes.

At this stage, he wasn't even used to his "new body" yet, so he hadn't been too reckless.

"Heh, you play coy even with an advantage." Deng Yuxiang gestured towards the swords scattered in the snow, "Pick them up."

"Let's fight again later; I need to digest this first," Lu Ran quickly waved his hands off.

Chapter 176: River Realm?!\_2

Deng Yuxiang hesitated for a moment, but didn't insist further and turned to walk toward the rooftop railing.

"By the way, on the fifteenth last time, how was your ranking?" Lu Ran asked.

Deng Yuxiang shook her head, "Mid-tier."

"Ah?"

""Heavenly Pride' rated me as average."

"So strict?" Lu Ran sighed in his heart.

The contestants in this project, were they all monsters?!

"It was just an internal test broadcast," Deng Yuxiang said as she looked out at a world of white vastness. "It doesn't count towards the official competition points accumulation."

Oh, and 'Heavenly Pride' also specifically asked about you."

"Me?"

Deng Yuxiang nodded slightly, "In their eyes, your performance was much better than mine."

Lu Ran: "..."

Damn,

this is upstaging!

Deng Yuxiang: "They've also requested the department to keep the squad with this setup.

Since you have the end-of-term exam this month, forget it.

Come and join me on the fifteenth next year when 'Heavenly Pride' is officially broadcast."

Lu Ran pursed his lips, staying silent.

"How come, you're not willing?" Deng Yuxiang turned her head to look at him.

"Is it because of me that your score was low?" Lu Ran asked.

Deng Yuxiang said doubtfully, "Why would you say that? You made this team more complete, and allowed me to perform better."

Lu Ran shrugged, "Without comparison, there's no hurt."

Deng Yuxiang: ?

Lu Ran pursed his lips in a smile, offering her a classic expression.

"Hehe." Deng Yuxiang suddenly laughed, waving to Lu Ran, "Come here."

But Lu Ran took a couple of steps back.

Only an idiot would go there!

Big Nightmare did indeed have bright and affectionate eyes, and her smile was even more vibrant and enchanting.

But these could not fool Lu Ran.

After all, she had just been holding him by the neck, lifting him into the air and shaking him from side to side...

Seeing that Lu Ran didn't come over, Deng Yuxiang huffed once and turned back around.

She looked off into the distance, then asked, "How was your gain from this trip to Beifeng City?"

Lu Ran thought for a moment and replied, "Teacher Yan was very good to me, gave me a class, and practiced with me for a day."

"Just one day?"

"I picked the wrong time, it was during New Year's Day, she went to a worship ceremony, and then she entered the Divine Ruins, so I didn't see her again."

Hearing this, Deng Yuxiang silently nodded.

Sensing the woman's silence, Lu Ran also felt somewhat complicated.

Before he could say anything, Deng Yuxiang spoke again, "What did she teach you?"

"The three realms of the knife."

"You're not a North Wind Believer, don't deviate from the path," Deng Yuxiang advised softly, "You may understand superficially, but there's no need to be fixated on this path."

The rigid requirement of the North Wind Divine Technique demands that North Wind Believers must delve into this path.

Other believers in the world need not waste time and energy on this.

"Oh." Lu Ran's heart stirred, sizing up Deng Yuxiang attentively.

The woman was tall and slender, dressed in an expensive dark woolen overcoat, exuding a commanding presence.

However, under Lu Ran's deliberate scrutiny, the elegant and noble woman gradually transformed into a large knife.

"Sister Yuxiang also seems like a knife."

"How about comparing it to Shuangzi?"

Faced with this question, Lu Ran fell silent.

And silence, in itself was a response.

Deng Yuxiang didn't pursue further; she placed one hand on the stone railing, leaving a shallow handprint in the snow.

"Do you ever regret it?" Lu Ran moved forward to the stone railing, standing three meters away from her and looking at her profile.

"Regret what?"

"Going home." Lu Ran spoke, "Teacher Yan said that at the beginning, you had more qualifications and opportunities than anyone else to stay in Beifeng City."

Deng Yuxiang smiled but didn't speak.

Lu Ran said softly, "Over the years, Yan Shuangzi has been able to often listen to the teachings of the gods.

Now that she has entered the Divine Ruins, she has gained an incredible opportunity.

When she returns to the human world, she will probably be a Jiang Realm Great Power."

Finally, Deng Yuxiang spoke in a low voice, "I'm happy for her."

Lu Ran was silent for a moment, then suddenly asked, "Sister, have you been stuck at River Realm Fifth Stage for a long time?"

Lu Ran had known Deng Yuxiang for only half a year already.

He didn't know how long she had been stuck before that.

"What do you mean?" Deng Yuxiang turned her head to look at Lu Ran, "Do you want me to leave Rain Alley City?"

"Of course not." Lu Ran shook his head, "I just think you could seek some guidance from the feet of the gods?"

"I've been back before," Deng Yuxiang spoke softly.

"New Year's Eve is coming soon. Beifeng City should have a ceremony. You could..."

"Enough." Deng Yuxiang interrupted Lu Ran's words.

Lu Ran hesitated but still urged, "It doesn't delay much, you could come back on the fifteenth..."

"Enough." Deng Yuxiang gazed into the snowy expanse of her hometown.

Her voice was very light.

But these identical words eventually made Lu Ran shut his mouth.

The rooftop fell into silence once more.

After a long while, she broke the quiet, "Prepare well for the exam, things might not be stable this fifteenth."

Lu Ran, however, said, "On the eighth day of the twelfth lunar month, that day, I advanced right here."

"Hmm?" Deng Yuxiang raised her eyebrows slightly.

Lu Ran moved beside Deng Yuxiang, propping his elbow on the stone railing, looking into the distance, "I feel that Rain Alley City cares too much for me.

As if afraid I'd leave it."

"Hehe," Deng Yuxiang laughed quietly.

As someone who had given up great opportunities, who had forsaken the bustling world, she didn't expect to find a modicum of resonance with someone who hadn't yet ventured out.

The experiences might be different.

But some people have such a talent and insight that allow them to possess a certain mentality early on.

After all, emotions in this world are interlinked.

Inner insights are not guaranteed by age.

There are plenty who live aimlessly for many decades.

And those who accomplish great things at a young age are likewise not rare.

"Sister, look at that river," Lu Ran tilted his head slightly, signaling to the distance.

Deng Yuxiang followed his gaze, looking at their hometown's mother river belonging to the people of Rain Alley.

Lu Ran: "Quite fierce, huh."

Deng Yuxiang: "..."

Lu Ran shared his insight: "In this icy and snowy world, all flowers and trees have withered, everything is buried beneath the frost and snow.

