

Old Gods 211

Chapter 211: You are very good

The arrow after all remained unshot.

The Silent Night Blade surged forward, its edge glittering.

Wu Shanshan's face lost its color, a sense of extreme danger assailed her, and her pupils fiercely contracted!

Was she going to... die?

How forceful was Lu Ran's impact?

Could the water flow armor really withstand this blade?

All of this happened in an instant.

And at this moment, Wu Shanshan felt as if she were watching everything in slow motion.

It seemed that at the moment before death, powerful believers all ended up in the same situation?

With a "snap" of a crisp sound!

The Silent Night Blade swept aside abruptly, carrying with it the icy blue wooden bow and dragging Wu Shanshan's wrist along, whipping both towards the upper diagonal.

The blade did not stab towards Wu Shanshan's face.

An Immortal Sheep Believer, coming on forcefully, rammed her shoulder heavily into Wu Shanshan.

"Ah!!"

Wu Shanshan let out a piercing scream as she was knocked off the stage.

"I'm going!"

"Don't push me, stop crowding!"

Chaos erupted from below, the crowd quickly scattering.

Wu Shanshan's figure, like a cannonball, crashed diagonally downward.

Such a heavy and forceful human cannonball—students dared not catch it.

Say what you will, Wu Shanshan is a River Realm powerhouse!

No matter how awkward or defenseless she was, she was not something that students below could contend with.

Among the audience present, the most anyone achieved was the Stream Realm Fifth Rank, with many students still stuck at the Stream Realm Third or Fourth Rank...

If they got hit, they were likely to be seriously injured.

To put it more extremely:

Even if the students were smashed to pieces, Wu Shanshan's water flow armor might remain unharmed.

The difference between Stream Realm Fifth Rank and River Realm First Rank seems like only one rank, but the disparity in all aspects formed a gaping chasm that ordinary people couldn't bridge.

"Thump! Thump! Thump!"

Wu Shanshan was like a stone skipped across the surface of a lake, bouncing repeatedly off the ground and hurtling towards the distance.

The crowd instantly parted to make way, raising dust along the cleared path.

"Hisss..."

"Roar!!" Atop the stage, numerous Protective Body Canglongs roared as they charged toward their master.

Just now, Lu Ran had deliberately avoided many Canglongs while attacking Wu Shanshan, so they naturally still remained.

Between killing enemies and protecting their master, they chose the latter.

From this scene, the characteristics of Divine Technique-Canglong Thousand Shadows were clearly discernible.

Having said that, although the Canglongs flew toward their master, the sky full of arrows were determinedly hunting down their enemy!

"Swoosh~"

"Swoosh!" Countless water-stream arrows, no longer linked in series.

Covering the sky, they flew at Lu Ran from every angle.

That sight made people's hearts pound with fear!

Even though Wu Shanshan had exited the fight, the arrows she left behind were dense and emanated murderous intent!

Watching the sky full of arrows rapidly weaving their way through, a part of the student body even felt a thread of despair.

Asking themselves, could they really survive Wu Shanshan's onslaught?

Truly a Second-class God·Ash's believer.

Indeed the Divine Technique of the Southern Sea Archery Sect!

It's no wonder Wu Shanshan scored extra points with the Divine People Bureau, on the Night of Ghosts on the fifteenth of the twelfth month she must have slain many...

"Zzzt—"

Lu Ran's Immortal Hoof rose again beneath his feet, Immortal Fog swirling.

Arrows fell like rain, filling every inch of space.

The shadowy figure in the rain flickered, darting like a ghost.

The students gazed up at that dashing figure on the stage, their emotions inevitably surging.

Because Wu Shanshan was so overwhelmingly powerful, making ordinary people feel despair, thus, now as they looked at Lu Ran, their eyes were filled with even more fervor.

"Whish—"

The male teacher blew the whistle and loudly declared, "Lu Ran, victory!"

