

Old Gods 191

Chapter 191: One Other Shore Flower

Qiao Yuansi looked at Lu Ran with a face full of astonishment, stammering her words.

Although the siblings often quarreled, their bond was genuine.

Facing her elder brother, not only did Qiao Yuansi feel a childhood dependency, but she also held a hint of admiration.

She was willing to believe Lu Ran, although... this news sounded like a tall tale.

"Ran Bro?" Niu Zhengzheng asked with wide eyes like brass bells, turning to look at Lu Ran, "Really or not?"

Xiao Yusong also looked at the rearview mirror, quite surprised at the reflection of Lu Ran.

On the other side, Guan Yiren also slightly turned her head, side-eyeing surreptitiously.

"Are you also participating in 'Heavenly Pride'?" Qiao Yuansi finally asked.

"Hehe~" Lu Ran looked at his sister's adorable appearance, "I'm not participating..."

"Pfft~" Qiao Yuansi interrupted Lu Ran, giving him a look.

Still feeling unsatisfied, she slapped Lu Ran's arm, "Always fooling me!"

For a moment, everyone in the car had different expressions.

Niu Zhengzheng slapped his forehead, greatly relieved, "You scared me to death."

Only Xiao Yusong and Guan Yiren continued to quietly watch Lu Ran.

Just then, Lu Ran turned to look out the car window and uttered another phrase, "Who's participating then?"

Niu Zhengzheng: ??

Everyone: "..."

"Hey? You!" Qiao Yuansi clenched her little fist and thumped Lu Ran on the chest, "Doesn't your conscience hurt?"

How can you keep lying back and forth, tell the truth already!"

"Participating, participating," Lu Ran hurriedly said.

"Man, bro!"

Niu Zhengzheng was completely numb, really unable to withstand Lu Ran's constant flip-flopping.

Qiao Yuansi leaned in slightly, her large eyes sparkling as she closely observed Lu Ran's expression.

Lu Ran cradled his twin swords, using the hilt to push the girl's cheek away through a layer of fabric.

"Why though?" Qiao Yuansi pushed the hilt away, extremely curious.

Lu Ran shrugged his shoulders, "Someone took a fancy to me.

There are points to earn, Divine Weapons, and Magic Artifacts as rewards, so I just joined."

"How did they notice you?" Qiao Yuansi was like a curious baby.

"Didn't I say? My teammate's sister represents Wu Lie River University in the battle."

"Hmm, and then?"

"I was in the same patrol team with her, and after that night, the 'Heavenly Pride' people noticed me."

"Wow!" Qiao Yuansi exclaimed, "You stole the show!"

Lu Ran: "..."

Qiao Yuansi playfully grinned, looking Lu Ran up and down, "You really are a sly man~"

Lu Ran silently turned his head, looking out the window.

That night, he wholeheartedly assisted Deng Yuxiang, the camera hanging on his collar, capturing only the shadows of the Big Nightmare.

Unfortunately, the cameras of Sun Zhengfang and Wei Long captured their gallant figures.

As a Ninth-Level God-Immortal Goat Sect believer, Lu Ran indeed drew too much attention.

"Rain Alley City truly is a place of outstanding people," Xiao Yusong sighed, "In the first selection of combatants, there were only 100 spots, and Rain Alley City occupied two."

Lu Ran: "Just me, that sister withdrew."

Everyone: "..."

Little Yuanxi looked blankly at Lu Ran, "You rose to the top just like that?"

You stole the show and then replaced that sister?"

"No, no," Lu Ran hurriedly explained, "That sister was promoted to the River Realm, so she couldn't participate in 'Heavenly Pride' anymore.

Then, she recommended me."

"River Realm!" Qiao Yuansi was secretly amazed, her little mind also understanding, "That's right, those selected for Heavenly Pride must be especially strong."

Lu Ran nodded in agreement.

Qiao Yuansi looked at Lu Ran: "You're now recognized as Heavenly Pride of Da Xia!

So, when are you going to be promoted to the River Realm?"

Lu Ran: "..."

"Heehee~" Qiao Yuansi's little face was filled with pride, no longer teasing her brother, "On the fifteenth day of the first lunar month, I'll be able to watch you on my phone!"

Lu Ran explained: "That won't work, the 100 people are split into two groups, alternating in the battle.

I'm in the second group, only participating during even-numbered months."

"Oh, I see." Qiao Yuansi was filled with joy, "Then, brother, you can still spend my birthday with me!"

"Yeah," Lu Ran couldn't help but reach out and touch Qiao Yuansi's little nose.

The fifteenth day of the first lunar month, during the winter vacation, students didn't need to defend the city.

And to celebrate his sister's birthday, Lu Ran specifically asked for leave from the Divine People Bureau.

This was Lu Ran's annual routine, first spending New Year's Eve with his mother and sister in Beijing before celebrating his sister's birthday on the fifteenth day of the first month.

As for his own birthday, he would celebrate it together with his sister.

This was the only time each year that Lu Ran spent with his family.

He didn't want to change his "custom."

Among all the perilous nights of the fifteenth, Lu Ran's favorite was the fifteenth day of the first month.

Even his extremely busy mother wouldn't go out to defend the city on this day.

Being powerful, she naturally took on heavy responsibilities and was a reliance for many.

But every fifteenth day of the first month, she would keep herself at home, always staying by the siblings' side.

No matter how fierce the battles outside, how rampant the Evil Demons roamed, the Qiao Family home on this day was immensely warm.

You should know, the earlier Lu Ran was just a frail ordinary person, naturally frightened, living through the night in fear.

Young as he was, he of course needed a sense of security, and more so, reliance.

Under such circumstances, having their mother at home with the siblings provided an incomparable feeling of safety and stability, something incomprehensible to others.

Therefore, Lu Ran's fondness for the fifteenth day of the first month stemmed from a mixture of many factors.

"How about the fifteenth day of the seventh month?" Yiren finally spoke up.

Xiao Yusong, who had been listening all along, explained, "In the lunar sixth month, gods roam, and in the lunar seventh month, the gates to the underworld open wide.

These two months, 'Heavenly Pride' is on hold."

Qiao Yuansi asked, "Then what about the battlefield?

Rain Alley City is so small, the invading Evil Demons aren't strong."

Lu Ran turned to look at Qiao Yuansi, his gaze deep.

Do you know what Rain Alley has done to your brother?

Night of Ghosts is nothing special, just like everyday dinner!

That attendance rate, almost catching up to the Moon Gazers...

"Hmm." Qiao Yuansi hugged Lu Ran's arm, burying her face against his arm.

Lu Ran looked at his coquettish sister and helplessly said, "Don't ask anymore, there are professionals who score, we don't need to worry about that much."

"Mhm." Qiao Yuansi felt the tide had passed and immediately raised her small face, "I'll tell mom the good news when we get back."

Lu Ran nodded with difficulty: "Alright."

Being a "Plastic Bag Master," making such a decision was indeed challenging.

"We're here," Xiao Yusong spoke up.

"Already?" Lu Ran looked outside and found they were in an underground parking lot, not even out of the city.

"You forgot, brother Xiao is a Dust Shadow Believer," Qiao Yuansi whispered.

"Oh." Lu Ran couldn't help but feel moved.

He hadn't expected to experience teleportation!

"Just sit tight, no need to be nervous," Xiao Yusong spread his palm open.

A black flower quietly bloomed on his palm.

This flower, shaped like a lycoris, had narrow leaves and even longer filaments, extending outward.

The black color added a mysterious and elegant air to the flower.

"Hoo~"

Energy surged above the flower, creating a spectacular scene.

It included high mountains and flowing streams, dynamic and strikingly realistic.

Lu Ran clucked in amazement as the beautiful scene grew larger and larger until it swallowed the entire car.

Dust Shadow Divine Skill·Other Shore Flower!

"Hoo!"

The terrain diagram suddenly converged, and Lu Ran only felt a blur before his eyes.

Both people and car were transported to another location.

In fact, Lu Ran had seen this divine skill before!

That was in the Dark Light Demon Cave, when the group encountered the Evil Nest and fled in a sorry state, a soldier team came to aid.

At that time, a 3D terrain diagram unfolded above a soldier's head.

Then the divine weapons descended from the sky, and a large number of guards were teleported over.

"There!" a soldier tapped on the car window, indicating a parking spot a few meters ahead.

"Okay," Xiao Yusong smiled and nodded, drove forward, and parked the vehicle.

Lu Ran then realized that Xiao Yusong had accurately transported everyone inside the military camp's parking lot.

If nothing unexpected, the soldier who tapped on the window was Xiao Yusong's teleportation coordinate.

As everyone exited the vehicle, several people either stood or knelt, all saluting a statue representing Lord Jian Yi.

After finishing, Xiao Yusong then smiled and approached the soldier, looking very familiar as they bumped fists.

"Brother, I can't guarantee Miss Guan's safety!" the soldier laughed, "This place is the Night Charm Demon Cave, and even I'm scared."

Though he said so, the young soldier's demeanor showed no trace of fear.

"Haha!" Xiao Yusong laughed as well, "We both volunteered, and she's too lazy to use us.

She even brought in external help from Wu Lie River without telling me."

"Oh?" The soldier's tiger-like eyes looked towards the group.

He seemed to recognize several of Guan Yiren's teammates and locked his gaze on Lu Ran immediately.

Xiao Yusong shook his head and stroked his medium-length hair:

"Brother Lang, this young fellow is no small fry, be nice, okay?"

Lu Ran's expression was odd as he watched Xiao Yusong's carefree gesture...

Carrying a guitar, isn't this just like a folk singer?

Soldier Lang naturally nodded, "Since Miss Guan invited him, I must be good."

"You two," Guan Yiren looked at childhood friends in one courtyard, "shut up."

Both: "..."

"Let's go, let's go, I've found another buddy, let's go together," Soldier Lang draped an arm around Xiao Yusong's shoulders.

Guan Yiren spoke softly: "Too many people isn't convenient, just us few will do."

Soldier Lang looked oddly at Lu Ran: "That fierce? Doesn't look very old either?"

Xiao Yusong: "Because he's young, he's fierce! This is my competitor."

Lang Zhixuan asked in confusion, "What competitor?"

Xiao Yusong lowered his voice: "Heavenly Pride."

Lang Zhixuan froze.

He looked at Lu Ran, then back at Xiao Yusong, and elbowed Xiao Yusong, "Stop joking!"

Xiao Yusong stroked his hair again: "Believe it or not."

"Yo?" Lang Zhixuan looked at Lu Ran, examining him up and down.

Lu Ran held his twin swords and pressed his lips into a slight smile, "Hello."

"I'm not very well."

"Ah?"

Lang Zhixuan: "I was rejected. In a fit of anger, I quit school and came here to enlist."

Lu Ran: "..."

Lang Zhixuan: "Brother, which university are you from? Wu Lie River? Is the competition fierce at your school?"

Lu Ran scratched his head: "Not fierce, no one competes, I... I'm in high school."

Lang Zhixuan widened his eyes: "You! What!?"

Lu Ran whispered: "Maybe you should try downgrading?"

Lang Zhixuan: ? ? ?

Chapter 192: Night Charm Demon Cave

Regarding extracting plastic bags, Lu Ran was undoubtedly an expert.

He directly breached Lang Zhixuan's defenses...

Everyone had finished registering, while Lang Zhixuan was still muttering "High school, high school" under his breath.

Qiao Yuansi couldn't stop laughing, and couldn't help but pat Lu Ran: "Don't break Lang bro!"

Lu Ran twitched his mouth in response, "I see you're pretty indulgent with your laughter, huh?"

Following the team, Lu Ran asked softly, "Do you know him?"

"Yeah, yeah." Qiao Yuansi wrapped her arm around Lu Ran's, "Aren't there three of us in our team? Brother Lang once led us.

He's an East Thunder believer, and when he fights Evil Demons, it's all smash and bash, super fierce!"

Second-class God·East Thunder believer?

Lu Ran's heart stirred; this believer had great self-restraint!

Because among the East Thunder faction, there was a Divine Technique·Thunderclap!

This was a Battle Roar technique, capable of causing dizziness or even stupor in those who hear it.

And Lu Ran often used Evil Technique·Evil Sense, which, while making him keen of hearing and sight, also made him doubly vulnerable when facing East Thunder believers!

In battle, especially when fighting the Night Charm Clan, any hesitation could be fatal!

No, he had to speak to this brother later; Battle Roar must not be used.

As he pondered, the group descended around the stone pillars and entered the Night Charm Demon Cave.

"Whoa?"

The night wind swept through, causing Lu Ran's hair to dance wildly.

Lu Ran stared up at the night sky, his face filled with amazement.

The moon?! It looked so much like the moon, just as bright and clear, casting down patches of silvery light.

The scenery in the Night Charm Demon Cave was quite pleasing to the eye; looking around, there were continuous undulating hills, and the trees had dense branches and lush leaves—it looked very dangerous!

Looking down, Lu Ran saw a grand stone city.

High walls and numerous towers—an impressively tight defense!

As soon as everyone had descended from the stone pillar, they met a middle-aged female soldier.

"Just you five?" The soldier scanned the group.

Lang Zhixuan immediately said, "Sister Zhang, I'm with them."

The soldier nodded, handing out headlamps and invisible earpieces: "My name is Zhang Ya, and I will be leading your training journey.

For the next week, I will accompany you throughout."

Guan Yiren didn't want too many people, but the military still arranged for a soldier to be part of the small team.

Zhang Ya, over forty and looking capable, clearly had plenty of experience.

She continued, "Since you are qualified to be here, it means you have some strength.

I've led many talented youths like yourselves before, and casualties were inevitable."

Zhang Ya didn't mince words, her gaze sweeping over the group: "I do not believe they died under the Night Charm blades."