Only the Wu Lie River remains unchanged.

From the time I could remember up to now, it has never changed."

"Hmm." Deng Yuxiang watched the mist rising from the river and gently nodded.

"Nothing can stop it, through the passing of years, the changing of seasons..." Lu Ran paused mid-speech and suddenly turned to look at Deng Yuxiang.

He saw her furrowed brows and her body trembling slightly.

Lu Ran's eyes widened, staring dumbfounded at her, feeling the energy fluctuations emitting from her growing more violent.

Was this...

A breakthrough?

River Realm Fifth Stage advancing to Jiang Realm?!

Suddenly, a trembling palm landed on Lu Ran's head, rubbing it not too gently or too lightly.

Lu Ran stupidly looked at her, and after a couple of seconds, he suddenly laughed, delighted:

"It seems your choice was the right one.

What Beifeng City could give you, your hometown could too."

"Hmm." Deng Yuxiang also smiled.

Gradually, she pressed down on Lu Ran's head, her lips lightly kissing his frosty hair.

"Whoosh!!"

A Gale sprung up!

A terrifying force, swirling within Deng Yuxiang, flung Lu Ran away.

The world was already a blank whiteness; now, layers of mist emerged incessantly.

The horrifying energy rushed toward the riverside, toward the abandoned residential building's rooftop.

"Zzz—"

Lu Ran leaned forward, his legs coiling as he slid backward, his feet kicking up Immortal Fog.

In front of the rooftop railing, he finally stopped his retreat and looked off into the distance.

The Gale, mingling with snowflakes and mist, wrapped around the figure among them.

Deng Yuxiang stood firm, her eyes closed, her head tilted back slightly, her black hair fluttering, and the tails of her coat billowing.

At this moment, Lu Ran felt as if he were beholding a statue of a goddess.

He felt honored!

To witness a River Realm Fifth Stage powerhouse crossing the intangible threshold, becoming a prominent figure among the Human Clan.

For forty years, that seemingly light word "threshold" had stopped countless talents and prodigies.

Now,

the barrier that had halted Deng Yuxiang was shattered in one stroke by the raging mother river.

Indeed,

the hometown looks after every child who cherishes it.

...

Four thousand words, seeking some monthly tickets.

Chapter 177: Master Ran

Deng Yuxiang's advancement had caused quite a stir.

Soon, a number of deities appeared on the bank of the Wu Lie River to enforce law and order.

When they realized the "higher-up" Deng Yuxiang was the one advancing, everyone was overjoyed to an unimaginable extent!

Deng Yuxiang was only twenty years old!

She had broken through the "Fifth Rank," a level that had buried countless heroes – just like that?

Some admired, some envied, and others were driven mad with jealousy.

But whatever the emotion, it ultimately turned into one – reverence!

The Vast River was turbulent and fierce!

How could a great power of the Human Clan be something ants could envy or critique?

Apart from respect and reverence, you should not harbor any other feelings.

Thus, the group of people who had rushed to investigate quickly dispersed to escort and protect Deng Yuxiang.

Lu Ran, of course, had no business being here.

One man immediately approached Lu Ran and whispered, "Sorry, Ms. Deng is advancing here and needs a quiet environment. I'll take you away from here now."

From a distance, Deng Yuxiang's faint voice could be heard, "He's with me."

The man: "..."

Lu Ran: "..."

The deity enforcer was clearly caught off guard for a moment, but soon he nodded to Lu Ran and quickly departed.

On the rooftop, only a man and a woman remained.

After thinking it over, Lu Ran said, "You focus on advancing, don't worry about me."

"Hmm," Deng Yuxiang replied with her eyes still closed and her head slightly tilted upward.

In the sky and earth, the mist became denser and the Divine Power churned wildly.

Lu Ran took this opportunity to sit and meditate as well.

This sitting turned into two full days and nights!

Obviously, one doesn't ascend to the River Realm lightly.

Finally, on the fifteenth of the lunar month at dawn, Deng Yuxiang showed the first sign of change!

At that moment, Lu Ran was both tired and hungry, and he really felt like he was at his limits.

He was desperately absorbing the Divine Power from the world around him when he suddenly felt someone stealing his food!

Well... alright, Lu Ran was the one who had been snatching the food.

But this was because Deng Yuxiang had been ignoring him all along, allowing him to freeload the benefits.

Now, as Deng Yuxiang faced her final moment of breakthrough, she could no longer concern herself with Lu Ran.

"Whoosh!!"

A Gale surged, and frost and snow filled the air.

Lu Ran was suddenly fully alert.

He widened his eyes, watching the figure of the goddess in the snowstorm, eager for the moment she would open her eyes.

What kind of brilliance would those already bright eyes display now?

"Mmm..."

Deng Yuxiang let out a soft nasal sound and her entire figure was enveloped in frosty fog.

Even with his Evil Technique·Evil Sense, Lu Ran could only catch glimpses of her silhouette.

He watched silently, sending his wishes.

Who knew how long it was...

An unprecedented, intense energy began to surge violently.

The Gale blasted toward him, pushing Lu Ran backward until he smacked against the rooftop railing.

Before the might of a Jiang Realm Great Power, everything else was indeed like ants.

"Wow~"

Lu Ran covered his face with one hand, peeking through his fingers at the proud figure in front of him.

The Gale calmed, and the frost and snow began to fall.

Fortuitously, the weather was clear that day, and the rising sun climbed slowly into the sky.

Its light pierced through the snow mist and landed on the young woman, painting a golden silhouette.

In no time, the Immortal Fog was drawn back into her body, and Lu Ran's view finally cleared.

He got his wish and saw her slowly open her eyes, catching sight of those radiant, dazzling orbs.

"Thank you," Deng Yuxiang said as she looked at Lu Ran.

"Ah?" Lu Ran gazed at the divine figure that still radiated divinity, filled with envy.

When would he be able to ascend to the River Realm himself?

"No one knows when or where they'll have their moment of enlightenment," murmured Deng Yuxiang as she floated toward Lu Ran amidst the winds.

Goodness me~

Such a scene directly amused Lu Ran.

Really acting like a Jiang Realm Great Power, huh?

Not even stepping to walk.

"Your guidance has saved me who knows how many years," said Deng Yuxiang as she landed in front of Lu Ran.

She lowered her head to look at Lu Ran, who was leaning against the railing, her face breaking into a slight smile.

That smile was shallow but enchanting.

Especially against the glow of the sunrise, she appeared even more radiant and beautiful.

"So..." Lu Ran thought hard for a moment, acting presumptuous, "should we each speak for ourselves from now on? I'll call you sister, and you can call me teacher?"