Although the outcome was decided, the dense barrage of arrows did not stop.

Lu Ran was still dodging!

"Wow— he really can dash through, even such tiny gaps... wow! Is he a live loach or what?"

"Never thought Lu Ran could actually win, he fought back even an Ash believer."

"Hey, I feel that Lu Ran's offensive moves are a bit too simplistic, the Immortal Sheep Sect is holding him back a bit."

"What do you want more? Just this one Immortal Hoof is enough to support an entire tactical system!"

"But the Immortal Sheep Sect only has one Immortal Hoof! If Lu Ran were a North Wind Believer or an East Thunder believer..."

Suddenly, the sky full of arrows suddenly lost their force, tumbling down.

Everyone sensed the oddity and immediately turned their heads to look behind.

At this moment, the crowd was still parted to the right and left, leaving the path Wu Shanshan was knocked flying.

At the end of the path, they saw Wu Shanshan shakily getting up.

The Protective Body Canglongs swirling around her had vanished without a trace.

The water stream arrows chasing down Lu Ran had also fallen to the ground, no longer pursuing him relentlessly.

Clearly, Wu Shanshan had voluntarily canceled the Divine Technique, otherwise, the arrows of the Ash Sect would have persisted for quite some time!

"Huff~"

Lu Ran slid back to the edge of the stage, the last water stream arrow falling at his feet, shattering into specks of energy.

Behind him, the crowd was silent.

On the path cleared by the crowd, Wu Shanshan walked forward.

As for this loser, the students dared not speak out in mockery.

Before the battle, a very few students dared to make remarks about Wu Shanshan behind her back.

After the battle, the terror of Wu Shanshan was laid bare for all to see.

Just because Lu Ran could defeat her, it didn't mean others could!

On the contrary, all the students were like chickens and dogs before her, to be freely trampled and slaughtered at her will...

"Sorry," Wu Shanshan said quietly.

"Hmm?" Lu Ran was quite surprised, turning his head to look.

What had he heard?

An apology?

Was this word supposed to come out of Wu Shanshan's mouth?

Before the battle began, she had come forward as a judge, claiming Lu Ran had gone too far.

This change in attitude seemed much too drastic.

Lu Ran couldn't help but sigh inwardly.

Strength, indeed, was the foundation of everything!

In this realistic and cruel world, reasoning wasn't spoken with the mouth, but enforced with the fist.

Wu Shanshan wore a complex expression, looking up at Lu Ran on the stage, and spoke again, "Sorry."

"Are you talking about the rain of arrows?" Lu Ran thought for a moment and dismissively waved his hand, "It's not necessary, that's a feature of the Divine Technique."

Hearing this, Wu Shanshan's expression became even more complex.

He was still the same as before, still so easy-going.

But he was no longer her teammate "Ranbao."

Wu Shanshan: "I..."

Lu Ran frowned, unsure of the girl's intentions as he looked at Wu Shanshan.

Wu Shanshan stared at the Silent Night Blade in Lu Ran's hand, the terrifying moment just earlier unavoidably resurfaced in her mind.

That Black Luminous Stone Blade that had nearly pierced her face ended up sparing her weapon.

Wu Shanshan really didn't think her water flow armor could withstand that blade.

How ferocious was the charge beneath the Immortal Hoof?

The continually dragon-slaying, strong charging Lu Ran, how terrifying was his momentum?

Was the just-shown scene about victory or life and death? It all depended on his momentary thought.

Others might cite the rules lightly, tossing out:

What are you afraid of? It's just a spar.

But when you're the person being "killed," do you still have the composure of "indifference when it doesn't concern you"?

Facing that ruthless and fierce blade, the domineering Lu Ran...

You feel more gratitude, fortunate that you've managed to escape with your life.

After struggling internally for a long while, Wu Shanshan bowed her head slightly and whispered:

"Sorry, not just for the arrow rain just now, but for before..."