During her talk, Zhang Ya's eyes turned towards Guan Yiren, her target clear:

"I believe they died due to their pride and arrogance."

Guan Yiren remained silent, looking emotionlessly at the soldier.

Zhang Ya suddenly turned to look at Lu Ran.

Qiao Yuansi immediately hugged Lu Ran tighter, finding this auntie very strict.

Zhang Ya emphasized, "Focus on your training; this is not a place for romance!"

Lu Ran: "This is my little sister."

Hearing this, Zhang Ya's expression softened a bit: "Take good care of her."

Lu Ran: "..."

Your attitude sure changes fast, wow!

Zhang Ya looked at the three youths: "Are you three protecting them?"

Niu Zhengzheng scratched his head; did he really look that old?

Xiao Yusong: "Dust Shadow Believer, River Realm Fifth Stage."

Lang Zhixuan: "East Thunder believer, River Realm Fifth Stage."

Zhang Ya nodded and introduced herself: "Biwu Believer, River Realm Second Stage."

River Realm!

And Second Stage?

Lu Ran was secretly astounded; this middle-aged female soldier was this powerful?

For these young masters and mistresses from the capital, the military's protective measures were really high!

You see, Biwu is only a Sixth-class God.

The believers it recruited were generally not of high aptitude, so one could imagine their strength.

Probably only in large cities or extremely dangerous Demon Caves would one encounter such high-level Biwu Believers!

Zhang Ya turned to Niu Zhengzheng: "And you?"

"I'm a West Desolation believer, River Realm First Stage." Niu Zhengzheng moved closer to Lu Ran's side, distancing himself from the two brothers.

Zhang Ya cleared her throat before saying, "All of you have had encounters with the Night Charm Clan, right?"

"Yes!"

"Yep," everyone responded.

"Good, then I don't need to stress the horror of the Night Charm Clan." Zhang Ya turned and walked away.

The group quickly followed.

Zhang Ya continued, "Lately, many teams have been moving north to carry out tasks; it's relatively safe over here."

Lu Ran took the opportunity to approach Lang Zhixuan and whispered, "Brother Lang?"

"What's up?" Lang Zhixuan looked at Lu Ran curiously.

Lu Ran apologized, "I have especially sensitive ears, a bit of a gift in that area.

During combat, could you use the Battle Roar techniques as little as possible?

Or at least be farther from me when you release Thunder Shock?"

But Lang Zhixuan was firm: "Xiao and I are here to protect you. If you can handle things, I won't intervene.

But if you can't withstand it, I'll have to do my utmost to save you."

Xiao Yusong looked at Lu Ran, expecting him to say something.

Instead, Lu Ran nodded earnestly: "Of course!"

"Of course?" Lang Zhixuan was quite surprised.

After all, Lu Ran was among the first selected for 'Heavenly Pride', almost like having been stamped with approval by Da Xia!

Considering his young age and such accomplishments, he should have some pride.

Who would've thought the kid was so easy to talk to?

"Saving lives is, of course, what's right," Lu Ran said with a smile, nodding, "If I don't need you to take action, isn't that enough?"

Lang Zhixuan: "..."

Xiao Yusong couldn't help but laugh out loud: "Hahaha!"

He too thought Lu Ran was quite amenable.

But this was arrogance of a whole new level?!

Lang Zhixuan looked ill at ease, holding on to Lu Ran's shoulder: "Kid, are you daring to say this in the Night Charm Demon Cave? Aren't you afraid of being proven wrong?"

"Human lives are of utmost importance; what's a bit of face?" Lu Ran shook his head, "I'm just setting a goal for myself and doing my best."

Lang Zhixuan watched Lu Ran with a weird expression, then looked towards Xiao Yusong: "Interesting, huh?"

Ahead, Zhang Ya nodded in approval at the conversation.

As the team approached the north gate, she asked, "Who is the commander of your team?"

"Me!" Qiao Yuansi immediately raised her hand.

Zhang Ya nodded: "During the training, I will let you fight on your own as much as possible.

But if I give an order, you must obey unconditionally!

Otherwise, I will immediately expel you from the realm. Understood?"

"Understood!"

"Clear!"

"Move out." Zhang Ya led the group to pass through a small gate at the base of the city wall, exiting the city.

The path outside the city was sparsely lit by torches—not meant for training students but rather for guidance.

It's worth mentioning that although the Demon Cave was enshrouded in darkness, visibility was high!

It was like a clear, unpolluted moonlit night in the countryside.

Though the group wore headlamps, they hardly needed them.

"Okay, you take over," Zhang Ya indicated to Qiao Yuansi.

Qiao Yuansi immediately ordered, "Bullhead, you go ahead, ready to use Divine Technique·Western Wilderness Body at any moment!

If anything goes south, activate it immediately; don't get taken out in one hit by Night Charm!"

"Can't do it!" Niu Zhengzheng, gripping his large axe, proceeded forward.

"I'll walk in the middle with Sister Yiren." Qiao Yuansi picked up an eight-sided lantern, looking at Lu Ran, "Bro, don't go jungling, okay?"

It's too dangerous out here, I'd be worried if you went out on your own."

"Sure." Lu Ran nodded; given Zhang Ya's strictness as the team leader, he wouldn't possibly let a team member leave the group.

Guan Yiren spoke, "You follow after Bullhead and report if you see anything."

"No problem." Lu Ran immediately moved forward.

Lu Ran knew full well that Guan Yiren selected him for his ability to gather information.

To make sure he could train in such special Demon Caves in the future, Lu Ran would need to perform well.

"Yuansi, there's a forest up ahead," Niu Zhengzheng called out.

Under the moonlight, the forest was silent, which felt disconcerting.

"It's fine." Qiao Yuansi waved her hand confidently, "My brother is right behind you!"

"Alright!" Niu Zhengzheng hefted his axe and stepped into the forest, "Ran bro, call out if there's anything!"

"Rest assured." Lu Ran said solemnly, quickly unraveling fabric to pull out his twin blades.

Whether the Night Charm Evil Sculpture can advance to River Realm or not will be seen in the next seven days!

"Hurry up, hurry up!" Lu Ran urged, "Stride forward with confidence!"

The babysitting Evil Demon for the weasel was already waving at me!

Niu Zhengzheng: "..."

How about you take the lead?

Chapter 193: Evil Sheep

Under the moonlight, in the mountain forest.

Niu Zhengzheng grew increasingly uneasy as he walked.

The area was just too quiet, and the occasional wind that rustled the leaves only made the atmosphere even more spine-chilling!

"Niu Head," Lu Ran called out softly.

"Where?" Niu Zhengzheng's head swiveled frantically like a rattle-drum as he scanned his surroundings.

Lu Ran: "You follow the Miao Fire Lantern, leading the team since Little Yuanxi is showing the way, saying it will lead us to Crescent Lake."

"Ah..." Niu Zhengzheng looked at the octagonal lanterns flitting by his side.

It wasn't strange that he was so nervous; the Night Charm Clan was undoubtedly an extremely dangerous presence.

Everyone gathered here could not really call it a practice experience; it should rather be termed "risking our lives"!

Honestly, if Guan Yiren hadn't stated she wanted to invite Lu Ran over, Niu Zhengzheng might not have agreed to come here.

After all, he was the one at the very front of the team.

The new year was around the corner, and he would soon be able to eat big pork knuckles and drink plenty of alcohol; wouldn't it have been better to keep a low profile?

Fortunately, Lu Ran had arrived as expected, and Niu Zhengzheng felt somewhat at ease.

He greatly admired Lu Ran's ability to gather intelligence information.

Even if the Night Charm Clan was faster and could hide better, Lu Ran would certainly have foresight!

Well... he should be able to, right?

At the rear of the team, Xiao Yusong felt something was off, whispering:

"Big Lang, is there something wrong with the blade that Lu Ran is holding?"

Lang Zhixuan knew what his brother meant, for he had also sensed the anomaly: "Not sure, let's wait and see.

That said, the kid really is sharp like a blade, isn't he? Is he a North Wind Believer?"

Xiao Yusong injected a word of caution: "When I tell you, you better not scream."

Lang Zhixuan spoke in annoyance, "He is whatever he is, so what's there to be secretive about?

Even if he's amazing, he would just be a Martial Artist Believer or a Martial Monk Believer.

Why should I scream?"

Xiao Yusong: "Guan Girl said, Lu Ran is an Immortal Sheep Believer."

Lang Zhixuan: "Ah??"

Instantly, everyone but Lu Ran turned to look in their direction.

The team was alert, thinking something dangerous had occurred near Xiao Lang and his companion.

Xiao Yusong smiled apologetically at everyone, waving them off while lowering his voice, "I told you, don't shout."

Lang Zhixuan felt a bit embarrassed, then his expression changed: "Is he that sinister?"

Xiao Yusong: "What?"

Lang Zhixuan's voice dropped even lower: "That kid wasn't lying, his ears are indeed sharp!

He must have heard our entire conversation."

"Oh?" Xiao Yusong looked towards Lu Ran's back.

He then understood what Lang Zhixuan meant.

The shout from earlier had put everyone on edge, causing them to look over immediately.

Only Lu Ran did not turn his head!

No reaction?

That was the biggest problem!

As the strong reinforcement specially invited by Guan Yiren, Lu Ran should have had the quickest reflexes.

Since he did not respond, there could only be one explanation:

Lu Ran had heard the entire conversation between the two men and knew the whole context!

"Watch." Lang Zhixuan bumped Xiao Yusong's shoulder and cleared his throat.

He spoke slightly louder, but still quietly: "Little bro, that Black Ice Blade of yours is pretty good, huh?"

Both men watched Lu Ran's back in anticipation.

second, 2 seconds, 3 seconds...

Lu Ran continued to walk quietly forward, still without any reaction.

Lang Zhixuan was a bit embarrassed; had he guessed wrong?

Impossible!

Lang Zhixuan rejected the thought, for he could distrust Lu Ran, but he had to trust Guan Yiren's judgment.

Thus, Lu Ran must have heard again, which is why he did not turn around.

"This is too strange," Lang Zhixuan whispered. "Speaking of which, I've never seen a brave and fierce little sheep before!

Today, I might get an eye-opener."

Xiao Yusong advised, "You know he can hear us, speak more politely."

Lang Zhixuan laughed: "Aren't I behaving well enough? How much more polite can I be? Should I also address him as 'Brother Ran'?"

"People ahead," Lu Ran suddenly spoke up.

The squad immediately halted.

Guan, Niu, and Qiao believed without a doubt, while Xiao and Lang were skeptical.

Team leader Zhang Ya, however, slightly furrowed her brows.

After a thorough survey, all she saw was a tranquil deep forest; where were the enemies?

"Where, Brother Ran?" Niu Zhengzheng raised his big axe, asking alertly.

"The person is playing with water," Lu Ran closed his eyes, listening intently, "Keep walking forward and stay alert.

You'll see the person once you spot the lake."

"Got it." Niu Zhengzheng strode forward.

Lu Ran spoke again: "Not just one, there should be three Night Charms, or perhaps more."

"This..." Niu Zhengzheng turned to look at the commander.

For a moment, Qiao Yuansi was also at a loss.

The military forces stationed here clearly didn't have the capability to screen out Evil Demons.

The Night Charm Clan could fly and use the properties of Evil Technique to flicker, to some extent.

Ordinary human methods, such as building tall walls, couldn't stop the Night Charms from rampaging freely.

Let alone screening them out, even the human race's main base had to be constantly anxious, fearing a Night Charm ambush!

In other words: the Night Charms you encounter here could be of any power realm!

If there were only one or two Night Charms, it could still be manageable.

But if there were three or more...

Lu Ran read his sister's expression and proposed: "According to our usual tactics, I'll lure two away.

You quickly defeat the rest, and then I'll bring the Night Charms back."

"No way!" A stern voice suddenly came from above everyone's heads.

Several people looked upward, only to see Zhang Ya standing solemnly on a giant tree branch, staring seriously at Lu Ran:

"I don't care about your battle strategies in other Demon Caves.

Nor do I care how strong you really are; I do not approve of this tactic, and don't bring it up again in the future!"

Everyone: "..."

Zhang Ya was indeed somewhat annoyed, feeling that the students had not taken her words before leaving the city to heart.

So she delivered a strong dose, speaking icily: "I've seen too many people like you.

All dead under the Night Charm Blade, just like those 'strong' individuals."

Lu Ran looked up at Zhang Ya: "I assure you, you have never seen someone like me."

"Heh." Zhang Ya scoffed coldly, "That's what everyone says before they die."

"Fine then." Lu Ran turned to face Qiao Yuansi, with a helpless look, "Let's try a different tactic.

The way team leader Zhang is acting, she's too much like my homeroom teacher; I don't dare to be too obstinate."

Zhang Ya stiffened: ????

This kid... is he mocking me?

As one of Jiang Realm's Great Powers, she naturally carried some authority, and in ordinary times, who would dare to joke around with her?

"That, that..." Seeing the situation taking the wrong turn, Qiao Yuansi hastily said, "We must take the upper hand first, let's try a sneak attack on one!

Brother, provide intelligence for Sister Yiren so she can use the Flying Sword to kill the enemy!"

Among the team's four individuals, Guan Yiren's Flying Sword is undoubtedly the swiftest and the most efficient in slaughter.

"Possible." Guan Yiren softly acquiesced, looking at Lu Ran.

Lu Ran pondered for a moment. If he himself were to attract the two strongest ones, it would be fine.

But if the team fought together against two or three Night Charms, the battlefield would undoubtedly become chaotic.

There might be a myriad of Night Charm Blades crisscrossing...

With that thought, Lu Ran stepped towards Qiao Yuansi, picking up the Dawn Blade.

"I have a sword." Qiao Yuansi, not understanding the reason, shook the Black Ice Sword in her hand, a gift from her mother.