Deng Yuxiang's smile faded gradually as she silently looked down at Lu Ran.

"No way, sister!" Lu Ran became nervous by her expression, "I was just saying... you can't be serious! I can't take it if you get rough with me."

Deng Yuxiang had just advanced, her "divinity" almost visible to the naked eye.

As a figure from the River Realm, both her aura and presence had elevated significantly.

All of these factors combined, once her smile faded, it was bound to impose an intense pressure on Lu Ran!

Indeed, she was qualified," Deng Yuxiang spoke softly.

She wasn't angry; she was just thinking.

If it hadn't been for Lu Ran taking her to see the Wu Lie River, sharing his insights with her...

Deng Yuxiang couldn't imagine herself being stuck in the Fifth Rank of the River Realm for another three or more years, or perhaps even a decade.

"No, no need, it was just a suggestion," Lu Ran waved his hands quickly, "you step back a bit, don't stand so close to me."

"What's wrong?" Deng Yuxiang frowned slightly.

Lu Ran, trying to look weak, complained, "Your aura is overwhelming me."

Deng Yuxiang: "..."

She obediently took a step back and then turned to the south, walking to the stone railing to once again gaze at the flowing Wu Lie River.

"I like that phrase you said," Deng Yuxiang murmured quietly, "Beifeng City can offer me what my hometown can."

Lu Ran stood up, "That's what I've been saying; our homeland fears that we will abandon it. It will look after us."

Deng Yuxiang kept her gaze on the river, continuing, "Since we've chosen this path, the higher we aim in our cultivation, the deeper we must trace back."

Lu Ran: "Huh?"

Deng Yuxiang heaved a sigh, "My moment of enlightenment wasn't just from a glance at the Wu Lie River. But it was from your understanding, in which I remembered the Wu Lie River that I had seen countless times in every spring, summer, autumn, and winter since childhood."

"Hmm..." Lu Ran nodded thoughtfully.

The emotion associated with one's hometown was indeed a shared sentiment between them.

"Is this notion correct, Master Lu?" Deng Yuxiang suddenly turned and smiled at Lu Ran.

Lu Ran pondered for a while before becoming cheekily presumptuous, "Let's change it a bit, call me Master Ran."

"Oh?" Deng Yuxiang looked at Lu Ran with amused interest, "Why?"

Lu Ran shrugged his shoulders and did not speak.

But in his heart, he added, "Later, it'll be smoother for you to start calling me Ran Shen."

"Miss Deng?" A man's gentle voice came from the hallway entrance.

Deng Yuxiang turned and smiled, nodding in acknowledgment.

"Ha ha!" With permission granted, Sun Zhengfang laughed heartily as he strode onto the rooftop.

His joy was uncontrollable, "Congratulations, congratulations! Ha ha ha ha! Little Deng, you've ascended to the River Realm!"

Behind Sun Zhengfang, a large group entered.

The Wei siblings were among them, offering their congratulations to Deng Yuxiang.

Deng Yuxiang nodded politely in response and then gestured to Lu Ran by her side, saying, "It was he who guided me and led me into the River Realm."

Silence suddenly fell upon the rooftop.

People turned to look at Lu Ran, their expressions quite the spectacle!

Deng Yuxiang was certainly not one to lie.

Not to mention, now that she was a Jiang Realm Great Power, her words could be considered as "golden."

But what she said...

This?

Lu Ran's gaze was deep as he stared at Deng Yuxiang.

Deng Yuxiang's smile grew wider, her eyes teasingly meeting Lu Ran's.

"Ha ha, it still has to be Little Lu!" Sun Zhengfang broke the silence, "I knew you were... cough, exceptional! Little Lu, I've been stuck at the peak of the River Realm for over twenty years! Any chance you can give me some guidance?"

Lu Ran: "..."

I guess that's hardly necessary, right?

You've been stuck for over twenty years; shouldn't you be used to it by now?

"Little Lu?" Sun Zhengfang stepped forward quickly.

"Don't listen to my sister's nonsense," Lu Ran waved his hands, "I'm just a newbie who has just entered the River Realm. How could I possibly guide one of the strongest figures at the peak of the River Realm."

"You're being modest again, aren't you?" Sun Zhengfang patted Lu Ran on the shoulder. "Although you are from the River Realm... ah?

You, you've ascended to the River Realm?"

Lu Ran sneakily pulled out a plastic bag: "Yeah, I was sparring with my sister, and I was thinking about turning her into a little lamb.

But then she advanced!

Sigh, I guess I won't get to hear her 'baa-ing'."

"Heh." Deng Yuxiang floated forward suddenly.

Not sure if Sun Zhengfang was aware or was driven back by an imposing aura.

But either way, Captain Sun retreated swiftly and decisively.

Lu Ran retreated as well but didn't manage to escape.

"What did you say just now, you want to turn me into what?" Deng Yuxiang asked casually while fixing Lu Ran's collar. "Want to hear me calling you what?"

Lu Ran's face stiffened: "Nothing, nothing, I... huh? Huh??"

With a "swoosh" sound,

Deng Yuxiang suddenly lifted Lu Ran by the collar, chucking him off the seven-story rooftop.

Everyone's faces changed, startled by this abrupt action.

But Deng Yuxiang remained cool and composed, picking up Lu Ran's scattered twin blades, "His stomach has been growling for two days. I'll take him to have breakfast.

Then I'll send him off to school for the final exams."

Meanwhile, Lu Ran had reached the highest point of his trajectory and began to plummet downwards in an arc.

Sun Zhengfang was getting anxious, never mind whether Deng Yuxiang was from the Jiang Realm, "Hurry! Go get him!"

"Whoosh~"

Deng Yuxiang flew off the rooftop with the wind swirling beneath her feet, heading straight for Lu Ran, who was falling toward the distance.

"However will I manage now," Sun Zhengfang sighed long and loud.

Wei Long: "Captain Sun, Little Deng has reached the Jiang Realm and will likely take a central position in the city."

She won't be in our team anymore."

"That's true..." Sun Zhengfang looked into the distance, spotting Deng Yuxiang catching Lu Ran.

Watching the pair of young men and women fly further and further away, Sun Zhengfang's face gradually broke into a smile again.

Among generation after generation, there will always be a few who stand out, capable of changing the course of history.

And in this little Rain Alley City, it had remarkably produced two.

And just like now, as they flew further and further away under Sun Zhengfang's watchful eye...

Distance does indeed make the heart grow fonder.

Sun Zhengfang did not know that the two figures he saw as monumental were actually quarreling.

"You have indeed grown," Deng Yuxiang lowered her head to look at someone, "I threw you so high and far, and you're not even scared."