"No." Lu Ran suddenly spoke up, finally realizing what she was trying to do.

Let's end things amicably and not continue past relationships.

"Hmm?" Wu Shanshan raised her head, looking at Lu Ran with a complex gaze.

The crowd was silent, watching this pair of male and female, most aware of their past story.

Lu Ran smiled: "You are great, I'm not worthy."

Wu Shanshan's face stiffened, and she felt very uncomfortable inside.

"Forget about me..." Lu Ran looked away from the girl, looking for Ma Tianchuan, "Next."

Lu Ran seemed easy-going, but he was actually rather temperamental.

Concerning the barrage of arrows, he truly didn't care because that was a feature of the Divine Technique.

But as for Wu Shanshan... well, next.

Lu Ran was very proud, even more so in his self-esteem.

He had no quarrel with Wu Shanshan, but if the other party looked down on him, why say more?

"Smooth with words, this kid, has the makings of a great scholar!"

Below in the crowd, Qian Hao stroked his chin, shaking his head.

Lu Ran: "..."

Qian Hao murmured under his breath, but unfortunately, Lu Ran had exceptionally keen ears.

This kid?

What happened to Ran Shen? Not even calling him Brother Ran?

Suddenly, Lu Ran turned around, pointing the blade at the plump person in the crowd, "You, come up for a one-on-one duel!"

Qian Hao: ? ? ?

Lu Ran displayed a smile with a slight press of his lips.

"Don't joke, Brother Ran!" Qian Hao wore a broad grin, "I can't withstand your few moves.

Class Leader Wu could at least stand up.

If it was me, you would shatter my body..."

This time it was Lu Ran's turn to be full of question marks.

What's with this talk!

Qian Hao took a stealthy glance at Wu Shanshan.

He saw the girl silently lowering her head, her eyes filled with sadness.

Qian Hao also remembered the condition of Kou Yingquan after his defeat.

After two battles, Lu Ran's opponents weren't physically injured.

All of them were emotionally damaged!

This little sheep, too malicious...

"Lu Ran!" Not far away, the male teacher's voice rang out, "As the victor, you can choose to rest or continue."

"Let's continue!" Lu Ran holding the blade, strode to the western side of the stage.

"Ma Tianchuan!" The teacher immediately looked toward the crowd below, "Ready?"

Ma Tianchuan, silent, strode through the crowd and leaped onto the stage.

"Hisss..." A gasp came from the crowd.

"Eh? He dares to go up?"

"Awesome! Ma Tianchuan is indeed someone to reckon with!"

"He doesn't think he's stronger than Wu Shanshan, does he?"

"Truly once the top student, truly unflinching, impressive!"

"Not at all, an old steed in his twilight years, a spent force, indeed..."

Ma Tianchuan's mouth twitched.

As a proud River Realm Believer and one of the top three of Rain Alley High, on the rise, how did he become a thing of the past?

"Both students prepare!" The teacher called loudly.

Ma Tianchuan snapped back to reality and looked at Lu Ran not far away: "Brother Lu, don't you need a rest?"

Lu Ran spun his blade: "I can't wait to compete with you."

Ma Tianchuan habitually pushed his rimless glasses: "Our battle indeed has been delayed for over half a year."

Lu Ran slightly raised his eyebrows: "Looks like you're quite confident?"

"Not at all." Ma Tianchuan shook his head.

Half a year ago, Ma Tianchuan would naturally be confident, but now, he had recognized the situation.

Ma Tianchuan drew two daggers from his waist, his expression growing solemn:

"Not daring to claim victory, just intending to give my all."

Lu Ran bent his legs slightly: "Come!"

The two locked eyes, ready to burst into conflict any second.

The teacher, whistle in mouth, mumbled, "Are you two done talking? Can I blow the whistle now?"

Lu Ran: "..."

Ma Tianchuan: "..."

"Whistle—"

Sneak attack?