But Lu Ran pushed Qiao Yuansi's shoulder with the hilt of the blade, turning her around: "You little Stream Realm rascal!

I told you not to come, yet you insisted.

Carry Dawn with you, it won't get in your way."

As he spoke, Lu Ran placed the Dawn Blade on his sister's back.

"Eh?" Qiao Yuansi grabbed the hilt reflexively, intending to pick up the blade, but found she couldn't move it?

"In a while, protect her well," Lu Ran said, tapping the cold Dawn Blade with his fingers.

"Hum~" The Dawn Blade buzzed softly.

Guan Yiren's eyes narrowed sharply!

Was this actually a Divine Weapon?

An Immortal Sheep Believer, even sooner than a Sword Technique specialist like herself, a Sword One Believer, came to possess an exclusive Divine Weapon?

"Wow!" Qiao Yuansi was both shocked and delighted.

She released her hand and spun around on the spot.

The Dawn Blade also clung to her back, spinning with her, without falling off.

On the tree branch, Zhang Ya's eyebrows raised slightly.

As a Biwu believer, Zhang Ya had no destiny with weapons in her life and was indeed not very sensitive in this aspect.

But upon seeing Lu Ran's actions, and the Black Ice Sword resting on the young girl's back...

Zhang Ya suddenly recalled a phrase Lu Ran had just mentioned:

"I assure you, you have never seen someone like me!"

From a distance, Xiao Yusong's expression turned very animated: "Now I know why he was chosen as a Heavenly Pride."

"Nonsense!" Lang Zhixuan was completely flustered, "I can see that too!"

"Let's go." Lu Ran held the Silent Night Blade, twirling it as he strode forward.

Guan Yiren looked at Qiao Yuansi, who was carrying the Divine Weapon, feeling somewhat envious.

Lu Ran, as a brother, was really too good to his sister.

They were about to face the powerful Night Charm, and at such a time, he left the Divine Weapon with Little Yuanxi...

"Let's go, let's go." Qiao Yuansi pulled Guan Yiren forward.

"Hush!" Lu Ran issued a silencing command, creeping forward.

Moments later, Lu Ran came to a halt, his gaze through the forest shadows landing on a curved, pristine lake.

The lake lived up to its name—Crescent Lake!

The moonlight poured down, casting glimmering waves on the water, stunningly beautiful.

There was also a woman in black, wearing a bamboo hat, with black gauze gently flickering, standing quietly above the lake surface.

Such a Night Charm,

Like the finishing touch that brought the entire scene to life, full of artistic conception!

The more he looked, the more Lu Ran wanted to take her home to be a nanny for his little civet...

"Do you see her?" Lu Ran, leaning against a large tree, whispered.

Guan Yiren nodded lightly: "And the other two?"

Lu Ran closed his eyes, listening attentively to the surroundings: "They should be at the bottom of the lake."

Guan Yiren slowly raised her hand, suddenly asking, "Do you think I should use the Flying Sword Technique or the Ten Thousand Sword Style?"

Lu Ran was taken aback, turning to look at the white-robed young girl beside him.

Sword One believers are extremely proud individuals. Why would they seek someone else's opinion on which Divine Technique to use?

Lu Ran thought for a moment and said, "Ten Thousand Sword Style, I guess. The sword rain could also kill the Night Charms at the bottom of the lake."

Guan Yiren: "The Ten Thousand Sword Style cannot track the Night Charms, making it difficult to sneak up and reduce their numbers."

Lu Ran whispered, "Oh, then use the Flying Sword Technique."

Guan Yiren shook her head: "The two Night Charms at the bottom of the lake will be alarmed and will rush out to attack us."

Lu Ran looked bewildered at Guan Yiren: "So what do you really want?"

Guan Yiren calmly said, "I just wanted you to help me make a decision."

Ever since I learned the Ten Thousand Sword Style, this question has troubled me for a long time."

Lu Ran immediately twirled his blade: "Don't dwell on it."

How about I take over? Will that do?"

Guan Yiren: "..."

If it were anyone else vying for the vanguard position with a Sword One Believer, Guan Yiren would certainly disdain.

Even giving such an individual an extra glance would be considered charity on her part.

But when the words came from Lu Ran...

He truly was capable!

"Hmph!" Without lingering doubts, Guan Yiren's palm surged with energy.

Directly above Crescent Lake, a golden sword rain abruptly appeared, rapidly sweeping downward.

Sword One Divine Technique·Ten Thousand Sword Style!

Chapter 194: Night Charm? Human Charm!

Golden swords fell like rain, showering Crescent Lake.

Long swords were not only incredibly fast, but also dense and numerous, making Lu Ran secretly click his tongue in amazement!

"Hisss..."

Above the lake, a Night Charm softly groaned.

Her speed was extraordinary as she stepped upon a layer of wind and waves, weaving and leaping through the golden sword rain.

Even Lu Ran found himself somewhat spellbound.

Such movement technique was too elegant.

Under the melancholy moonlight, the lady on the lake fluttered in her black veil, her figure enchanting, providing onlookers with a peerless nocturnal dance.

"Plop!" Water splashed everywhere as a Night Charm burst forth from the lake's depths.

Amid the dense rain of swords, a golden long sword pierced through the Night Charm's bamboo hat, nailing her back into the lake.

As expected of Sword One's believer, the efficiency of the slaughter was indeed alarming.

Even for a swiftly agile Evil Demon like a Night Charm, a slight misstep would lead to a swift and clean death.

"Plop!"

Another Night Charm surged from the bottom of the lake, flinging an arm up fiercely.

A Gale suddenly whipped up, rattling the trees.

Guan Yiren's hair danced wildly as she staggered back several steps, her casting interrupted by the members of the Night Charm Clan.

"Hisss..."

"Hiss." Two Night Charms seemed to communicate with each other, attacking from the left and right, targeting the woods.

As they lunged forward, both flung strings of Night Charm Blades.

"Eight blades, both are from River Realm!" Qiao Yuansi picked up a lantern and immediately released it into the night sky.

The nature of the Bright Fire Cage changed, from dark red to golden red.

Brilliant and dazzling, blindingly bright.

At once, the Night Charms on the edge of the woods began to show a layer of golden-red luster on their bodies.

It was as if they were tagged, making them distinctly visible.

Divine Technique·Bright Fire Cage!

In fact, this was a defensive technique.

Any creature touched by the light could don a layer of golden-red energy for protection.

Of course, whether to encase a target in "Golden Red Armor" was up to the caster's will.

That is to say, this group defense technique was very advanced and could distinguish friend from foe.

And this technique had one characteristic—it was darn bright!

That eye-catching golden red was like taunting the enemy:

"Come on~ I'm here, come kill me~"

Qiao Yuansi was using this feature to turn a defensive Divine Technique into a marking technique.

She was inherently from Stream Realm, executing Divine Techniques of Stream Divine Skill Grade, and she deliberately adjusted the Divine Method Grade down to Immortal Fog...

The key point was "all brightness, no defense."

"Whoosh~ Whoosh~!"

Guan Yiren quickly retreated, using the golden-red luster as guidance, rapidly flinging 8 flying swords from her hands.

"I hate these bitches most!" Niu Zhengzheng yelled, wielding a great axe, desperately deflecting the Night Charm Blades.

Accompanied by a series of crisp sounds, several Night Charm Blades were shattered by the axe.

Still, one vicious Night Charm Blade, ambushing from behind Niu Zhengzheng's left, thrust straight at the back of his head.

Niu Zhengzheng: !!!

The whizzing sound of swift approach, along with the martial artist's sharp intuition, made Niu Zhengzheng's skin crawl!

He instinctively activated Divine Technique·Western Wilderness Body!

In just an instant, Niu Zhengzheng transformed from a flesh-and-blood body into one made of sand.

This was an exceptionally powerful life-saving technique, but it had a flaw: it consumed an excessive amount of Divine Power.

"Ding~"

A crisp sound struck, but Niu Zhengzheng was not hit by the piercing Night Charm Blade after all.

Suddenly, a Black Luminous Stone Blade flew past him from behind, flicking away the Night Charm Blade.

"Go help Little Yuanxi," Lu Ran said in a deep voice.

"Thank you, Ra... Eh." Niu Zhengzheng's 'brother' word hadn't yet left his mouth when he was filled with Immortal Fog.

Lu Ran stopped abruptly and shot straight toward Crescent Lake.

He not only broke away from the squad but leaped over the lake to the other side of Crescent Lake.

"Here he comes!" Lang Zhixuan clenched his fists, brimming with excitement.

He was finally going to witness how the feeble and timid Immortal Sheep Believer fought.

Lang Zhixuan's heart was filled not only with curiosity but also with immense anticipation!

Coincidentally, Zhang Ya was also discreetly observing the youth on the opposite side of the lake.

Only instead of excitement, Team Leader Zhang frowned, displeased.

Previously, her stance was adamant; she had rejected Lu Ran's proposal.

And now, Lu Ran had still broken away from the team. How was this different from suicide?

Alright, I'll assume you have keen senses and aren't worried about being ambushed by Night Charms hiding in the deep forest.

But you ran off to the other side on your own—what are you planning... Hm?

"Meeeh~"

An unexpected bleating sound came out, resembling the wailing of a young lamb.

Since Lu Ran was far enough away, his voice was very weak and didn't overly disturb the Human Clan.

But it was different for the Night Charms!

Especially the one targeting Niu Zhengzheng—this Night Charm, still near the lakeshore, heard the faint bleating clearly!

"Hm?" The Night Charm suddenly turned its head and immediately abandoned Niu Zhengzheng, heading straight for Lu Ran.

Under the moonlight, the lake surface shimmered.

The enchanting figure treaded on the water, splashing droplets all around, a sight of incomparable beauty.

"Old Xiao," Lang Zhixuan said gravely, "that bleating sound is strange; there's something off about it!"

Xiao Yusong did not respond; instead, he focused intently on the other battle in the deep forest.

Guan Yiren was fiercely battling a Night Charm.

Eight flying swords and eight flying blades were engaged in a ferocious skirmish; the situation was intense.

"Dawn Blade," Qiao Yuansi held the handle of the blade with her backhand, "can you help Sister Yiren?"

As she spoke, she tried to pull on the handle, but it wouldn't budge.

The Divine Weapon remained still on her back, immobile.

"Dawn Blade, you... oh!" Qiao Yuansi was startled because the Dawn Blade suddenly moved.

It quickly circled around her side, the blade fiercely sweeping out a half-moon arc.

"Snap" came a crisp sound.

A wildly veering Night Charm Blade was sliced apart!

The Dawn Blade circled around Qiao Yuansi and then resumed its position on her back.

Qiao Yuansi: "..."

At that moment, she didn't know whether to feel happy or not.

The Dawn Blade was cold, yet Qiao Yuansi felt a warm and secure feeling in her heart.

It was as if... as if her brother was there protecting her side, and she didn't have to worry about getting hurt.

The only problem was that the blade didn't obey her commands.

Even though Qiao Yuansi was Lu Ran's biological sister, it didn't matter!

Divine Weapon recognized only one master!

At the same time, a burst of exclamations suddenly came from the deep forest in the distance.

"Damn it! Damn it! Damn it..."

Lang Zhixuan covered his head with his hands, his face full of disbelief.

"What are you yelling about?" Xiao Yusong's expression darkened; it was the first time he found his brother so annoying.

After all, as an East Thunder believer, he was usually quite proud and had some level of dignity.

But why was he becoming more and more pathetic, always yelling and screaming?

"Look, just look! I'm going to your mother..." Lang Zhixuan pointed with a gaping mouth toward the other side of the lake.

Xiao Yusong followed his gaze and his expression immediately froze.

Under the cool moonlight, a man and a demon were clashing blades!

A close-quarters, face-to-face blade duel!

The Night Charm wielded eight blades.

One grasped in the hand, the other seven circled around the body, fluttering like butterflies.

Lu Ran had only one blade, but he stood resolute, fearlessly forcing the Night Charm to retreat step by step!

Those seven Night Charm Blades, referred to as butterflies, were real lethal weapons!

Especially under the moonlight's reflection, each Night Charm Blade twinkled with a chilling light, making one shudder.

And amidst the crisscrossing Night Charm Blade Formation...

Lu Ran was even more a Night Charm than the Night Charms themselves!

He flickered and dodged, unpredictable in his movements.

Lunging left, darting right, advancing and retreating.

His blade never strayed from the vitals of the Night Charm!

"This..." Xiao Yusong stared in astonishment at the shadow dancing under the moon.

This was no longer a matter of whether he was a "lamb" or not!

Should a martial artist of the River Realm·First Rank possess such skills?

For a fleeting moment, Xiao Yusong felt as if he was watching two Night Charms in combat!

"Zhi—"

Mist spewed from beneath Lu Ran's feet as he swiftly retreated backward.

Two Night Charm Blades, flickering with cold light, suddenly flew past his face, forming an "X".

The closeness of the slash made onlookers' hearts leap.

"Zhi—"

Lu Ran stomped heavily on the ground, apparently using Immortal Hoof, but only retreated less than 2 meters.

He abruptly stopped and started again, Immortal Hoof beneath his feet took off once more.

With the Silent Night Blade in hand, he thrust forward sideways.

"Whoosh~"

"Whoosh~ Whoosh~"

In the short distance of a two-meter thrust, Lu Ran, leaning to the side, avoided three Night Charm Blades.

Tilting his head, one Night Charm Blade grazed his temple.

Leaning his body, another Night Charm Blade swept past his chest.

With his arm behind him slightly raised, he allowed a Night Charm Blade to slip beneath.

"Zhi!"

With a grim expression, Lu Ran lifted the fluttering underlay of the black veil with the Silent Night Blade in his hand and, from bottom to top, diagonally stabbed into the Night Charm's throat!

Precise and sharp.

A blade that sealed the throat!