Lu Ran was not afraid, partly because of his absolute trust in Deng Yuxiang.

But fundamentally, it was because Lu Ran himself was quite powerful!

He wouldn't die from a fall.

He had already learned the Evil Technique-Night Dance!

Of course, if Lu Ran dared to use it in broad daylight, his life wouldn't be far from over...

Lu Ran grunted: "I don't believe you'd let me crash to the ground... hey?"

Before he could finish his sentence, Deng Yuxiang suddenly let go of her embrace.

Lu Ran got a shock and quickly grabbed her arm.

"Ha ha ha ha~" Deng Yuxiang couldn't help but burst out laughing.

Lu Ran was completely dumbfounded.

I'm a man of the River Realm; where's my dignity?

You're a mighty Jiang Realm figure; can't you be a little more composed?

Chapter 178: A Person's Rallying Assembly

Lu Ran had his eyes opened once again.

On the fifteenth day of the lunar calendar, the streets and alleys were deserted, and various shops were closed for good.

However, Deng Yuxiang managed to knock on the doors of Rain Alley!

No chef?

Then the boss takes the field himself!

What? The boss isn't here either, and you're the boss's wife who only takes care of the money?

Then you go and cook for me!

Don't delay my good brother's important business!

Look at the kid, starved. Without a full stomach, how can he set off?

After filling up, Lu Ran was again taken by Deng Yuxiang from east to west of the city in a wanton manner!

The siblings hurried along and finally flew to the school before 8 a.m.

"Wow! A North Wind Believer?"

"What sort of Immortal is this, do we... do we kneel?"

"Don't, has a strong believer from Rain Alley City come to stay? Is there going to be trouble again tonight?"

"Quit babbling, you're jinxing it! I've seen this powerhouse before, she's actually a protector of Rain Alley."

"Hey, can't you see Lu Ran in her arms?"

Amidst the murmurs, the North Wind Believer skimmed over the playground at low altitude. After dropping off Lu Ran, she didn't linger for a moment and flew away rapidly.

"Huff~"

Lu Ran, with double swords in hand, once again leaned forward, knees slightly bent, continuously sliding backward to slow his momentum.

As Big Nightmare flew away, everyone's attention naturally fell on Lu Ran.

Lu Ran, meanwhile, lowered his head, trying to blend into the crowd.

But wherever he went, the students made way for him, leaving him a clear space.

It was quite uncomfortable...

Fortunately, a tall figure ran over, easing the awkwardness.

"Ran Bao!" Chang Ying exclaimed with delight, "Thank goodness, you made it!"

"I'm not late, am I?" Lu Ran was somewhat puzzled, looking at the overly excited lass before him.

"Two days late." Chang Ying pouted, "You didn't answer calls or texts.

We all thought you... uh, had something come up and weren't taking the final exam."

"How could that be?" Lu Ran said with a smile.

Over the past two days, he had been practicing by the Wu Lie River and leveling up with Big Nightmare, having thrown his phone at home.

"Master." Tian Tian walked over, calling out softly.

"How's your training going?" asked Lu Ran with concern.

Tian Tian looked up at Lu Ran, a picture of obedience: "It's going well. We completed the training mission, and our points have been added."

"Good, thanks." Lu Ran smiled and nodded.

He did not participate in this month's training mission, purely relying on his teammates to carry him.

"Morning, Mr. Deng." Lu Ran looked at the young man beside him and queried, "Why so silent?"

Deng Yutang: "..."

"What's up?" Lu Ran asked with concern, stepping forward.

But Deng Yutang unexpectedly blurted out: "That person just now, was it my sister?"

Now it was Lu Ran's turn to be speechless.

Your own sister, can't you recognize her?

Thinking this, Lu Ran had an idea: "Oh, congratulations!"

Deng Yutang's expression was filled with melancholy, it was hard to imagine that you'd see a hint of resentment in the eyes of a red-scarf believer:

"Congratulate me for what? For getting a brother-in-law?"

Lu Ran: ????

"Eh?" Tian Tian gasped with a small open mouth, her expression somewhat eager.

No way!

That big sister is indeed radiant and captivating, anyone would admire and cherish her, but...

What about Sister Ruyi?

You two mustn't split up...

With annoyance, Lu Ran said: "What a mess!"

This response reassured Deng Yutang and Tian Tian quite a bit.

Then, Lu Ran suddenly lowered his voice: "Congratulations to the Deng Family for having a Jiang Realm Great Power."

"Ah?"

"What?"

"Jiang... Jiang Realm?" The trio were astonished.

Did Deng Yutang's sister, Deng Yuxiang, advance to the Jiang Realm?

As a disciple of the Second-class God Lord Beifeng, her talent is too explosive.

"How old is your sister?" Chang Ying asked, "Just twenty-two or three?"

Deng Yutang's eyes were filled with excitement, "Twenty."

Chang Ying exclaimed in awe: "My gosh..."

"How's your cultivation going?" Lu Ran looked at Deng Yutang.

Deng Yutang, still excited a moment ago, now blushed: "I'm at Stream Realm Fourth Rank."

"Hmmm... Good, keep it up!" Lu Ran patted Deng Yutang's shoulder.

Deng Yutang opened his mouth, finally heaving a helpless sigh: "Keep what up? I've been stuck for ages."

Lu Ran waved grandly: "Think of it this way, the longer you're stuck, the firmer your foundation!"

Tian Tian looked at Lu Ran with wide eyes, puzzled.

Master's heart is in the right place, he wants to comfort.

But just saying these blatant lies with eyes wide open, is that really okay?

"We're all at Stream Realm Fourth Rank." Chang Ying's eyes full of anticipation, looked at Lu Ran, "How about you?"

"Shh!" Lu Ran signaled for silence in advance.

Then, under the watchful eyes of several people, Lu Ran whispered: "I'm at River Realm First Rank."

"Hiss..." Chang Ying sucked in a breath of cool air.

Tian Tian still looked at Lu Ran blankly, then her eyes gradually turned to joy: "That's amazing."

Deng Yutang stepped forward, hands on Lu Ran's shoulders, his expression serious, and said solemnly:

"Awesome!"

In the world of cultivation, there is no such thing as equality for all.

The young Deng Yuxiang's successful promotion to the Jiang Realm had already filled them with envy and even adoration.

But after all, she was a few years older than them.

Lu Ran was different, the four were truly the same age, and had all become believers on the same day.

River Realm First Rank versus Stream Realm Fourth Rank, that gap...

"You'll catch up soon too," Lu Ran encouraged. "Once you advance to Stream Realm·Fifth Rank, you might enter the River Realm at any moment!"