The teacher suddenly blew the whistle.

Lu Ran reacted astonishingly fast, the mist at his feet billowing, propelling him forward fiercely.

On Ma Tianchuan's face, a fearsome mask appeared swiftly...

Chapter 212: Annoying Little Demon Sheep

Lu Ran was well-prepared and immediately shut his eyes, refusing to look at the fierce mask.

The teachers and students present at the scene also had flickering eyes and quickly averted their gaze.

Some of the students, who were already faint-hearted, turned pale and cried out in alarm:

"Ah!"

"Don't, don't come here..."

There was a disturbance from below, all because of the mask on Ma Tianchuan's face.

Nuosa Divine Technique·Nuo Mask Fear!

This mask was extremely fierce, with a black and red color scheme, and its style was quite rough, resembling a fierce ghost.

This technique was from God Nuosa, not from an evil spirit.

Many students also realized that Ma Tianchuan was more than just a notch stronger than the Greedy Wolf believer, Gao Zhonglin!

After all, when Ma Tianchuan fought Gao Zhonglin, he had not revealed this terrifying mask.

A crisp "ding" sound!

The Silent Night Blade and the long dagger collided fiercely, emitting a piercing noise.

Figures crisscrossed past each other, and Ma Tianchuan only felt a huge force coming at him, almost causing him to drop the dagger in his hand.

"Brother Lu, with your eyes closed, afraid to look at me, isn't it disadvantageous for battle?"

Ma Tianchuan quickly turned around, looking at the still advancing figure, and shouted loudly.

In the first battle, Lu Ran had once said to Kou Yingquan, "Look at me directly."

Now, it seemed somewhat like the tables had turned?

Ma Tianchuan's remark immediately sparked discussions among the students.

"That's way too scary!"

"Why else would the top student dare to go on stage, he's a Nuoshasha believer! Even fiercer than an evil ghost!"

"No way, how am I supposed to watch the duel?"

"I've been wanting to ask, Lu Ran doesn't have any Purification Techniques or sensory techniques; how is he fighting Ma Tianchuan?"

"Exactly! Wu Shanshan has everything she needs to absolutely demolish Ma Tianchuan! But Lu Ran... seems to be at a disadvantage!"

"It's over! Closing his eyes isn't a solution, he's blind now."

"Eh? Over here there's a Sword Lotus believer summoning the treasure lotus, come quickly, let's watch it from here!"

"Blind?" Chang Ying couldn't help but mutter quietly, "Who said my Ranbao needs to open his eyes."

Beside her, Deng Yutang's expression was quite amused, nodding subtly.

A good show to watch?

In a moment, when the classmates discovered that Lu Ran was fighting with his eyes closed, what would their reaction be?

"Brother Lu!" Ma Tianchuan's voice came from the stage again, "I won't show any mercy now!"

As he spoke, Ma Tianchuan, holding double daggers, swiftly pounced towards Lu Ran.

The gleaming daggers now showed a faint silhouette of another set of blades.

Nuosha Divine Technique·Sha Blade!

Similar to many summoned weapon Divine Techniques, Divine Technique·Sha Blade could be directly held by the caster.

It could also rely on an existing weapon to enhance output.

But this wasn't the main effect of the "Sha Blade."

The most terrifying enhancement of this technique was — soul damage!

Da Xia had many gods, nearly a hundred, with a wide variety of Divine Techniques.

However, among the many Divine Techniques, there were few that involved the "soul."

Nuosha Divine Technique·Sha Blade was one of the rare few!

That seemingly illusionary blade edge could tear apart the target's soul!

It's not to say that the gods were inept, incapable of touching the domain of the soul.

On the contrary, the gods probably all explored this aspect, and some might have made significant achievements.

However, almost none of the gods incorporated soul-related abilities into their list of Divine Techniques.

In other words: The gods did not want the Human Clan to grasp this aspect of power.

God Nuosha was an exception, of course.