Lu Ran knew that the Night Clothes, bamboo hat, including that soft black veil, all had strong defensive power!

But behind the veil, the Night Charm's face and neck were not wrapped in the Night Charm Robe.

Why did Lu Ran know this so clearly?

Because he had personally worn this set of Night Charm Robes...

Um... soft and quite comfortable.

As for how to inflict effective damage on the Night Charm Clan, Lu Ran had come up with a theory:

Either go for their hands.

Or lift their veils!

"Whoosh~ Whoosh~"

In an instant, the seven erratically dancing Night Charm Blades fell apart like kites with broken strings, scattering everywhere.

"Uh..."

The Night Charm issued a strange sound, desperately gripping the Silent Night Blade.

It was evident she was exerting force, with her palms slashed by the blade edge, blood flowing down unrestrained.

Yet, Lu Ran held the hilt tightly, unwavering.

He was not only using Evil Sensitivity and Evil Sense throughout but also activating Evil Technique·Soul Splitting Power!

On the premise that both parties' realms were similar, Lu Ran's overwhelming strength was not something the Night Charm could contend with.

"Puh~"

The Night Charm suddenly shattered into mist, even the previously flowing blood transformed into wisps of energy, dissipating with the wind.

Beneath the moonlight, beside Crescent Lake.

Two twirling black shadows had been reduced to one.

His expression dark, he performed a flourish with his blade and mist rose again from beneath his feet.

"Zhi—"

The dark shadow swept over the lake surface, and a weak bleating sound once again reached the forests:

"Meeeh~"

"Hisss..." Xiao Yusong drew a sharp breath.

That grade-lowered Divine Technique·Desolate Sound couldn't affect the dedicated believers.

However, that wail of the lamb to Xiao Yusong's ears sounded so harrowing!

It was eerily similar to the whispering voice of Evil Demons.

"He's gone mad, damn it!" Lang Zhixuan clutched his head, his scalp tingling, "Pure martial arts...

Pure blade confrontation, hard-contending with Night Charms!

Why doesn't Lord Beifeng see value in him? What reason is there not to want him?"

Xiao Yusong whispered, "I heard from Guan Yiren, in terms of Worship God, Lu Ran is the same as me."

Lang Zhixuan wore a shocked expression: "He too rejected a First-class God and deliberately went to worship Immortal Sheep?"

Xiao Yusong's expression became strange: "Not quite.

Apparently, Lu Ran rejected Evil Demon-Yan Paperman and then went to worship Immortal Sheep."

Lang Zhixuan's mouth gaped, his mind buzzing.

Indeed, there will always be someone better!

He had thought that his own brother's rejection of a First-class God to humbly join a lesser sect was legendary enough.

Who would have thought, there'd be someone even bolder?!

The deity Lu Ran worshipped wasn't even within the ranks of the divine...

Had he actually attracted Evil Demons?

Chapter 195: Knives in the rosy clouds, moon beneath the gauze

Immortal Fog filled the air, shadows darted to and fro.

Someone, who should have been called "little lamb," had earned the title "Human Charm" through a fierce battle.

Indeed, there was a large difference between Lu Ran and the Night Charm Clan.

Their races were different, as were their garments, and their techniques were not entirely the same either.

Yet their styles were alarmingly similar!

Both were swift, with agile postures; both were fierce, striking ruthlessly.

Most notably, both bore an aura of wickedness.

Had it not been for Lu Ran riding on Immortal Hoof, many would have mistaken him for a disciple of the Night Charm...

"Ding~Ding~"

Amidst two crisp sounds, Lu Ran flung a couple of Night Charm Blades and pressed on the remaining Night Charm.

"Sss..."

The Night Charm let out a low growl.

This clan was of the reticent type, much more so than Lang Zhixuan; they seldom cried out.

Now, emitting a low moan, it was clearly intrigued by Lu Ran.

Since the battle started, the Human Clan had been trembling in fear, as if treading on thin ice.

Even that mighty disciple of Sword One dared only attack from a distance.

At this moment, this swiftly arriving young human seemed bent on seeking his own death.

Well then, I will fulfill your wish!

"Ding!"

The Silent Night Blade clashed heavily with the Night Charm Blade.

"Ran bro..." Niu Zhengzheng opened his mouth, unsure of what to say.

He stood in front of Guan Yiren and Qiao Yuansi, occasionally invoking the Divine Technique·Western Wilderness Body, shielding his teammates from harm.

On this battlefield, not only were there eight Night Charm Blades darting about, but also eight flying swords stabbing back and forth.

And Lu Ran, he just plunged in there?

Yiren's heart tightened, her fingertips trembled, and she immediately instructed the flying swords to slow their momentum.

Previously in the Demon Cave of the Soul-splitting Demon, her flying sword had nearly pierced through Lu Ran.

"Ding! Ding..."

The crisp sounds were incessant. In just two or three seconds, Lu Ran had clashed with the Night Charm five or six times.

"Hu~~~"

Suddenly, the Night Charm raised its left hand, and a gale abruptly arose.

Lu Ran was immediately toppled over.

"Bro!" Qiao Yuansi cried out anxiously.

Lu Ran landed steadily before gliding backward due to the immense inertia.

Niu Zhengzheng extended a big hand, pressing on Lu Ran's back, helping him unload his momentum.

Lu Ran flipped a knife flourish: "Damn, I didn't smack it, this Night Charm is pretty tough, huh?"

Guan Yiren: "..."

Qiao Yuansi immediately said, "Bro, it's good you're here! Don't leave the team yet, prepare the special version of 'Voice of Compassion' and wait for my command.

Yiren sister, envelop the Night Charm!

Niu head, go, push to the front, always ready to invoke the West Desolation Body."

"No problem." Lu Ran nodded immediately, praising inwardly.

Little Yuanxi indeed had a commanding presence, not only was his thought process clear but his decisions were also decisive.

Thinking about it, it made sense that Little Yuanxi could form a permanent team with people like Guan Yiren and Niu Zhengzheng without being kicked out; obviously, he had substantial skills.

"Shoo~Shoo!"

While Lu Ran contemplated, sword shadows suddenly burst forth.

The next moment, eight sword shadows abruptly turned into phantom figures, each one an image of Guan Yiren.

Sword One Divine Skill·Sword Dance Clear Shadow!

Just in time, Qiao Yuansi lifted the lantern, coating everyone with the splendid golden-red hue.

What she sought was not defense, but a dazzling light.

Countless practices had shown this to be an effective method to lure the Evil Demon!

However, the Night Charm, with its black veil fluttering, retreated alone.

"Is it really not working?" muttered Qiao Yuansi softly, unwilling to witness this scene.

The Evil Demon Clan's craving for slaughter was well-known.

Not to mention, Qiao Yuansi had deliberately lit up her own side, making the delicious human flesh clearly visible to the enemy.

But this Night Charm actually retreated?

Not only did it retreat, but it also flung out eight Night Charm Blades, stabbing directly at everyone.

Guan Yiren reacted immediately, similarly flinging out eight flying swords.

张雅 perched on the tree branch, quietly observing everything.

Had it been any other ferocious Evil Demon, perhaps it really would have been lured by the flesh and entered the encirclement.

But this method didn't work on the Night Charm Clan unless...

"Bro, call it!" Little Yuanxi commanded confidently, with a commanding air.

张雅 nodded slightly, thinking to herself: indeed.

Lu Ran: "Everyone, cover your ears."

"Mm." Little Yuanxi, obedient, immediately covered her ears.

Lu Ran stood behind Qiao Yuansi, also extending his hands and covering the backs of the girl's hands.

Double ear-covering?

Moreover, Lu Ran also effectively controlled the girl's hands.

He was genuinely worried that Qiao Yuansi couldn't take it and would turn around and smash a lantern over him...

"Mie~~~"

The retreating Night Charm suddenly halted.

The sound of a sheep, although turned down by Lu Ran to the Stream Divine Skill level, still agitated Guan Yiren and Niu Zhengzheng.

"Sss!!"

The Night Charm charged back.

Among the Evil Demon population, the Night Charm Clan indeed had exceptional intelligence, but it couldn't compare with the Human Clan.

What was most fatal was the Night Charm, as an Evil Demon, harbored a real desire to slaughter humans.

The underlying logic of the Sound of Despair proving effective, made this technique truly divine!

"This Divine Technique..." murmured Zhang Ya.

She watched as the Night Charm, contrary to its usual behavior, charged into the human encirclement!

Earlier, when Lu Ran had lured away the first Night Charm, Zhang Ya as the team leader sensed something was off.

This Divine Technique was weird enough to arouse an impulse to abuse and harm Lu Ran in someone.

However, Zhang Ya, esteemed of the River Realm, had a high mental strength and easily dispelled these intrusive thoughts.

Humans could dispel them, but Evil Demons could not!

"Kill."

Guan Yiren's voice was chilling.

One person plus eight shadows, a total of nine Guan Yirens, formed a semi-encirclement around the Night Charm, all wielding their swords.

Instantly, swords lashed out, infusing with a cold icy breath.

The area was enveloped in frost, and the temperature plummeted.

Sword One Divine Skill·Frost Sword Qi!

"Swoosh~"

"Crack!"

Icy sword arcs crisscrossed across the battlefield, neatly slicing through the surrounding trees and branches.

"Sss!!" The Night Charm roared in anger.

Its blade left a lengthy trail.

The Beifeng Sect Divine Skill·Residual Wind Trace, known as the strongest single-target killing technique below the River Realm.

The counterpart Evil Technique·Night Shadow Charm Trace, was not to be underestimated!

That elongated blade mark split the frosty sword qi in half.

Amid continuous sheep sounds, the Night Charm's attacks grew even fiercer, thrusting diagonally at the Lu siblings.

"You dare!"

Guan Yiren's face was expressionless as she spat out two icy words.

Eight shadowy figures lashed out with sword energy, and one true body flung a flying sword.

In the night sky, the sword energy and shadows interwove intricately, terrifying all onlookers!

"Sss!"

Even the Night Charm couldn't withstand the terrifying output from a disciple of Sword One.

Just as several flying swords crisscrossed over the Night Charm...

The Night Charm's figure abruptly trembled, splitting into three.

Evil Technique·Night Charm Shadow!

This indicated that the Night Charm was at least of the River Realm·Third Rank.

Taking advantage of the special nature of the Evil Technique, the Night Charm completed an alternative "blink" in the moment it split into three, dodging the fatal blow.

After this brush with death, the Night Charm still thrust at Lu Ran.

Only this time, it fiercely swung its hand!

"Hu!"

The gale rose again.

Since the wind was blowing from a diagonal upper direction to a lower one, not everyone was blown away; they staggered and retreated in disarray.

Only Niu Zhengzheng, activating the Divine Technique·West Desolation Body, stood firmly in place, unmoving!

"Ah, ah, ah!" Niu Zhengzheng roared angrily, his battle axe enveloped in a layer of ghostly battle-axe outline.

West Desolate Divine Skill·Desolate Shattering Axe!

As the Night Charm swooped low and closed in, Niu Zhengzheng disregarded the fierce wind and took a bold step forward, furiously swinging his battle ax.

"Shatter!"

Divine Power surged in his hands, and his ax blade erupted with astonishing energy.

West Desolate Divine Skill·Shattering Eight Desolates!

With this ax, you might be split into pieces.

"Buzz!"

The Night Charm repeated its old trick, instantly splitting into three.

One body was left to be shattered by the ax, while the other two flanked Niu Zhengzheng from the left and right.

And their speed was unrelenting as they thrust at Lu Ran.

Qiao Yuansi's eyes widened: "Bro!!"

The sheep sound was indeed emitted from Lu Ran's mouth.

The problem was, Lu Ran was standing behind Qiao Yuansi, covering her ears.

"Zzz~Zzz~"

From a distance in the forest, the team of Xiao Lang and Lang Zhixuan was ready to strike.

Lang Zhixuan, previously nonchalant, now wore a grim expression, his body tense, electricity crawling over him.

Xiao Yusong, flinging his left hand, grasped a Shadow Blade, while his right hand opened up, revealing a pitch-black Other Shore Flower blooming.

Perched atop the large tree branch, Zhang Ya pressed her hand against the trunk next to her, energy swirling in her palm.

Beneath the siblings' feet, there were faint signs of trees breaking through the earth.

And at that moment, Lu Ran suddenly took a step forward!

In the midst of the gale, Lu Ran's feet burst with Immortal Fog, his advancement staggeringly steady!

He whisked past the side of Qiao Yuansi, deftly pulling the Dawn Blade from behind her as he passed.

"Zzz—"

Lu Ran's feet roiled with thick mist, his figure abruptly soaring upwards.

"Mm!" Qiao Yuansi, under the dual forces of the fierce wind and mist, instantly flew backward.

"Lu Ran!"

"Lu..." Several cries of alarm sounded.

"Mie!!" Lu Ran, wielding the Dawn Blade, thrust diagonally into the night sky.

That sheep sound added an extra layer of protection to all his teammates.

"Sss!!" The Night Charm roared in fury, slashing downward, its eyes blind to anyone else!

The two figures drew closer and closer.

The Night Charm Blade in its hand dragged a long blade mark, seeming capable of slicing through everything.

Lu Ran held the Dawn Blade, its dark translucent blade body suddenly emitting a rosiness!

As the Dawn Blade passed, it left a trail of golden-red satin, like igniting layers of crimson flames.

Light red, orange-red, golden-red, deep red...

"Hu!"

As Lu Ran swept the blade horizontally, the splendid dawn, like silk, danced in front of him.

"Buzz!"

The Night Charm's figure trembled, and just before the two blades made contact, it split into three.

And Lu Ran...

He never stopped swinging his blade!

Lu Ran spun in the air, the dawn emanating from his blade sketching a perfect arc.

"Puff! Puff!" Two sounds of dissipating into mist, the splitting Night Charm vanishing.