That's true.

But what do you take the "Death of Five" for?

Isn't the word 'death' straightforward enough?

Countless believers with endless dreams and ambitions, even their lives, are buried at this rank!

"Ran Bao, can you turn people into lambs now?" Chang Ying asked excitedly in a low voice.

Compared to Deng and Tian, Chang Ying was a pure optimist, carefree by nature.

And she has always worshipped Lu Ran more and more, no matter how astonishing his feats, she thought it was normal.

"Yes, but I..." Lu Ran was interrupted by a sound from the podium.

"Everyone, assemble!"

"Quick, move faster!"

Under the teacher's urging, the students quickly found their places.

However, it took everyone quite a while to line up properly.

Because the position of the squads had changed significantly!

Recalling June of the lunar calendar, there were 100 teams and 399 believer students in Rain Alley No. 1 Middle School.

Now in the cold December, there were half as many believer students on the field!

The number of believer squads had sharply declined to less than 50.

Those missing students...

A very few had died, unable to survive a certain Night of Ghosts.

Many others had transferred, leaving this cursed city.

"Today, is the day of your final exam."

The male teacher's face was serious, his eyes sweeping across all the students, signaled with a scissor gesture:

"This is one of only two chances in your student career to get a large amount of credits!"

"This final exam, and the final exam in the second semester of your third year, credits are based on a hundred-point system!"

"This time the fifteen-night defense, whatever your comprehensive score is, you will get the same amount of believer's points. Did everyone understand that?"

"We understood!"

"We understood!" the students responded loudly.

"Good." The male teacher nodded in satisfaction, "I remind you again, the score line for high school graduation is 320 believer points."

"I don't expect you to get 70 or 80 points, but to at least get to graduation, you must get 60 passing points!"

"As for those who want to go to a good university... Lu Ran!"

Lu Ran paused, looked up at the podium.

What now?

Am I the target again?

The teacher's voice spread all over the field through the microphone: "You're currently ranked first in the school with 194 believer points."

"Ah?"

"194 believer points?"

"No way, man! Why the heck?"

"Holy crap! I only have 94 points, how come he has one more than me?"

"You're quite awesome too, only 1 point behind Ran Bro..."

"Have you guys really holidayed your brains out? Don't you ever check the school's official website for the leaderboard?"

The male teacher watched the students' reactions, listened to the buzz of discussion, and seemed pleased with the example he had set up.

He continued: "After this final exam, you'll be close to graduating."

Lu Ran quietly lowered his head, silent.

I'm not leaving, I still need to earn half a year's credits!

During high school, believer points are the easiest to earn.

Once you step out of high school...

Look at Si Xianxian, frantic for a few points, even volunteering and sweeping streets.

"But you can't be complacent!" the male teacher changed his tone, "The minimum score line for applying to Beijing University is 660 believer points.

And that's just eligibility to apply, whether they accept you or not still depends on your performance.

Remember this number, you still have a long way to go."

Lu Ran: "..."

Who said I wanted to go to Beijing?

Isn't Wu Lie River University nice?

Hmm... okay, compared to Beijing University, it's indeed lacking a bit~

Seeing Lu Ran with his head bowed in silence, the teacher misunderstood, his tone changing again to encourage: "However, you don't have to worry.

Your strength is steadily increasing, and in various tasks, your responsibility is getting heavier too.

Next semester, whether it's city defense or Demon Cave training, believer point rewards will be increased.

There are also other new types of tasks for you to earn credits.

Lu Ran, keep up this momentum, 660 is definitely not your limit."

Lu Ran still kept his head down, just wishing this part would end quickly.

However, the male teacher continued: "Before the teams depart, one last item: Lu Ran, come up to receive your reward."

Lu Ran: "..."

The teacher's words echoed inside and outside the campus: "On the fifteenth of October in the lunar calendar, the Barbaric Woman Clan's Night of Ghosts.

To commend student Lu Ran for his brave performance that night, Yunshan City's Divine People Bureau awards Lu Ran 30 believer points.

And awards one River Grade Divine Power Pearl..."

Under the envious, jealous, and even fervently admiring gazes of the crowd, Lu Ran walked up with his head down.

Along the way, Lu Ran heard whispers.

"Right, he deserves the award! I saw the video in the group, holy crap! This dude's really fearless, going right up against the Barbaric Women!"

"Bold! How dare you refer to my Ran Bro like that?"

"You're bold too! How dare you call my Ran Shen like that?"

Lu Ran: "..."

Chapter 179: The Final Night

Lu Ran ascended the stage, took the Divine Power Pearl handed by the teacher and then walked away!

The teacher wanted to use the same trick again, asking Lu Ran to give a speech to motivate the students.

But Lu Ran ran so fast~

It was not until Lu Ran returned to his team that the male teacher showed a look of regret and said, "After this city defense, you all will have your winter break.

No homework over the winter break, wish you all a good year.

Alright, follow your Moon Gazer team leader and go!"

"Yeah, New Year is coming soon." Lu Ran muttered while holding the newly acquired Divine Power Pearl.

Though he had always lived alone, every New Year's Eve, he still went to Beijing to celebrate the festival with his mother and sister.

It had been a year since he last saw his mother, and to say he didn't miss her would be a lie.

Ever since he became a Believer, he had been busy training and gaining experiences every day, and he had fewer phone calls with her.

"Let's go, Brother Lu!" Deng Yutang patted Lu Ran's shoulder, "It's our turn."

"Oh." Lu Ran immediately came back to his senses.

"What were you thinking about? You seemed so engrossed," Deng Yutang asked curiously.

"Thinking about the New Year. It's only half a month away now, it's really soon," Lu Ran remarked wistfully.

Deng Yutang nodded silently, empathizing deeply.

Since becoming a Believer, these months kept...

"It's been a while." A familiar male voice came from ahead.

The group looked ahead and saw the Moon Gazer in charge of Squad 98, Zhang Feng.

"Hello, Zhang Brother."

"Morning, Zhang Brother."

"Hello." Zhang Feng smiled, nodding as he sized up the group, "How's your training been? What ranks are you all now?"

It had been four months since they parted ways on August 15th.

The students had changed quite a bit, matured a lot, and took on more of a warrior's flair.

"We are all at Stream Realm Fourth Rank," Chang Ying proudly stated, "Lu Ran is at River Realm First Rank now!"

"Oh?" Zhang Feng looked at Lu Ran, both surprised and delighted.

This special young man always brought him surprises.

Whether it was Lu Ran's desire to fight, his battle capability, or his terrifying talent, it was all enough to astonish anyone.