As for the River Grade-Slaughter Blade, the soul damage was not so severe.

Otherwise, this technique would undoubtedly be classified within the dueling category as a "Forbidden Technique!"

The reality was:

Even if Ma Tianchuan cut Lu Ran into a thousand pieces, at most, Lu Ran would face physical death, but his soul would not be torn apart.

River Grade-Slaughter Blade would only cause minor injury and soul tremor to the opponent.

In some respects, this technique was more like a control technique.

Once the target blade struck, it could likely cause mental distraction and a state of soul unsteadiness.

On the battlefield, being distracted for even a second could spell doom!

"Ding!!"

Ma Tianchuan hurried towards Lu Ran, his daggers aiming for Lu Ran's neck, but they were fiercely parried by the Silent Night Blade.

"Hiss..." Ma Tianchuan took a sharp intake of breath, feeling his palms go numb.

The tremendous force transmitted from the Silent Night Blade almost made the daggers slip from his hand!

Was that much force possible?

Ma Tianchuan, hidden behind the mask, was filled with astonishment.

After all, Lu Ran was not the burly type, but rather slender...

"Huh~"

As Ma Tianchuan's right hand holding the dagger was swung away, he slanted his left hand in a strike.

Lu Ran leaned back, and the illusionary blade passed just in front of his throat.

That was a close call!

Ma Tianchuan: ???

Since Lu Ran's previous move was a turn and block, Ma Tianchuan hadn't realized the gravity of the situation.

But now, as they faced each other, Ma Tianchuan suddenly noticed that Lu Ran was fighting with his eyes closed?

Eyes! Closed?!

How did Lu Ran... how did he dodge that horizontal swipe?

And his control over the distance was so precise!

"Wow! Sound Positioning?"

"I told you something was off about Lu Ran, he must have secretly worshipped Lord Beifeng! Definitely!"

"He's really fighting with his eyes closed? Guessing?"

"Not sure, let's keep watching..."

The students below huddled in groups, under the protection of various auxiliary Divine Techniques, watching the duel.

Of course, they expected the battle to be exciting, but they didn't anticipate it being this bizarre!

"Zi!"

Lu Ran twisted his wrist, and the Silent Night Blade swung from top to bottom, a slanted chop!

The blade edge shallowly embedded into the water flow armor, slicing out a scar.

Chapter 213: Annoying Little Demon Sheep_2

Ma Tianchuan's face was solemn as he hastily retreated, a surge of Divine Power billowing in front of him.

In a flash, a figure, identical to Ma Tianchuan, appeared in front of Lu Ran.

Nuosha Divine Technique·Shadow of Evil!

"Sss..."

The Shadow of Evil let out a hissing sound, akin to the evil spirit on the night of the fifteenth, extremely ferocious!

It too wore a mask and wielded twin daggers, continuously stabbing at Lu Ran, targeting vital points with every move.

For a moment, the blade and the twin daggers intertwined, the clashing sounds incessant.

"Brother Lu?!"

Ma Tianchuan was startled and confused.

Lu Ran had his eyes closed all the while.

Every dodge, every block, he did with his eyes closed.

Every slash, every sweep, his movements were fluid like flowing clouds, unaffected in the slightest, and even more so, he forced the Shadow of Evil into a constant retreat!

What the...?

"Zi!"

With a fierce diagonal slash, the Shadow of Evil held the twin daggers, blocking it in place, but was overpowered.

The Silent Night Blade forcefully tore through the twin daggers, chopping directly from the left shoulder of the Shadow of Evil to the right side of its waist and abdomen.

In the blink of an eye, as the upper body of the Shadow of Evil slid downward diagonally, the section cut by the Silent Night Blade was so smooth...

"Puff—"

The Shadow of Evil shattered into mist.

Before the mist had dispersed, a figure burst out from it!

He still had his eyes tightly shut, the blade in his hand stabbing straight at Ma Tianchuan as he shouted fiercely,

"Did you call me?"