"Crack!" A sound like glass shattering, that was the sound of Evil Technique-Night Charm Robe being shattered.

The Divine Weapon was invincible, the blade edge sinking into flesh.

The three figures of the Night Charm encircling Lu Ran were almost instantaneously beheaded.

Zhang Ya looked up, stunned by the scene.

The Divine Technique she invoked and the trees that emerged indeed protected several of her teammates.

But it seemed... unnecessary?

Was Lu Ran that quick?

No, it was pure anticipation!

Lu Ran was just... following in the footsteps of the Big Nightmare.

Learning from that night on the fifteenth, how she had slain the Night Charm, drawing an arc in the air.

"Hu~"

Lu Ran was still flying backward in the air, his short hair dancing wildly.

Under the moonlight, in the night sky.

A haze like smoke, a dreamlike light veil, spread outward from the blade, sketching the trajectory of his backward flight...

Chapter 196: Arrogant River and...

"You're quite bold, kiddo," a young voice suddenly erupted from behind.

Lu Ran, still in midair, immediately turned his head to look.

He saw Lang Zhixuan holding a square halberd, standing in the forest below.

Lu Ran clenched the handle of his blade tighter. With a shared thought, the speed of the falling Rosy Clouds Blade slowed down, leading Lu Ran to a steady landing.

Since acquiring the Divine Weapon, Lu Ran, to some extent, possessed the ability to fly.

If he wished, Lu Ran could even master flying with the blade!

But that was not Lu Ran's style of combat.

And to tell the truth, the Rosy Clouds Blade was quite slender; it probably wouldn't make for a very stable stand...

"Is that the 'Evil Technique·Night Shadow Charm Trace'? You really dared to challenge it?" Lang Zhixuan half-teased and half-admired as he watched Lu Ran land.

Lu Ran swung the Rosy Clouds Blade in his hand: "I have the Divine Weapon, what should I fear?"

The Rosy Clouds Blade buzzed gently in agreement with Lu Ran's response.

"Fair point," Lang Zhixuan nodded.

Perhaps only those who wield a Divine Weapon dare to clash blades directly with the Night Charm Clan.

If you're just a common Believer, the moment you see the Beifeng Clan unleash the 'Divine Technique·Residual Wind Trace,' or encounter the Night Charm Clan releasing the 'Evil Technique·Night Shadow Charm Trace'...

Don't hesitate, just run!

Want to keep your life, no shame in that~

Anyone daring enough, Beifeng and Night Charm wouldn't hesitate to cleave both person and weapon into halves!

"Buzz!!"

Suddenly and strangely, Lu Ran felt his head buzz.

The abrupt phenomenon made his face change color, thinking perhaps he was struck by some evil technique.

Not right!

The Night Charm Clan doesn't seem to have any psychic techniques... Oh, it's you.

Lu Ran was delighted in his heart!

In his psychic world, inside the Evil Demon Sculpture Garden.

That huge Night Charm Evil Sculpture was buzzing and trembling, clearly undergoing an upgrade.

Lu Ran realized in his heart, had the Night Charm he just killed had its soul sucked over here?

Lu Ran hadn't activated the 'Divine Technique-Pupil of the Netherworld,' so naturally, he couldn't see creatures from another dimension.

At this moment, filled with joy, he spiritually connected with the Night Charm Evil Sculpture in his mind.

River Realm·Fifth Rank!

Ah~ Feels good!

Once leveled up one more time, I can start creating Evil Demon minions.

I could control the Night Charm Clan to go out and spook people at night... Eh, forget it.

Such an action would be utterly heartless.

Better to summon them to serve as housekeepers, bringing me tea, doing laundry... cough, not exactly.

Better to summon them to feed Little Yuanxi, clean the cat litter.

"Brother!" Qiao Yuansi's voice approached from afar like a swallow returning to its nest, diving into Lu Ran's embrace.

"Whoa," Lu Ran came back to his senses, instinctively opening his arms.

Qiao Yuansi turned into a human cannonball, directly pushing Lu Ran back several steps.

"You scared me to death!" Qiao Yuansi was both shocked and annoyed, her forehead gently bumping Lu Ran's chin.

Lu Ran threw his head back: "Uh."

"Next time, you can't do this!" Qiao Yuansi looked up at him, eyes filled with worry, "That was the Night Shadow Charm Trace!"

Up to this point, two people had spoken to Lu Ran, and the focus was all on the 'Evil Technique-Night Shadow Charm Trace'.

This further indicates, the technique's reputation for being lethally effective was legend!

Lu Ran's earlier dive into the night sky, in ordinary peoples' eyes, was really akin to courting death.

"Alright, alright, I understand," Lu Ran patted Little Yuanxi's back gently, pressing the Rosy Clouds Blade to it.

Qiao Yuansi still clung to Lu Ran, feeling waves of fear in her heart.

"Lots of people are watching," Lu Ran whispered.

"Hmm," Qiao Yuansi pursed her lips and turned to leave.

The Rosy Clouds Blade lay against the back of the girl, though it no longer diffused any rosy glow.

Lu Ran turned to look at Lang Zhixuan, shrugging helplessly.

Lang Zhixuan said, "Don't look at me, if I were this little girl, I wouldn't be happy either."

Lu Ran: "..."

Are you taking sides now?

Lu Ran muttered to himself and walked towards the lake area.

Seeing Lu Ran return, Guan Yiren spoke softly, "It seems you don't need teammates."

She had entered the Night Charm Demon Cave with the goal of strengthening and advancing.

In facing most Evil Demons, Guan Yiren found it hard to train effectively.

Only the Night Charm, with their rapid speed and flying blades, could help Guan Yiren progress quickly.

Guan Yiren had deliberately called Lu Ran over, of course, to keep the team safe.

She didn't want the three-member team to be killed in disgrace, often having to rely on soldiers for protection.

Guan Yiren had never imagined, Lu Ran, his strength was a bit over the top!

Supposedly playing a supportive role, he instead became a main attacker!

This...

Before, in the car on the way here, Lu Ran had once said that he had robbed a scene from a Heavenly Pride sister.

Now Guan Yiren personally experienced how Lu Ran stole the spotlight!

"How could that be?" Lu Ran waved his hands quickly, "This is also our first time fighting Night Charm, we still need to coordinate."

Upon hearing this, Guan Yiren's expressionless face showed a complex smile as she gently shook her head.

Months ohneighborseo Lu 泽 past.

In her plans, it was Guan Yiren who would combat the Night Charm.

He would surreptitiously hide, and at the most crucial moment, shout to attract the Night Charm's attention.

This way, they would be safer, and the Night Charm would die without pain!"

Guan Yiren: "..."

Suddenly, a woman's voice came from the tree: "Your 'Voice of Compassion,' seems quite unique."

"Ah," Lu Ran looked up, "Lord Immortal Sheep favors me, he taught me the special method of the 'Voice of Compassion'."

Lu Ran briefly explained, causing Xiao Yusong and others to marvel secretly.

Zhang Ya remained silent, repeatedly sighing inwardly, "Ah..."

Despite being unwilling, Zhang Ya had to admit, the boy before her truly had a basis for his arrogance!

Martial arts, techniques, combat skills.

And that immensely strong heart!

Only in his late teens, yet already possessing his own Divine Weapon.

Aware of the formidable Night Charm, yet he kept the Divine Weapon with his sister.

Zhang Ya witnessed the whole scene, Lu Ran's gallant figure as he slew the Night Charm across the lake.

Without exaggeration, Lu Ran had indeed defeated the Night Charm head-on!

Upon his return to the woods, facing the second Night Charm activating the 'Evil Technique·Night Shadow Charm Trace,' Lu Ran finally drew the Divine Weapon - Rosy Clouds Blade.

Under the cold moonlight, he left a trail of spectacular rosy clouds.

So... what kind of youth was this?

Zhang Ya watched Lu Ran silently, her gaze growing more complex.

She had long guarded the Night Charm Demon Cave, leading countless Da Xia talents, what kind of geniuses hadn't she seen?

Today, Zhang Ya truly had her eyes opened!

The words Lu Ran had said to her before still echoed in her ears:

"I assure you, you've never met anyone like me."

The past Zhang Ya had scoffed at those words!

But now she... was utterly baffled.

"Captain, will our plan work?" Qiao Yuansi raised her head, looking towards the tree branches.

"What?" Zhang Ya came back to her senses, looking at the young girl.

Qiao Yuansi, dissatisfied, glared at her brother and under Lu Ran's insistent gaze, still spoke to Zhang Ya, "Let my brother stay on the side of the team, not within it."

Captain, we won't let him stray too far from the team, just as long as he can draw the attention of the Evil Demons from another direction..."

The girl elaborated further, and everyone turned to look at the stern captain.

And this time, Zhang Ya didn't immediately reject with severity.

Unwilling to respond?

That was a response itself!

Evidently, Zhang Ya still didn't support this tactic, but amidst Lu Ran's impressive performance, she seemed to have difficulty opposing...

This scene made Lang Zhixuan smile secretly.

He had followed teams before, managing a group of young masters and mistresses, and their captain was the Zhang Ya before them.

Lang Zhixuan had personally witnessed how Zhang Ya trained that group of Heaven's Chosen like they were grandchildren.

Yet now, facing Lu Ran, she had kept silent?

"Cough, cough." Lang Zhixuan coughed, timely bailing out his senior, "You don't need to go any further.

Let's wait by Crescent Lake, for the Night Charm to walk into our trap."

"Wait?" Lu Ran looked at Lang Zhixuan.

"Yes!" Lang Zhixuan explained, "The Night Charm Demon Cave is thickly forested, with the lake area being a relatively rare scene.

The Night Charm Clan is often drawn to the water and gathers here.

Many lakes within the Demon Cave, including Crescent Lake here, are artificially created."

Lu Ran nodded thoughtfully, learning something new: "So, Captain Zhang brought us here.

This site is meant for hunting the Night Charm Clan?"

"That's right," Lang Zhixuan nodded, "You can set an ambush here, even if we split into two groups, we three can still look after you four."

"Great!" Lu Ran was thrilled.

With only 7 days for this expedition, his biggest fear was aimlessly wandering without finding enemies.

Since the lakes have such a useful purpose, why worry about not summoning souls?

It was just unknown how efficient this lake was in attracting the Night Charm.

The Evil Sculpture in the Sculpture Garden always had a massive demand for souls whenever it ascended a great realm!

Suddenly, Lu Ran spoke up, suggesting, "If the Night Charm come too slowly, can we have Little Yuanxi deploy the Bright Fire Cage?

Let's stoke the fire a bit and draw the Night Charm over?"

For a moment, everyone's expressions were quite something, finding Lu Ran a bit too audacious...

Little did they know, Lu Ran really needed those souls.

Lu Ran's idea was simple: Since it's a positional battle, we can let loose a bit.

If we really accidentally attract a few more Night Charm, then let Captain Zhang Ya, Xiao Yusong, and Lang Zhixuan take them on!

Who kills Night Charm without dropping souls?

Jiang Realm Great Power, River Realm Peak's Heavenly Pride...

Just work and it's done~

Up in the tree, Zhang Ya couldn't hold back any longer and finally spoke up!

She didn't look at Lu Ran, but towards the shimmering Crescent Lake in the distance, saying sternly, "Enough is enough."

Lu Ran shrank his head, saying softly, "Oh."

His timid appearance, contrasting starkly with his earlier brash words, resembled a high school student being scolded by the teacher...

Chapter 197: Dai Yuegui

Seven days later, Crescent Lake.

The moonlight poured down, and the lake shimmered, utterly beautiful.

Directly above the lake surface, a Night Charm stood aloft in the air, exuding a regal aura.

With one hand reaching downward, her slender fingers gently plucked as if strumming the strings of a harp.

"Whoosh~ Whoosh~"

Eight Night Charm Blades crisscrossed, slaughtering the heedless humans.

On the left bank of Crescent Lake, Guan, Niu, and Qiao formed a standard position.

Niu Zhengzheng was at the forefront, having transformed into a pure meat shield.

Qiao Yuansi stood in the middle, holding a Bright Fire Cage, cloaking the trio in golden-red armor while drawing the attention of the Night Charm.

The Lantern Sect was comprehensive indeed!

Healing, defense, purification, control—they excelled in all, especially in control.

The disciples of the Lantern Sect were truly the kings of support!

But in terms of offensive power, the Lantern Sect was somewhat lacking.

Their only offensive Divine Technique, the Blazing Fire Cage, wasn't fast in flight nor wide in explosion range, making it unsuitable for killing enemies.

Instead, it was more appropriate for setting off like fireworks during festive celebrations.

At that moment, the reason Qiao Yuansi could still stand in the middle was because she was carrying a Divine Weapon on her back!

The Dawn Blade did not kill enemies, but if any flying blades approached, the Divine Weapon would immediately shatter them!

Consequently, Guan Yiren, who stood behind Qiao Yuansi, was also protected by the Divine Weapon.

"You can do it, Sister Yiren, just a little closer and my brother can cast his spell!" Qiao Yuansi encouraged the core output of their team.

"Mm." Guan Yiren's face was covered with frost, and with one hand reaching forward, her fingertips lightly tapped.

Over the past seven days, Guan Yiren and the Night Charm clan had battled round after round.

Especially the flying swords and blades frequently engaged each other in the night skies.

The Night Charm Clan was really perfect for sparring.

In such intense combat, Guan Yiren's mastery of the Divine Technique·Flying Sword Style had become more proficient.

Guan even believed that this week of intensive training was comparable to several months of her past experiences!

"Whoosh~ Whoosh~"

Eight flying swords, following her graceful fingertip movements, entangled fiercely with eight flying blades and increasingly neared the Night Charm in the night sky.

"Hiss!"

The Night Charm grew increasingly aggravated, losing her composure.