Now, Chang Ying's mention of "River Realm-First Rank" stirred up waves in Zhang Feng's heart.

Half a year to reach River Realm First Rank!

Without a doubt, this was the growth rate of a first and second class deity's Believer.

Even powerful third-class God Believers probably couldn't match it!

"Incredible." Zhang Feng was filled with emotion, gazing over everyone, "Good, you all are doing very well, have made considerable progress!

Especially Lu Ran, you've changed a lot.

You now possess the aura a warrior should have."

Lu Ran chuckled sheepishly, "I'm not there yet, still a long way to go.

The one who has changed the most is Jiang Ruyi."

"Ah?"

"What?" The group was confused, looking at Lu Ran.

But they saw Lu Ran patting Chang Ying's back, looking up at the black-skinned girl, "Look at the change in Jiang Ruyi!"

From a fair-skinned, beautiful young girl to a tall, imposing big foodie~"

Chang Ying: ???

Tian Tian couldn't help but cover her mouth with a hand, yet she burst out laughing, "Pft...haha~"

Deng Yutang: "Hahaha!"

Such hearty laughter caught the attention of the onlookers.

Zhang Feng was also amused, leading the group towards the bus, "Looks like it's time for me to step back."

"Team leader Zhang?" Tian Tian, keen and thoughtful, noticed the complex tone in Zhang Feng's voice.

"Step back?" Lu Ran looked at Zhang Feng.

Zhang Feng nodded, "Yes, you are at least all Stream Realm Fourth Rank now, have undergone half a year of training, participated in numerous battles.

Now, you all are warriors, the main force protecting our city.

I guess my role as a leader should come to an end."

Evil Demons invading cities on the night of the 15th mostly range between Mist Realm and Stream Realm.

Normally, a four-person squad is indeed capable guardians of the city.

Hearing Zhang Feng's words, Lu Ran couldn't help thinking of another person—Instructor Dou Zhiqiang.

During the last visit to Evil Dog Village with Si Xianxian, Dou Zhiqiang had said something similar.

The stern-faced instructor had already bidden farewell to Lu Ran in his words.

From this point forward, they were unlikely to meet again.

The path ahead, he had no ability to accompany Lu Ran any further.

Hmm...thinking about it, it was actually quite good.

At least there was a formal goodbye.

And in one's life journey, many final goodbyes happen without one realizing it.

"Get on the bus!" Zhang Feng arrived in front of the bus, "After this test, go home for the New Year!"

This flag setting, quite standard indeed.

The group quickly boarded, feeling the spaciousness inside the bus. Including Lu Ran's group of four, only 20 students remained in the class, totaling five squads.

The bus carried everyone towards the east side of the city.

Their destination was that abandoned school—Rain Alley City Elementary School No. 5.

When the bus arrived at the school, and Lu Ran stepped onto the playground, he couldn't help but look towards the southeast.

The old swing still existed.

Only the yellow leaves of autumn had turned into the white snow of winter.

So many memories!

Lu Ran walked directly towards the swing, treading on the accumulated snow.

Zhang Feng remained easy-going, not bothering Lu Ran.

"Tsk tsk~" Lu Ran arrived at the swing set.

One of the swings had a broken wooden board, leaving only two iron chains tied together—Lu Ran's own masterpiece.

Back then, he was chasing a Night Charm up and down, relentless in pursuit.

He had also swung around with the full moon of August 15th, right there on the swing.

Beauty, all done~

Thinking about it made Lu Ran wear a strange expression, gripping the icy swing chain, "You might not believe it if I say it.

Now, I've become a Night Charm."

"Squeak~"

The rusty iron chains gently swayed, making a sharp noise.

"Creak, creak..."

The sound of footsteps in snow approached from afar.

Lu Ran turned his head and saw Tian Tian approaching, carrying his twin blades.

"Master." Tian Tian called softly.

"Thanks." Lu Ran took the twin blades.

Tian Tian's eyes darted slyly, full of little thoughts, "Master, were you thinking of Sister Ruyi?"

"Uh." Lu Ran choked.

Four months ago, he indeed swung on this swing with Jiang Ruyi.

If I say I was thinking about Night Charm, wouldn't that sound bad?

"Not really?" Tian Tian whispered, feeling somewhat disappointed.

"I thought about it, thought about it," Lu Ran was somewhat amused.

My disciple is actually a fan of our CP (character pairing)?

Tian Tian's little face brightened with a sweet smile, not caring whether Lu Ran was deceiving her.

It seemed as if, as long as Lu Ran said it, she was willing to believe.

Lu Ran wrapped one hand around the twin blades and patted Tian Tian's little head with the other, "I haven't slept for two days and nights, I'm a bit tired."

Tian Tian quickly said, "Don't sleep here, you'll catch a cold."

Lu Ran: "..."

...

Lu Ran's sleep was deep and complete!

As night fell, finally a tall dark shadow quietly crept into an office on the fourth floor.

"Ran Treasure, Ran Shen?"

"Hmm..." Lu Ran mumbled drowsily, turned over, and continued to sleep deeply.

Chang Ying stepped forward a few steps, sat by the bedside, and gently patted Lu Ran's shoulder, "Wake up, Ran Treasure.

It's getting dark, time to get up!"

"Hmm?" Lu Ran finally opened his eyes and, aided by the light from the hallway, looked at the person in front of him.

"Time to get up," Chang Ying smiled brightly\Message received, "In a bit, the Evil Demon will be crawling into your blanket."

Lu Ran: "..."

Your method of waking someone up is quite scary, isn't it?

If it's the Straw Demon or Wooden Demon that crawled into the blanket, you could tie them up and continue to sleep.

Just a pillow.

But if it's the Yan Zhi...

Who could handle that?

Lu Ran sat up, feeling his head buzzing.

"It's just our squad patrolling outside," Chang Ying whispered, "Without you, we're a bit anxious."

But Lu Ran laughed, "Isn't Zhang Feng leading the team?"

Chang Ying pursed her lips, with evident reason saying, "It's not the same sense of security as being with you."

Lu Ran rubbed his eyes and warned, "Don't say this in front of others."

"I know, I know, I'm not a fool."

"I need to wash my face." Lu Ran got up and shuffled out in his shoes.

"Should I wait at the door?"

"Blades."

"I'll get them." Chang Ying had already spotted the twin blades on the table.

Just like Tian Tian, Chang Ying didn't mind being Lu Ran's "blade carrier".

To this day, the relationship between Lu Ran and his teammates was slowly changing.

Fundamentally, it was because of Lu Ran's strong abilities, and partly, he was guiding them intentionally.

As for when it would bear fruit, he didn't know.