Ma Tianchuan: !!!

Ma Tianchuan's feet crumbled, and he leapt fiercely to the right, narrowly dodging the attack.

Lu Ran's feet brought forth swirling mist, and immediately he pursued Ma Tianchuan.

Ma Tianchuan was equally swift, terrifyingly fast in his movements, dodging once again.

Just in terms of agility, Lu Ran had met his match.

If it were a sprint, Lu Ran, possessing the Divine Technique·Immortal Hoof, would surely be the victor.

But in terms of bodily flexibility?

Lu Ran possessed the Evil Technique·Evil Agility of the Evil Dog Clan.

Ma Tianchuan, on the other hand, possessed the Nuosha Divine Technique·God and Ghost Entanglement.

From the name itself, one could deduce the purpose for which the Nuoshasha Ancestor created this technique.

The Nuosha Sect granted Believers agility far beyond ordinary people.

Thus, when Believers fought, their style should be as unpredictable as gods and ghosts!

They should even make their enemies feel haunted by shadowy souls, as if their lives were being snatched away.

"Ding! Ding! Ding!"

Ma Tianchuan was dodging and blocking, the more he fought, the more frightened he became.

That damn sheep went crazy!

Truly like an undying phantom!

It was Ma Tianchuan who had activated Divine Technique·God and Ghost Entanglement, but it was he who seemed to be the one haunted!

"Huff!" Sweat streamed down Ma Tianchuan's forehead, his Divine Power rippling outwards.

"Ah!"

"Fuck, stop!"

"Nuosha Dance! This one's alright, this one's okay to watch!"

"Man, Ma Tianchuan is really being pushed to the edge!"

"Can't handle a single day? Strong for twenty seconds but weak for six or seven days?"

On the presidential platform, a massive shadow suddenly appeared!

From its build, it should be male, his face wearing an especially horrifying mask, already leaping up to dance.

Such dance moves, the rhythm fierce and unrestrained, the movements robust and powerful.

Truly majestic!

It was precisely in the instant when the shadow danced that Lu Ran's movements subtly changed.

"Zi—"

The undying sheep immediately disengaged from the fight, the mist at his feet churning as he distanced himself from Ma Tianchuan.

"What's the matter, Brother Ma?" Lu Ran still kept his eyes closed, listening with tilted ear, "Not fighting the next round?"

During the conversation, Lu Ran's body twitched slightly.

Occasionally tilting his head slightly, lifting his hand slightly, he playfully twisted his waist.

Clearly, it wasn't Lu Ran wanting to move on his own, but under the influence of the Nuosha Dance, he was compelled to move.

Lu Ran was "tied down"!

Thankfully Lu Ran was of the River Realm, otherwise, had his realm been any lower, his body would definitely have been uncontrollable, dancing alongside that shadow!

"To compete against Brother Lu, one must go all out!" Ma Tianshuan clenched his twin daggers, darted swiftly towards Lu Ran.

The reason the two were having this conversation was because Divine Technique·Nuosha Dance was enormously draining for the caster.

This was a major move of the Nuosha Sect!

As long as the shadow existed, the caster would continuously consume vast amounts of Divine Power and Qi.

Until the caster collapsed from exhaustion, the shadow would not disappear.

Yes, this was a Divine Technique that once activated, could not be stopped!

The shadow, with wide and comprehensive dance moves, though not a deity itself, was not something you could summon or dismiss at will!

"Zi—"

Lu Ran's feet brought forth swirling mist, and he slid backward: "Since that's the case, I shall also offer Brother Ma the due respect.

Do you know that my Immortal Sheep Sect also has a powerful move?"

Ma Tianchuan immediately felt alarmed!

Divine Technique-Sheep!

As the saying goes, the fewer the words, the bigger the deal!