Qiao Yuansi immediately raised a Bright Fire Cage.

The dark-red lantern, only serving as a light source, signaled to Guan Yiren and Lu Ran.

On the right bank of Crescent Lake, by the edge of the woods.

Lu Ran hid behind a large tree, revealing only half of his face, gazing at the battlefield in the night sky.

As Qiao Yuansi released the Bright Fire Cage, Lu Ran's eyes sharpened, seizing the moment: "Meh~~~"

"Hm?" The Night Charm abruptly turned her head, looking towards the right bank of the lake.

This momentary diversion on the battlefield was fatal for her.

"Whoosh! Whoosh!"

The combat zone of blades and swords was already close to the Night Charm.

Now, with her attention diverted, her control over the flying blades lapsed momentarily.

Three flying swords instantly broke free from the entanglement of blades and directly stabbed at the Night Charm.

Guan Yiren's eyes were icy cold, and those gently tapping fingertips suddenly flicked upward.

One sword lifted the veil, one sword sealed the throat, one sword penetrated the skull.

The cold brilliance flickered, exceedingly sharp.

"Got it~" Qiao Yuansi quietly cheered, also admiring Guan Yiren's rapid growth in her heart.

Those flying swords were frighteningly precise, seemingly involving "micro-control" level manipulation.

As Guan Yiren's combat power increased, Qiao Yuansi could naturally follow the team to achieve better results.

"You've inconvenienced my brother." Guan Yiren turned her head, looking towards the woods across the lake.

From behind a tree, she faintly saw half a figure.

So different from a week ago.

This powerful Immortal Sheep Believer had restrained his sharpness, focusing solely on assisting her.

Both being seventeen or eighteen-year-olds and proud Heavens Chosens, Guan asked herself if she could not be as generous.

Spending her time dressing someone else.

Lu Ran did it, without a single complaint.

Even more, Guan placed Lu Ran on a higher pedestal.

After all, Lu Ran had also been chosen by the "Heavenly Pride" and had a Divine Weapon by his side, which were real achievements.

Despite this, Lu Ran willingly demeaned himself to support her training.

Where did Guan know that Lu Ran did not care who killed the Night Charm?

As long as the Dead Souls were in place, any command was fine~

"It's okay, it's okay." Qiao Yuansi waved her little hand, "Sister Yiren brought him here just to enhance strengthening, right?"

"Mm." The expressionless Guan Yiren showed a slight smile on her face.

Indeed, she had benefited from Little Yuanxi.

Lu Ran, this brother, cared for his sister everyone could see it.

The Divine Weapon on Qiao Yuansi's back not only protected Little Yuanxi but also added a layer of safety to Guan Yiren's life.

Actually, Guan Yiren could sense the special feelings of Lu Ran.

Ever since meeting, Lu Ran was particularly friendly to both Guan and Niu.

Back then, Niu Zhengzheng was full of doubts about Lu Ran, and back then, Guan almost hurt Lu Ran.

Regarding various incidents encountered along the way, Lu Ran casually dealt with and glossed over them.

The underlying meaning was self-explanatory.

"You have a good brother." Guan Yiren reached out and gently ruffled Qiao Yuansi's hair.

"Mm-hmm!" Hearing Sister Yiren praise Lu Ran, Qiao Yuansi immediately felt happier and turned her head to look across the lake.

Beside her, Niu Zhengzheng scratched his head: "Actually, I'm quite wronged too."

"Wronged about what?" Qiao Yuansi rolled her eyes at Niu Zhengzheng, "You've also improved in training, now you can block flying blades."

Niu Zhengzheng: "..."

Indeed!

In stand this way, either deflecting the flying blades or getting hit by them.

Over the week, the number of times he got hit did indeed decrease.

"Let's stop here." From the nearby woods, came the voice of the leader Zhang Ya, "It's time for us to go back."

Her words were also transmitted to everyone's ears through an invisible earpiece.

"Is it time?" Lu Ran's voice came through the earpiece.

"You should go." Zhang Ya maintained a businesslike demeanor.

Lu Ran: "Now that I'm here, let's play a bit longer~"

Zhang Ya's face darkened, only feeling her temples thumping!

Strangely enough, Lu Ran always felt she was like a strict class teacher, and Zhang Ya treated Lu Ran like a proud and presumptuous student.

Sure enough, people are mutually influential.

As soon as Lu Ran spoke, Zhang Ya felt a surge of anger!

Guan Yiren reached for her ear, speaking softly: "Next time, I'll bring you again."

She perceived her own indebtedness to Lu Ran, and determined that next time she would let Lu Ran train intensely.

The young girl's cool voice, transmitted via the earpiece, reached everyone's ears.

Even making Xiao Yusong and Lang Zhixuan look at each other with odd expressions.

Although they were a few years older than Guan Yiren, they had grown up together and naturally knew Miss Guan's temperament.

It was rare for Miss Guan to take the initiative to speak.

And this voice, why did it even sound a bit tender?

"Oh." Lu Ran, looking rather regretful, responded in a low voice.

The Night Charm Evil Sculptures in the Sculpture Garden had not advanced to River Realm.

What made Lu Ran even more uncomfortable was that whenever the sculpture was at the fifth stage, facing a major boundary upgrade, the required number of Dead Souls was uncertain.

That was really annoying.

These seven days, everyone had killed no less than two hundred Night Charms.

The risks involved, upon reflection, were still frightening.

Mostly from the Stream Realm and River Realm, both realms were roughly equivalent in numbers.

According to the standard of one hundred Dead Souls of the same realm advancing the Evil Sculpture by one level, Lu Ran had already accumulated enough.

But apparently, breaking through a major realm for the Evil Sculpture required more Dead Souls.

"Let's go, I'll take you back to the city." Xiao Yusong came up to Lu Ran, patting him on the shoulder.

"Mm..."

As everyone converged, Xiao Yusong's palm blossomed with a black Other Shore Flower.

In these days, the group had barely traveled any distance.

Whenever they returned to the city to rest, Xiao Yusong would open a flower.

When they returned to the lake area to hunt, Xiao Yusong would again open a flower.

Very convenient!

Every time he saw this Other Shore Flower, Lu Ran envied it immensely.

It was clearly black, yet in Lu Ran's eyes, it appeared so enchantingly beautiful.

Really, the more one looked, the more attractive it seemed~

When would he be able to enjoy such a flower himself?

Lu Ran admired the Other Shore Flower, and as the phantom image expanded and then contracted, everyone was directly transported back to the main city.

"Brother Xiao." Lu Ran suddenly spoke, "This Divine Method, can it directly transport someone outside the Demon Cave?"

"It can." Xiao Yusong nodded, "But my current strength is insufficient, and the Divine Method Grade isn't high enough."

Hearing this, Lu Ran became even more intrigued.

To be able to directly teleport from the human world into the Demon Cave?

Truly a cheat technique for sneaking in!

"You all go back." Zhang Ya looked at everyone, urging them to leave.

Qiao Yuansi was very polite, her voice sweet: "Thank you, Leader Zhang, for taking care of us these days."

Zhang Ya's attitude softened slightly: "Everyone go back, it's the twenty-fifth of the twelfth month, go back and prepare for the New Year."

"It's New Year's~" Little Yuanxi regained her energetic demeanor.

Thinking about the upcoming New Year's Eve and Lantern Festival, she became exceedingly happy.

Hoping this year, Mother would be a bit understanding!

Not so stern, punishing with kneeling at the slightest offense~

Hmm... Yes, she would make that her birthday wish this year!

"Goodbye, Leader Zhang."

"Goodbye, leader." Everyone bid farewell to Zhang Ya, and under Lang Zhixuan's lead, they ascended around the stone column.

Under the beautiful moonlight sending them off, Lu Ran, with a reasonably good harvest, finally left the Night Charm Demon Cave.

As Lu Ran exited the central building, he couldn't help but raise his hand, covering his face in front.

The warm winter sun was obscured by clouds and not too dazzling.

But Lu Ran had grown accustomed to the night and needed some time to adjust.

"Little Brother Kiddo!" Lang Zhixuan came to Lu Ran's side with a hearty laugh, grabbing his shoulder.

"Just call me Lu Ran." Lu Ran said helplessly.

Lang Zhixuan had been calling him that for days.

The problem was, Lu Ran didn't think of himself as little...

"Isn't that too formal?" Lang Zhixuan laughed, "On the fifteenth of the second month, I'll definitely watch the live stream."

Looking forward to your performance, haha!

Teach those proud and arrogant Heaven's Chosens a good lesson!"

Lu Ran looked puzzled: "Since you say so, then just call me Master Ran."

Lang Zhixuan: ?

The student turned out to be me?

Lu Ran pursed his lips and smiled, sending a classic expression to the other party.

Whether he could teach others a lesson, Master Ran wasn't sure.

But Master Ran knew, the Lang student before him had clearly learned his lesson!

The haughty East Thunder believer, after just seven days of lessons, had completely calmed down.

No more questioning, no more resentment, speaking more and more pleasantly.

So... should he try harder and make all the Heaven's Chosens behave?

Chapter 198: on Jinghong Peak

"Bro," Qiao Yuansi ran out of the central building.

"What's up?" Lu Ran turned his head to look.

Qiao Yuansi pouted and shook her phone, "Mom said for us to go home first.

She's really busy and probably won't be able to come back until New Year's Day."

Although Lu Ran was mentally prepared, he couldn't help but sigh, "That busy, huh..."

Guan Yiren suddenly spoke up, "Senior Qiao must be busy with Jinghong Peak."

"Jinghong Peak?" Lu Ran questioned.

He was unsure if he had pronounced those three words correctly.

Guan Yiren turned around, lifted her head towards Divine Sword One, and bowed respectfully before explaining:

"My Sword One sect is transforming a mountain peak in the northern part of Beijing."

Lu Ran nodded thoughtfully.

The word 'transforming' seemed a bit awkward, but he understood her meaning.

Mountains are not renowned for their height, but for the spiritual presence within.

A plain mountain once reorganized by the disciples of Sword One and surmounted with lofty palaces becomes an abode for a manifestation of Lord Jian Yi.

The fortunate peak that welcomes Lord Jian Yi is thus turned into a "Spirit Mountain."

From then on, imbued with Divine Power, it becomes a place of pilgrimage for all beings.

Lu Ran understood this because there were already eight such Spirit Mountains in and around Beijing.

Clearly, Lord Jian Yi was intensifying her control over her base of operations while expanding outward.

From the perspective of the common people, the establishment of Spirit Mountains offered tremendous benefits.

With thick Divine Power on the mountains, they naturally attracted the Evil Demon Clan during the nights of the full moon, sharing the city's burden.

For the Sword One sect, it meant that the Divine Lady was extending her influence and that the disciples had another place for tranquil cultivation.

As for Da Xia's perspective... well, Lu Ran didn't have the insight or wisdom to know how they played the game of power at the higher echelons.

Xiao Yusong spoke up, "Shall I drive you two siblings home?"

"Uh-huh," nodded Qiao Yuansi, grabbing Lu Ran's arm, "Shall we go eat at Burger King?"

Lu Ran smiled at Little Yuanxi's cravings, "Since we're free now, let's go see Mom."

"Oh?" Qiao Yuansi looked at Lu Ran curiously, "I remember you sleeping all day, how come you have so much energy now?"

Don't you want to rest at home?"

Lu Ran shrugged his shoulders, "I haven't done any work these past few days, just shouting orders, so I'm not tired!"

Guan Yiren: "..."

"Hehe~" Qiao Yuansi couldn't help but chuckle.

"Let's go, get in the car, I'll take you," Xiao Yusong called out to everyone, heading for the parking lot.

"Thanks, Brother Xiao!" Qiao Yuansi smiled sweetly.

The vast expanse of Beijing was not the small alley of a town.

If you were in a small town, a twenty-minute drive would get you to the northern suburbs.

But to reach the so-called northern suburbs from Beijing... well, you'd just have to drive.

Driving towards the city's edge,

towards Wu Lie River province...

Although Xiao Yusong had a Teleportation Skill, he needed to set coordinates to teleport.

Luckily, the Night Charm Demon Cave was located in the northwest area of Beijing, which saved a significant distance.

Not until 9:30 in the morning did Xiao Yusong drop the siblings at the entrance of a village.

To get closer to Jinghong Peak, there was no road to follow.

The siblings had to make their way up the mountain on their own.

"Sister Yiren, would you like to come and see?" asked Qiao Yuansi as she got out of the car.

Guan Yiren shook her head, "Spirit Mountain is not yet finished, I won't disturb."

"Oh, okay, then see you after New Year!" Qiao Yuansi waved goodbye to everyone.

"See you," Lu Ran nodded in acknowledgment.

Guan Yiren looked at Lu Ran and whispered, "Thank you."

"Hehe," Lu Ran just smiled, saying nothing more.

From Guan Yiren's perspective, Lu Ran had indeed invested a lot of time and effort.

But the problem was, Lu Ran had also reaped a lot of benefits for himself.

So, not selling out was Lu Ran's final stand.

The siblings watched the car leave and then turned to look at the path leading to the small village.

Beside the road stood a large stone with three bold characters inscribed on it — Emperor Village.

"Goodness gracious~" Lu Ran grinned, "Emperor, that's quite a name."

It was predictable that once Jinghong Peak was completed, the villages within a certain radius at the foot of Spirit Mountain would be largely spared the incursions of the Evil Demon Clan.

Qiao Yuansi looked at the knife in Lu Ran's hand and mused, "Do we really need to climb the mountain?"

Lu Ran raised an eyebrow slightly, "What are you thinking?"

"How about flying with the Dawn Blade?" Qiao Yuansi playfully said, "Brother, carry me~"

Lu Ran: "..."

Qiao Yuansi patted Lu Ran's shoulder, "Quick, quick, squat down."

Lu Ran squatted down, mumbling, "Why not just fly yourself with the lantern?"