Lu Ran just hoped that when the day he was ready came, when he invited his teammates...

They would meet his expectations and join the "Ran Sect" without looking back.

A few minutes later.

The two arrived at the lobby on the first floor, just in time to see Bai Manni's team guarding beside a small shrine.

"How does it feel?" Lu Ran greeted everyone, then looked at Bai Manni.

As a Caster Believer, Bai Manni still looked restless, her worries shaking her head.

"Ah..." Lu Ran sighed deeply and walked out the door.

The cold air hit his face, fully awakening him!

Stars twinkled in the night sky, the moon hung high.

The cool moonlight poured onto the snowy ground, making the frost shine brightly.

"Nice weather, Dawn Blade!" Lu Ran clenched the Dawn Blade in his left hand and slowly raised it.

His gaze, through the pitch-dark yet clear black ice material, targeted the moon in the sky.

"It's freezing, how is the weather nice?" Chang Ying rubbed her hands together, breathing out warm air.

Lu Ran softly spoke, "She doesn't understand what we're waiting for, does she?"

"Buzz!!"

The Dawn Blade in Lu Ran's hand suddenly trembled violently, making quite a noise.

Such a scene flabbergasted everyone.

If a weapon could react so violently, could it possibly be about to...

Zhang Feng, shocked, couldn't help asking, "Lu Ran, your blade?"

"It was left by my father."

Lu Ran peered through the icy thin blade, his eyes fixed on the night sky's moon.

It's time, Dawn Blade!

Tonight, might be the last night before the skies fill with rosy clouds.

Moon Gazers said, tonight in Rain Alley might not be peaceful.

That Caster Believer also looked deeply worried.

It seems, tonight will be tough.

But...

Dawn doesn't come to us by waiting.

It's something we must fight out!

Don't you think?

"Buzz!!"

Chapter 180: Demon Name Sky Prison

The moonlight was cold and clear, and the night was deep and quiet.

A four-person squad stood in front of the teaching building's main gate, quietly waiting for disaster to descend.

"Whoosh~"

A crisp sound came, drawing Lu Ran's attention.

He saw Chang Ying holding a divination tube in her hands and shaking it back and forth.

Everyone remained silent, quietly awaiting the result.

With a "swoosh," a phantom divination sign flew out, hovering above their heads and slowly rotating.

It displayed one large character—down!

"Eyah," Chang Ying casually tossed the divination tube into the snow as if she hadn't been the one who drew the sign.

The problem was, there was only one divination believer by the gate...

Chang Ying looked at the others with a guilty face and whispered, "I'm just Stream Realm, really bad at this, not accurate."

Everyone: "..."

Lu Ran slowly raised his Silent Night Blade.

Chang Ying's face soured, "I just got it wrong, Ran Bao, you don't have to go so far as to kill me, right?"

Curiously, even with Ran's blade hanging over her head, she didn't evade.

Perhaps it was because Chang Ying had immense trust in Lu Ran.

Or maybe she knew, in front of Lu Ran, there was nowhere to escape.

In this world, only beings like East Thunder believers or North Wind believers were qualified to compete with Lu Ran for speed.

It seemed quite magical!

After all, East Thunder and North Wind were second-class gods, while Immortal Sheep ranked at the very bottom as a nine-level god...

"Slap~"

Lu Ran turned his wrist and slapped Chang Ying on the head with the flat side of the blade.

"Uh," Chang Ying flinched, holding her head with one hand.

Lu Ran spoke, "Next time, be more accurate."

His voice was gentle, as if he could melt the cold winter night.

"Yes, yes," Chang Ying nodded emphatically, like a little chick pecking at rice, her docile appearance totally out of sync with her large frame.

Actually, everyone had their suspicions—

The little shaman's divination should be accurate.

Lu Ran's gesture seemed more like comfort as well as a face-saving opportunity for Chang Ying.

Tian Tian watched the scene with a hint of envy in her eyes. She wasn't one to misbehave usually—could her master's blade ever pat her on the head?

"Whoosh~"

Twenty meters away, a surge of energy arose, stirring up gusts of wind.

Lu Ran turned immediately, wondering if it was finally starting.

On this night of the fifteenth of the twelfth lunar month, the opening act for the Evil Demon Clan turned out to be an old adversary—the Bamboo Spirit!

It was dressed in a coat of bamboo leaves and wore a bamboo hat.

Its pair of green eyes flickered with frightening luminescence in the dark night, giving off an especially horrifying look.

"Deng, make it quick!" commanded Tian Tian, transforming into a commander.

"Roger that!" Deng Yutang stepped forward confidently.

He was all too familiar with this kind of Evil Demon.

And as expected! The seemingly terrifying Bamboo Spirit barely made it through two rounds under the Red Cloth believer's spear before being pierced through the face!

"Spurt~"

The Bamboo Spirit's body crumbled into mist, with strands of energy being absorbed into Deng Yutang's Divine Power Pearl.

Meanwhile, across the city, howls could be heard continuously.

"Front left," Lu Ran suddenly said.

Deng Yutang gripped the Heavenly Star Spear tightly, the spearhead flickering with red light as he instinctively stabbed toward the front left.

Red Cloth Divine Skill·Red Edge!

With the Heavenly Star Spear already incredibly sharp at a million-grade, adorned with an "Armor-Piercing" effect, it was truly formidable!

"Crack!"

The spearhead wrapped in red light pierced through the Bamboo Spirit's chest.

"Oh?" Deng Yutang looked surprised. Was it another Bamboo Spirit?

Could it be a special event tonight, Night of Ghosts?

And the invading species was the Bamboo Spirit Clan?

That would be... too good to be true!

Deng Yutang thought a lot, but his movements were not slow at all.

He brandished his long spear upwards sharply, tearing the Bamboo Spirit from chest to face.

Only the bamboo hat soared high before shattering into mist in the nighttime sky.

Like a small firecracker had gone off.

"Could it be the Night of Ghosts for the Bamboo Spirit Clan?" Tian Tian clenched her fists, filled with anticipation.

If so, that would be an excellent fortune within the bad.

"Whoosh!!"

Another wave of energy surged, this time coming from behind Deng Yutang to the right.

"Ha!" Due to the proximity, Deng Yutang didn't need any reminders and he swiftly turned around to swing his spear.

He swept through like he was cutting down a thousand enemies,

the spearhead leaving behind a beautiful arc of red light.

"Snap!"

However, the indestructible Heavenly Star Spear met resistance.

Deng Yutang instinctively pulled back the spear, but it wouldn't budge!

A terrifying oppression overwhelmed him instantly, as if it was going to crush him!

"Deng..."