"Hehe~" Lu Ran's body twitched, his hand uncontrollably nearly striking himself, but it did not interfere with his smirk.

"Ah!" Ma Tianchuan burst out shouting, accelerating towards Lu Ran.

From the moment the Nuosha Dance began, his time on the field entered a countdown.

Lu Ran abruptly lifted his hand, and Ma Tianchuan was alarmed once more.

However, Lu Ran's hand suddenly twisted absurdly, as if dragged by some inexplicable force.

Lu Ran was not intentionally feigning movement, but it inevitably elicited a burst of exclamation: "Ah!"

"Damn, everyone really wants to win, huh?"

"Yes, do it like this! Fierce! No one gets out good, nobody fucking survives!"

"He at least exhausts Divine Power and Qi, Lu Ran is directly sacrificing his soul... Here it comes!"

Under Ma Tianchuan's uneasy gaze, Lu Ran's hand rose again, and he shouted loudly,

"Sheep!"

Ma Tianchuan's pupils suddenly constricted!

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second, 2 seconds...

Nothing happened.

From afar, Lu Ran's body swayed gently, the movements so slight, they had a rather cheap feel to them.

And with Lu Ran's words, it got even cheaper: "Hehe, gotcha~"

Ma Tianchuan: ???

"Pfft... Hahahahahaha!"

"I'm... "

"What is this? Supposed to be an expert and still tricks people!"

"You know nothing, this is called 'All's fair in war!'"

"Damn it, even fooling the audience, huh?"

"It's got to be my bro Ran, making him stall for a few more seconds, Ma Tianchuan is about to go soft, huh?"

"Arrghh!" Ma Tianchuan's eyes bulged in fury as he blasted towards Lu Ran at top speed.

"Zzt—"

Lu Ran scampered away like mad, his right foot spraying a mist and then taking an odd twist.

Again, his movements deformed beneath the guise of a phantom dance.

In tandem, Lu Ran darted to the left.

Ma Tianchuan's eyes narrowed, opportunity!

His footing collapsed, and he dragged long shadows with his twin daggers, bellowing harshly: "Fall!"

Lu Ran jerked his head around, and despite closed eyes which lessened the intimidation, his expression was extremely grim!

Amidst the audience's gasps, Lu Ran astonishingly didn't dodge or weave, seemingly ready to trade his life, utterly fearless of his movements potentially deforming at any moment.

Lu Ran's left hand shot up fiercely, his right hand gripped the Silent Night Blade tightly, and he slashed viciously towards Ma Tianchuan, roaring:

"Sheep!!!"

Ma Tianchuan's heart quivered intensely.

Once turned into a lamb, he would no longer have his armor of flowing water to protect him, nor any power to resist.

Lu Ran would indeed be drained, but that sharp Silent Night Blade would surely, following through with the momentum, chop into the lamb's body!

Ma Tianchuan chickened out...

Or rather, it should be said Ma Tianchuan's rationality overtook him.

His movements lightning fast, he instinctively leaped to the side.

As long as he dodged this blade, Lu Ran would collapse from exhaustion, and at worst, this battle would be a draw for Ma Tianchuan.

But not dodging this blade could very well decide the victor!

"Whoosh!"

Lu Ran's body jerked wildly, snagged for a moment by an invisible force, and the descending blade cut through nothing.

Ma Tianchuan performed a side dive, quickly stood up, and looked towards the twisting and turning Lu Ran.

Lu Ran was dancing, moving awkwardly and awkwardly, much like a live-streaming hostess playing hard to get.

Below the stage fell into silence.

Where's the sheep?

Where is it?

Why is he, Ma Tianchuan, still in human form?

"Ah ah ah ah, there's no playing people like that!"

"F*ck! Can I go up there and hit him?"

"This annoying little witch..."

"I'm genuinely done! I came to see a fight, not to be kept in suspense!"

"Let's break up, I'm tired..."

"Hahahaha! Believe me, Ma Tianchuan is even more tired than you, hahahahaha!"