"My brother loves me the most!" Qiao Yuansi giggled, wrapping her arms around Lu Ran's neck, and with a light jump...

In an instant, Lu Ran mockingly stumbled forward.

Qiao Yuansi: ???

Is he calling me fat?

"You drama king!" Qiao Yuansi bumped her forehead against the back of Lu Ran's head, discontentedly saying, "You were Heavenly Flying and Earthly Escaping in the Demon Cave!

Now you're going to fall over just carrying me?"

"Hehe," Lu Ran chuckled, "Hold on tight, the blade's about to fly."

"I'm not like you, I... Whoa!" Qiao Yuansi held Lu Ran's neck tightly, feeling the Gale howling past her ears.

Lu Ran held the handle of the knife and shot straight into the forest.

Jinghong Peak was not hard to find.

As Lu Ran ventured deeper into the mountains, he saw disciples of Sword One flying on their swords.

Soon, a figure flew towards them.

The woman wore a classical white dress, her countenance ice-cold, fitting the stereotypical image of a Sword One Believer.

"Halt, both of you!"

The woman approached on her sword and blocked Lu Ran's path.

Since Lu Ran was hanging onto the knife handle for flight, it was clear to the discerning eye that it was a Divine Weapon, so the Sword One Believer was relatively accommodating.

With a thought from Lu Ran, the Dawn Blade hovered in mid-air.

The young woman asked, "Where are you two headed?"

"To Jinghong Peak," said Lu Ran.

The woman sized up the two of them, "You are not disciples of our sect, why do you come here?"

Qiao Yuansi tilted her head and looked at the Sword One Believer, "Our mom is Qiao Wanjun.

I just called her, and she said she's not coming home until New Year's Eve, so we wanted to come see her."

"Senior Qiao?" The woman was somewhat surprised and looked them over again.

Qiao Yuansi offered, "Shall I call her again for you to confirm?"

The woman nodded slightly, "That would be best."

"Just wait, okay? Coming up!" Qiao Yuansi fumbled with her phone.

Upon further confirmation, the woman finally nodded, "Follow me."

"Whew~"

The woman led the way with Sword Flight, and Lu Ran followed closely.

As they flew, Lu Ran couldn't help but feel a bit odd.

He saw a large mountain gate hidden deep in the mountains and stairways leading to the peak.

What surprised Lu Ran was to see Sword One Believers, all females, carrying stones up the mountain.

All without exception were women of varying heights, mostly leaned in stature.

So... they all came here to carry stones up the mountain?

Moreover, since Sword One Believers could fly, why would they opt to carry building materials by foot?

Lu Ran was puzzled but didn't ask aloud.

He didn't know what rules Lord Jian Yi had established...

Led by the young woman, the siblings flew all the way to the peak, amazed at what they saw.

The apex had been leveled, and various stone and wooden structures, though not yet completed, were scattered across the top.

Lu Ran, being there, became the odd one out.

Because the Sword One sect did not take male disciples!

Even with the young woman's guidance, Lu Ran had to answer many questions.

However, once Lu Ran identified himself as the son of Qiao Wanjun, the Sword One Believers eased their attitudes and let him pass without delay.

Clearly, Qiao Wanjun held a certain status within the Sword One sect.

As for what her exact position was, Lu Ran was not sure.

About Divine Sect matters, she rarely spoke of them to the siblings.

"Sister, where's mom?" Qiao Yuansi curiously looked around.

"Senior Qiao is on the back mountain, over there."

The two followed the woman as they flew to the back mountain, where no one else was to be seen, only tranquility.

At the edge of a snowy peak and cliff, Lu Ran finally saw the silhouette he had long missed.

She stood motionless, quietly.

"Please," the Sword One Believer said softly, not daring to approach and disturb, and quietly withdrew.

Lu Ran landed steadily on the peak, observing the tall and graceful figure.

She wore a white and gold dress with an antique charm, and her long, pitch-black hair fluttered gently in the wind.

Sensing someone behind her, the woman finally turned.

That was when Lu Ran saw her wearing a white veil covering the lower half of her face.

Therefore, her salient brows and indifferent eyes stood out even more.

"Mom," Lu Ran called out.

Lord Mother was already in her mid-thirties but looked quite young.

In this unique era, people married and had children early.

Plus, with Qiao Wanjun's high cultivation level, she almost seemed like a Fairy who had descended from the heavens, radiant and lively.

Lu Ran would like to describe her with "Unrivalled Charm," but it might seem like he's praising his own mother too much...

As a son, Lu Ran's perception of his mother naturally had a filter.

In his eyes, Lord Mother was no less remarkable than Divine-Sword One.

Although this view would probably not be agreed upon by others.

Well... it didn't matter.

One day in the future, when the Divine Sculpture of Divine-Sword One took on the likeness of his mother...

Everyone would agree then, wouldn't they?

At this thought, Lu Ran hurriedly composed himself.

Such 'blasphemous' thoughts had to be kept well hidden.

"Ranran has come," Qiao Wanjun's voice was soft.

With just one phrase, Lu Ran felt as if the entire frigid mountain had melted.

As a disciple of Sword One, Qiao Wanjun undeniably had a cold and indifferent aura.

But as a mother, the smile on her face upon seeing Lu Ran was so tender.

Lu Ran pressed his lips together.

Great,

She's even more like the Jian Yi in my heart.

Chapter 199: Astonishing Swan Shadow

Between the gods and her son, whom would she choose?

Lu Ran tried to restrain himself, yet he couldn't help but let his mind wander.

The gods would eventually notice the existence of the Sculpture Garden; whether he revealed it voluntarily or it got exposed inadvertently, in any event, the All Gods would never spare him.

When the moment came, and the gods drew their weapons to slaughter him, would his mother stand by his side?

"Mom," Qiao Yuansi called out, awakening Lu Ran from his deep thoughts.

Qiao Wanjun nodded slightly, not looking at her daughter.

Immediately, Qiao Yuansi pouted.

Qiao Wanjun observed Lu Ran quietly, and after a long pause, she slowly raised a hand.

That hand was slender and pale, like an exquisite piece of art.

It had also descended upon Lu Ran's head time and again.

Lu Ran certainly understood the gesture; hesitating for a moment, he still stepped forward.

The closer he got to Qiao Wanjun, the more oppressive the atmosphere became.

Auras may be invisible, but they were indeed tangible.

Fortunately, her eyes smiled gently.

This was quite a paradoxical scene.

Qiao Wanjun was clearly an aggressor, her presence crushing all beings around her.

At the same time, she was strenuously softening herself, consoling the mortal before her.

"It seems you've grown taller."

Qiao Wanjun's voice was soft, and her raised hand descended upon Lu Ran's head.

Lu Ran spoke, "Just came out from the Demon Cave. I'm dirty."

Despite saying that, Lu Ran did not dodge.

Qiao Wanjun smiled and didn't mind.

Slowly, her palm moved down, a single slender finger gently tracing the contours of Lu Ran's face.

This face was still somewhat green.

Yet his eyes had toughened a bit.

Lu Ran spoke softly, "Mom."

"Mm," Qiao Wanjun came back to her senses, "You've become much stronger."

Her hand fell to grasp his, the one clutching the Dawn Blade.

Qiao Yuansi still pouted, "Mom noticed, huh? I thought you only had eyes for Brother."

Qiao Wanjun's beautiful eyes gently looked at Lu Ran,

"Indeed, I first saw the blade, and then, I found this one."

Lu Ran suddenly exclaimed, "How long have you been standing here? Your hand is ice cold!"

"Starting to care about me now?" Qiao Wanjun rotated her wrist.

The sudden movement startled Lu Ran.

Holding Lu Ran's hand meant she also grasped the Dawn Blade, sweeping toward Lu Ran's neck.

Lu Ran instinctively resisted, but in terms of strength, he was no match for her.

"Buzz!"

The Dawn Blade immediately rebelled, unwilling to harm its master.

The next moment, Lu Ran's pupils shrank slightly!

The mighty Divine Weapon was equally unable to escape the woman's control; she held it, inch by inch, pressing toward its master's throat.

The process was excruciatingly slow, each moment a heart-wrenching ordeal!

Qiao Wanjun obviously did not intend to harm Lu Ran; she was giving the Divine Weapon the chance to resist.

"Buzz!!"

The Dawn Blade trembled violently, a layer of rosy light spilling over the blade.

Qiao Wanjun paused, looking at the beautiful red halo, whispering, "As expected."

Finally, she released her hold.

At the same time, Lu Ran's palm was violently jolted away from the hilt.

"Whoosh!!"

The Dawn Blade, constantly resisting, suddenly lost its opposition and, like a wild horse breaking free, flew in the opposite direction, burying itself in the snowy ground.

"Don't!" Lu Ran hurriedly reached out, positioning himself beside Qiao Wanjun.

Because the Dawn Blade, now aloft, reversed direction and pointed directly at the woman.

Qiao Wanjun remained motionless, completely unconcerned by the Divine Weapon's threat.

She quietly observed Lu Ran, enjoying the sight of her child protecting her.

After more than a dozen seconds, Lu Ran finally calmed the Dawn Blade and slung it behind his back.

He lifted his gaze to the divine woman before him, "Mom, what are you doing? If you wanted to see the Divine Weapon, I could have simply asked it to demonstrate."

While he spoke, a storm of thoughts whirled through Lu Ran's heart.

What level of power did his mother possess?

Not even a Divine Weapon could contend with her?

Sword One was not known for strength, so this must be attributed to her own level of power!

Lu Ran sighed inwardly. His mother, as a Human Clan believer, was able to achieve such might.

Then how powerful could the gods themselves be?

Qiao Wanjun stood with her hands behind her, a hint of pride in her eyes, "The blade lives up to its name. What he couldn't accomplish, you've done for him."

"Huff!"

A shadow suddenly emanated from the Dawn Blade behind Lu Ran.

The Artifact Spirit appeared displeased, its gaze fixed on the woman.

Qiao Wanjun looked up at another "son," her eyebrows lifting slightly with apparent surprise at the Artifact Spirit's image.

After all, now that the Dawn Blade belonged to her son, it made sense for it to be as it was.

Lu Ran sensed a shift in Qiao Wanjun's demeanor.

Initially, she had been indifferent to the Divine Weapon's feelings, even forcibly using it to attack its master.

Now, she gave a polite nod of acknowledgment, whispering softly, "Alright."

Those two words weren't a conventional apology; rather, they seemed more like placation.

But coming from a powerful Sword One believer, they were almost equivalent to an apology.

Lu Ran grasped the hilt with a reversed hand and, through their shared consciousness, the Artifact Spirit slowly retracted into the blade.

Qiao Wanjun's eyes met Lu Ran's, "Don't be disheartened. Once it opens the Divine Weapon Domain, it will show another side. Then it will be quite difficult for me to wield it."

Lu Ran nodded thoughtfully.

A weapon that manifested an Artifact Spirit was merely a Divine Weapon in the eyes of mortals.

In the eyes of a powerful believer, was the Dawn Blade simply an inferior item?

Only once it had unlocked the Divine Weapon Domain would the Dawn Blade be truly a "Divine Weapon"?!

"Mom, look at me!" Qiao Yuansi complained, "Here stands your precious daughter!"

Qiao Wanjun still fixed her gaze on Lu Ran, "Ever thought about what kind of Domain the Dawn Blade might have?"

Qiao Yuansi: "..."

Her little face puffed up with indignation, yet she dared not act too rashly.

In the end, she huffed and huffed and squatted in the snow to play...

Lu Ran, however, was intrigued. To get pointers from his mother would be invaluable.

He promptly shared his own ideas and how the Dawn Blade had been promoted, explaining everything to her.

It was only after Lu Ran finished speaking that she whispered, "Not a bad train of thought."

Lu Ran asked, "Mom, do you have any suggestions?"

Qiao Wanjun shook her head, "You already possess the qualities to cultivate a Divine Weapon; I can't teach you anything. You have your unique experiences and your own path."

Lu Ran inwardly regretted, "Oh."

Qiao Wanjun sighed softly, "I had hoped to keep you here, but now it seems you are becoming increasingly inseparable from Rain Alley City."

Lu Ran nodded silently.

Breaking through the dawn or gifting humanity, the foundation of it all, the root of a man and blade's rise—everything lay in Rain Alley.

From this perspective, his mother had indeed provided guidance—take root in Rain Alley.

Qiao Wanjun spoke plainly, "If one day, you and the Dawn Blade unlock the Domain but are unable to possess it, remember to tell your mother."

Lu Ran realized something and looked at his divine, resplendent mother,

"Mom, will you help me shatter that Divine Weapon?"

Through the veil, Lu Ran caught a glimpse of a faint smile on Qiao Wanjun's face.

She simply smiled and did not respond.

Good Lord~

Lu Ran thought, it might be time to write a book!

"My Overbearing Female Sword Immortal Mom"

Wait a minute!

What if that Divine Weapon wasn't in the hands of the Human Clan but instead belonged to one of the gods?

Lu Ran hesitated for a moment and chose not to ask.

Currently weak, some probes were unnecessary and might inadvertently expose his disloyalty.

"How do you find this place?" Qiao Wanjun turned around, gazing at the vast snow-covered mountains, her eyes somewhat lost.

Lu Ran looked up and admitted, "It's majestic."

Qiao Wanjun, "If I were to seclude myself here and you didn't see me for a few years, would you come to see your mother?"

"Of course," Lu Ran replied without hesitation.

"Eh? Mom is going to seclude herself?" From the snowy ground, Qiao Yuansi raised her head, quickly asking.

Finally deigning to speak to her daughter, Qiao Wanjun said, "Isn't this what you've been hoping for? When I'm in seclusion, nobody will constrain you anymore, and you won't have to complain about me behind my back."