"Watch out!" Several people at the entrance of the classroom changed their expressions.

"Gulp." Deng Yutang's Adam's apple bobbed as he looked up.

But his inclination wasn't enough to get a full view. They saw only the sturdy chest of the adversary?

Deng Yutang looked up, and the figure continued to tower higher...

Despite being 1.85 meters tall, Deng Yutang looked like a small, thin child in front of this Evil Demon.

With the ferocious face coming into view, Deng Yutang's color drained, "Prison... Prison Sky Demon?"

This was a Human-shaped Demon, appearing as a fierce man.

Notable for his bald head, his body was wound with chains, amidst a shroud of black mist.

Bare-chested with darkly tanned skin resembling cast iron and bronze, he exuded an aura of strength.

Another remarkable feature was that upon appearing in this world, the Prison Sky Demon sprouted six additional arms!

A total of eight sturdy arms stretched out, muscles bulging and waving menacingly.

At that moment, the Prison Sky Demon looked down with its blood-red eyes, fixating intently on Deng Yutang.

The pressure was immense!

"Damn it!" Deng Yutang was utterly shocked.

Since becoming a believer, he had never seen a member of the Prison Sky Clan with his own eyes.

And especially after he had just handled two "cute" Bamboo Spirits, suddenly encountering such a being...

Who wouldn't be confused?

As Deng Yutang cursed in anger, his movements were swift, and he tried desperately to pull back his Heavenly Star Spear.

But how could a mere Human Clan member wrestle with a Prison Sky Demon?

"Zzzt—"

"Meehh~" The sound of mist spraying was accompanied by a mournful bleat.

"Hmm?" The Prison Sky Demon turned its head sharply, its blood-red eyes searching for the silhouette of the little lamb.

Lu Ran had deliberately lowered the grade of Divine Technique·Desolate Sound to Stream Grade.

In doing so, his human companions could resist slightly, while the naturally violent and brutish demons would surely be affected.

"Out!" Deng Yutang roared angrily as Divine Power surged within him.

Divine Technique·Red Cloth Soul!

Red Cloth disciple Deng Yutang called upon the presence of the Red Cloth Ancestor!

Deng Yutang clenched his teeth tight, exerting all his strength to yank the Heavenly Star Spear!

However, the right hand of the Prison Sky Demon... well, the lowest one of its four right hands, held fast onto the spear shaft, unyielding!

"Drop the spear!"

"Forget about it!" Both the leader Zhang Feng and commander Tian Tian issued the order at the same time.

The choices made by both Sword Lotus believers were surprisingly consistent as they launched several lotus petals.

"Retreat!" Zhang Feng barked, "Eight hands in total, this is a River Realm Prison Sky Demon!"

The Prison Sky Demons were naturally enormous, all around 3 meters in height, so one couldn't deduce their level of power based on size alone.

However, the additional arms that Prison Sky Demons grew were part of their Evil Technique·Prison Sky Hand!

Fog Grade·Prison Sky Hand allowed demons to sprout two extra arms, and for each grade improvement, like Stream Grade, two more arms would add on.

"Darn it." Deng Yutang was still rational enough to drop the spear and retreat under the cover of the petals.

"Whoosh~"

At the same time, Chang Ying was quickly shaking the divination tube.

"May the spirits bless... cough, may the gods protect us, please come out!"

"Swoosh~"

A spirit sign flew out rapidly from the divination tube.

Chang Ying was elated!

Because the remaining four spirit signs in the tube followed suit.

The output sign of the Five Treasures!

"Good!" Chang Ying pointed forward confidently, "Go!"

To directly draw the sign she desired was an incredibly rare occurrence!

"Swoosh~ Swoosh~"

The five spirit signs, like five tiny wooden swords, sped toward the Prison Sky Demon with the guidance of their owner.

At this time, the Prison Sky Demon was facing away from the teaching building, distracted by a little lamb's attention.

An opportunity!

Chang Ying eyed the back of Prison Sky Demon's head closely, urging the five spirit signs to pierce forward.

A crisp "snap" echoed.

A giant hand of the Prison Sky Demon reached back and slapped away the full five spirit signs with ease.

Effortless!

Chang Ying's face stiffened, her hopeful anticipation dissolved.

Oddly enough, the Prison Sky Demon's numerous arms kept twisting in eerie angles, making one's teeth ache at the sight.

After a moment, aside from the two original arms of the Prison Sky Demon, the other six all turned toward the direction of the teaching building.

Even stranger was the fact that the Prison Sky Demon's attention had been focused entirely on Lu Ran from the outset!

Were those six arms fighting on their own accord?

"Snap~"

The large hand, as if swatting flies, once again slapped the incoming spirit signs away.

But this time, there were more than just five spirit signs attacking.

Under Zhang Feng's spell, the schoolyard blossomed with a huge lotus flower, from which six flying swords emerged.

Sword Lotus Divine Skill·Lotus Flying Sword!

One sword after another pierced toward the Prison Sky Demon from various angles.

"Snap! Snap! Snap..."

A rapid series of crisp sounds followed.

As the Prison Sky Demon marched forward, a series of large hands behind it clutched the flying swords with force.

No need for guns or cannons, the Human Clan provides them?

The clear sounds seemed to slap the face of the Sword Lotus believers...

It was understandable that Stream Realm Chang Ying couldn't trouble the Prison Sky Demon, given the vast difference in their levels.

But even River Realm Zhang Feng seemed unable to cause much damage to the Prison Sky Demon!

The Prison Sky Demon indeed bled, its palm sliced open when it grabbed the swords.

But that was it.

"Sss..."

The Prison Sky Demon's face contorted fiercely, emitting a deep, chilling growl that alarmed everyone.

With six swords held by the arms behind its back, and its own two hands holding the Heavenly Star Spear and iron chains, the demon's menacing presence multiplied.

As the faint bleating continued, the Prison Sky Demon's movement suddenly accelerated, shrouded in ever-denser black mist.

Lu Ran stood amidst the snow, holding dual blades, eyeing the cruel red pupils of the Prison Sky Demon with cold concentration.

Suddenly, Lu Ran blinked.

His pitch-black human eyes instantly transformed into a pair of sinister Dead Sheep Eyes.

Meeting the challenge head-on without yielding!

Behind those dark, thick horizontal pupils, a faint Black Fire quietly ignited.

"Roar!!" The Prison Sky Demon bellowed fiercely, its aura overwhelming.

The massive form, like dark clouds pressing down upon the city, bore down with brutal ferocity toward the tiny Human Clan.

Lu Ran's eyes were cold as he made no move to retreat; instead, he slowly lifted the Silent Night Blade to his front:

"Baa."