"Wha—what?" Qiao Yuansi's face soured, "I never complained behind your back! I like being with Mom."

Her stammering speech clearly lacked credibility.

Qiao Wanjun, "Then I'll keep you by my side and have you seclude with me to cultivate."

"Well... that..." Qiao Yuansi opened her mouth, her voice trailing off, "I'd rather not."

Lu Ran took the opportunity to ask, "Mom, is your seclusion for breaking through to a new level of strength?"

"Go back," Qiao Wanjun said softly, "On Yuanxi, I will come back and be with you."

Lu Ran: "..."

She remained as ever, keeping the affairs of her sect and her own strength shrouded in mystery.

It's unclear whether this was a rule set by the gods.

Qiao Wanjun turned to Qiao Yuansi, instructing, "Once back, listen to your brother and don't be naughty."

"Oh," Qiao Yuansi replied softly.

"Go ahead," Qiao Wanjun issued the leave.

The siblings exchanged a glance, not saying anything more.

Lu Ran drew the Dawn Blade from his back, and Qiao Yuansi took the Black Ice Sword, quickly stepping forward.

She took Lu Ran's Silent Night Blade, then nimbly leapt up, clinging to Lu Ran's back.

"Head home early." Lu Ran whispered, promptly leaping high, gripping the hilt tightly, and diving down from the mountaintop.

He always felt his mother's gaze following him.

Moments later, Lu Ran still couldn't resist, letting the Dawn Blade carry him down while he turned his head toward the peak.

At the summit, Qiao Wanjun stood silently, like a solitary fairy cut off from the world.

The mountain wind lifted flecks of frost, blowing her long hair and dress into a gentle dance.

Lu Ran's vision was exceptional; he could see so much.

Her eyes, which should have been cold, were now filled with warmth and affection, silently watching him depart.

Lu Ran silently turned his head to face the snowy forest below.

His desire for strength grew even more intense!

Lu Ran didn't know when he would be qualified to lay his cards on the table with his mother.

He simply hoped that on the day the gods drew their swords, his mother would still look at him with that same affectionate and gentle gaze, standing steadfastly by his side.

Mm... she surely would.

She definitely would!

Lu Ran clutched the hilt of the Dawn Blade, trusting not only his mother but also believing that he could handle all this.

If there must be a battle one day, those so-called Sword Immortals...

Sword One deserves it,

And so might the family matriarch!

Chapter 200: Immortal Scenic Garden

After arriving at Emperor Village, Lu Ran and Qiao Yuansi hailed a cab and returned to their home, also located in the north of the city.

The residential community had a pleasant name—Immortal Scenic Garden.

Inside the community, it was indeed serene and tastefully quiet, but the so-called "immortal scenery" didn't refer to these mundane landscapes.

Rather, while residing here, you really could behold the divine presence of Divine-Sword One!

Like Divine·Beifeng, beneath Lord Sword One's feet, there was also an ancient city brimming with antique charm.

The city had a rather domineering name: Jiantianque City.

Jiantianque City was situated on the eastern side of the Immortal Scenic Garden community.

It is worth mentioning that most of the residents in the Immortal Scenic Garden were Sword One Sect's disciples or the families of Sword One's believers.

So, every morning, figures would appear on the balconies of various households throughout the community.

People would gaze towards the east and toward that towering figure beneath the rising sun, and would kneel in sincere worship.

Hmm... It's sort of a unique landscape born from special geographical conditions.

In his earlier days, Lu Ran too, under his mother's insistence, would gaze towards Jiantianque City along with her and pray in worship.

Even though the Sword One sect didn't accept male disciples, this didn't stop his mother from fantasizing...

"Ah~"

Inside room 1501 in a residential building in the southeast part of the community, Qiao Yuansi let out an odd intonation.

She stretched fiercely and with a relaxed body declared, "Finally home at last!"

Lu Ran surveyed the room's decor, which hadn't changed much from his memory.

Compared to his father, his mother's living conditions were much better.

In Rain Alley City, he and his father lived in an old, shabby house that was both small and run-down.

Then look at his mother's place!

A 160-square meter flat, with four rooms, one living room, double balconies, clear from north to south, with excellent lighting, and with the presence of divinity just on the balcony.

It was simply too good!

Clearly, ever since his parents divorced and his mother returned to Beijing, her standard of living had skyrocketed.

Little Yuanxi once mentioned that when she and her mother first returned to Beijing, life was not so affluent.

But, after years of struggle and with increasing contributions to the Sword One sect, she got everything she deserved.

Eventually, she moved into this special, upscale community with Little Yuanxi.

This also showed from another angle just how nostalgic Lu Ran was and how strong-willed he was.

Keep in mind, after their father's death, Lu Ran was taken in by his mother, and they lived together for three years.

During these three years, Lu Ran certainly enjoyed everything here.

As the saying goes: It's hard to transition from luxury to frugality.

Yet, Lu Ran stubbornly left, leaving such a favorable living environment behind.

He returned alone to his rainy hometown and moved into the childhood "old shabby small."

Thinking of this, Lu Ran's expression turned somewhat odd.

When he left, although his mother was powerful, she didn't seem to occupy any particularly important position within the sect.

Yet, this time returning, and by chance, Lu Ran had the fortune of visiting Jinghong Peak.

From the reactions of the many Sword One disciples, his mother's status seemed rather high?

Did this mean that in the years he had been gone, his mother had risen high in the ranks, becoming powerful and influential?

"Dammit."

Lu Ran slapped his forehead.

Am I being a burden?

No, it's not just me!

Lu Ran thought of his deceased father.

Weren't we both burdens?

After all, before their parents divorced, his mother always followed his father, living together in the "old shabby small"...

"What's wrong?" Qiao Yuansi curiously looked at her brother.

"Nothing." Lu Ran waved his hand dismissively.

Hopefully, it was just a case of accumulated effort finally paying off for his mother.

If her career had been stagnant because she was caring for him...

Then Lu Ran would indeed feel quite guilty.

Hmm... but that's probably not the case.

After all, while Lu Ran was living here, his mother was also very busy.

With this thought, Lu Ran relaxed slightly.

"Brother! Brother?" Qiao Yuansi reached out with her little hand and waved it in front of Lu Ran's face, "Why are you always in a daze?"

"It's been too long since I last came back," Lu Ran replied offhandedly.

"I've already cleaned up your room for you!" Qiao Yuansi looked at Lu Ran with beaming eyes, with an air of 'please praise me.'

"Thank you." Lu Ran patted Little Yuanxi on the head and, knowing the way, headed to the southeast bedroom.

"Oh, right, brother!" Qiao Yuansi reminded him, "Don't forget to pay respects to the divine."

"Okay." Lu Ran nodded.

He first went to his mother's bedroom, then Little Yuanxi's bedroom, and paid respects to both Divine-Sword One and Divine-Lantern.

He thought back to last New Year's Eve when, not yet a believer, Lu Ran had been brought by his mother to kneel before Divine-Sword One's Divine Sculpture.

The Lu Ran of today, however, stood firm.

He didn't stay long in their bedrooms, and after saying "Excuse me," he left.

When he returned to his own small bedroom, Lu Ran saw the toy placed on the bed.

It was a cartoon toy in the shape of a hamburger.

Obviously, Little Yuanxi had put it there, as if deliberately reminding him of something...

"Heh." Lu Ran couldn't help but shake his head and smile.

...

In the following days, Lu Ran took Little Yuanxi out for burgers every noon.

Truthfully, Lu Ran was about to tire of them, but Little Yuanxi seemed happier day by day.

According to her theory, she wasn't eating food, but memories.

The warmth of that night, when she had been punished by their mother to kneel and was hungry in the middle of the night, and her brother had secretly brought her comfort.

Wow~

Little Yuanxi, not even 17 years old, already started reminiscing.

However, Lu Ran had no place to judge his sister, as he too was someone often lost in memories.

During these days at home, Lu Ran accompanied Little Yuanxi in catching up on TV dramas, often went shopping, and bought various New Year goods.

Well... really just a bunch of snacks.

Life seemed to go back to how it was before, something Qiao Yuansi had long dreamt of.

The only difference was that even when watching TV dramas, there was always mist swirling around Lu Ran's body.

Not to mention that just on the east side of Immortal Scenic Garden, there was Jiantianque City, and right in their home, there were two Divine Sculptures.

The cultivation environment, of course, was very good.

This also elicited complaints from Little Yuanxi, who said her brother had changed and was no longer focused on keeping her company.

After all, when you're engrossed in a TV show, and suddenly a wisp of fog floats past your face, it's really quite annoying...

Soon, the time came to New Year's Eve.

That morning, Lu Ran woke up early, preparing to tidy up the house again to welcome their mother home.

Just as he was cleaning the coffee table in the living room, he felt a surge of energy fluctuation.

"Hm?" Lu Ran turned his head toward the northwest direction; it was his sister's bedroom.

Lu Ran's heart leaped with joy!

Was Little Yuanxi about to ascend in rank? She was at Stream Realm·Fifth Rank, poised for a breakthrough at any moment.

Or was it... Divine·Lantern in a good mood, blessing the disciples?

"Yoohoo~!" A cheer came from inside the room.

Immediately after, the door was flung open.

There Little Yuanxi appeared wearing a pink nightgown, barefoot, her face beaming with joy as she ran out: "Brother!"

Lu Ran, watching his sister adorned with Immortal Fog, immediately asked, "About to ascend?"

"Haha!" Little Yuanxi, brimming with joy, skipped towards Lu Ran, ready to hurl herself into his arms.

Lu Ran quickly got to his feet to catch the human cannonball, to avoid being knocked to the ground.

"Today is New Year's Eve!" Little Yuanxi was ecstatic, her cheeks rosy, "Just now, when I was paying respects to Lord Lantern, I made a special wish.

I wished that mom, you, and I would always be together...

Then I started to ascend!"

Lu Ran was utterly stunned.

On one hand, he felt a warm heart, grateful for having such a cute and family-loving sister.

On the other hand...

Is that how you treat an ascension?

"Yoo-hoo~" Little Yuanxi celebrated, popping champagne like mad.

Perhaps because she might ascend to the River Realm, she was too excited. She leaned close to Lu Ran's cheek and planted a hard kiss:

"Mua~"

"You..." Lu Ran looked at the girl, feeling both amused and annoyed.

Where most would grasp a sudden "flash of inspiration" tightly and make the most of the chance,

You on the other hand, didn't even stay in front of the Divine Sculpture to ascend, but came out celebrating?

"Stop celebrating and concentrate on ascending!" Lu Ran said sternly, his face serious, "If you miss this chance, who knows how long you'll have to wait!"

"I'm sharing the joy with you!" Little Yuanxi rebuffed, then giggled and darted back to her room.

She seemed to transform into a football player, even performing a goal celebration slide on her knees.

With a "plop,"

Little Yuanxi hadn't even entered her room before she knelt down, sliding towards the Divine Sculpture.

While sliding, her hands together in prayer, her figure halted steadily in front of the Divine Sculpture, and she instantly entered a state of bowed head and prayer.

It was oh so smooth~

Watching this, Lu Ran was utterly dumbfounded!

Truthfully, it's no wonder Little Yuanxi was often scolded by their mother, with that kind of action...

Lu Ran helplessly shook his head and tiptoed to the front of his sister's room, gently closing the door.

"Click~"

Just as he closed that door, the security door on the other side opened.

Lu Ran quickly walked over and saw the figure of their mother.

"Mom, Little Yuanxi is ascending," Lu Ran said in a low voice, stooping down to fetch her slippers.

"Oh?" Qiao Wanjun glanced down at Lu Ran, allowing her son to help her with her shoes, and teased, "Seems like you should come back more often."

Lu Ran paused for a moment.

It seemed that Little Yuanxi's sudden insight indeed unfolded with the wish that "the three of us will always be together."

Seeing that her son didn't speak, Qiao Wanjun asked, "Has she been mischievous these past few days?"

"No, Little Yuanxi has been good," Lu Ran finally responded.

"Hmm." Qiao Wanjun softly replied, stepping into the house, "I'll go freshen up."

Later, will you accompany me to Jiantianque?"

"Mom, I..." Lu Ran hesitated.

"What's wrong?" Qiao Wanjun stopped and turned to look at Lu Ran.

Lu Ran: "I'd rather stay home with Little Yuanxi."

Qiao Wanjun: "What she needs is quietness, not company."

Lu Ran thought for a moment, then said, "I am now an Immortal Sheep Believer; it wouldn't be right for me to go to another divine being's main city."

Due to his experience in Beifeng City last time, Lu Ran didn't want to cause any trouble for his mother.

For the sake of family, Lu Ran could of course bring his palms together, bow his head in reverence.

But the current Lu Ran, influenced by Lord Immortal Goat, had developed a hint of different feelings towards the divine beings. If he could avoid meeting the deity in person, it was best to do so.

Qiao Wanjun stared intently into Lu Ran's eyes, her voice gentle, "Is that so?"

Those eyes, as if they could see through Lu Ran's soul.

Lu Ran kept silent, avoiding her gaze.

Qiao Wanjun stepped forward and, with a gentle hand, lifted Lu Ran's face to meet her eyes,

"Tomorrow is the first day of the new year, and there will be a festival in the city. Don't you want to join me like in the previous years?"

Lu Ran: "..."

After a while, Qiao Wanjun sighed softly, "It seems you've realized the issue.

That's why, at the God Worship Platform that time, you attracted the Evil Demon Yan Zhi."

Lu Ran's heart tightened.

Since this June, mother and son had never discussed this matter face-to-face.

Following the God Worship event, his mother hadn't mentioned the Evil Demon when calling him, only gently soothing Lu Ran.

"So..." Qiao Wanjun's palm remained gentle, her thumb caressing Lu Ran's cheek, "this is why you can only attract one deity, Immortal Sheep."

"Mom, I..."