On stage, Ma Tianchuan stood with hands on hips, looking hopelessly at Lu Ran.

Lu Ran kept moving, swaying left and right: "Why stop?"

Ma Tianchuan smiled bitterly and shook his head: "Never mind, I give up."

Lu Ran: "Huh?"

"While I can still walk away on my own," Ma Tianchuan sighed deeply and quickly walked towards the edge of the stage.

No more spirit,

nor time.

And worse still, Ma Tianchuan had no power to counter the intimidation brought by Divine Technique-Sheep.

On the chairman's podium, Lu Ran continued to wiggle slightly, looking for all the world like he was celebrating:

"Brother Ma is a man of dignity!"

"Heh." Ma Tianchuan didn't even turn his head, simply waving his hand back and forth.

He found his classmates, displaying such candor that there was a sense of honor even in defeat, which also brought waves of applause and cheers.

Ma Tianchuan's eyes gradually became unfocused, his body softened, and he slumped into his classmates' embrace.

After a while, the dancing phantom on stage also quietly faded away.

"Ran Bao!" Chang Ying shouted loudly, "Stop dancing, the phantom is gone!"

"Oh oh, sorry, just got used to it..."

Chapter 215: Spring Breeze Returning Person

"Lu Ran, victory!"

The male teacher announced loudly.

Though the students had been tricked time and again by someone, they still politely gave a round of applause.

"Yahoo~" Chang Ying cheered and jumped for joy, "We won!"

Tian Tian's face beamed with joy as she held a precious lotus flower in her hands, whispering, "Master is the best."

Deng Yutang also wore a smile, raising his fist high towards Lu Ran.

Four characters: Truly well-deserved!

The male teacher continued, "Since Ma Tianchuan will not be able to fight again so soon, Wu Shanshan automatically takes second place, and Ma Tianchuan is third."

Inside and outside the campus, the applause from the spectators never stopped.

Only, the cheers and celebrations suddenly turned into exclamations of surprise.

The male teacher's voice carried on, "Next, we'll proceed with the award ceremony... Uh?"

He hadn't finished speaking when the teacher suddenly looked up.

Under the slightly overcast sky, a figure slowly drifted in, radiant and eye-catching.

She was dressed in a long white dress, radiating ancient charm, with four white jade plaques circling around her, revealing a graceful fairy-like demeanor.

Her pitch-black hair danced lightly with the skirt in the wind.

A crowd of students looked up with puzzled expressions, gazing at the stunning figure.

However, the girl in the white dress did not look at them.

Her bright eyes were fixed on Lu Ran on the stage.

Lu Ran was stunned.

He had noticed early on the girl flying in from the distant sky and felt it incredibly unreal.

Lu Ran even began to wonder if he had been caught by an illusion technique.

Couldn't be, could it...

The Nuosha Sect does possess illusion techniques, but they are Divine Techniques that are only suitable for those of the River Realm Third Rank.

He, Ma Tianchuan, was only at River Realm-First Rank, how could he possibly fall for it?

Besides, the illusion techniques of the Nuosha Sect only caused living beings to fall into endless fear and pain.

How could they be so kind as to bring loved ones together?

"Jiang... Jiang the Beauty?"

"My God! It really is Jiang Ruyi, I thought some deity had descended..."

"Hasn't seen her for half a year, and she's turned into this beauty?"

"She's also in the River Realm, ah! The Jade Talisman Formation has been deployed!"

Among the crowd, Wu Shanshan looked up with shock, staring at the figure standing in the air.

That had once been her teammate.

It's just that Wu Shanshan had distanced herself from Lu Ran, and naturally also from Jiang Ruyi.

Wu Shanshan could never understand why Jiang Ruyi would team up with Lu Ran.

Jiang Ruyi was also among the top three in her grade, certainly a key figure nurtured by the school.

If Jiang Ruyi wished, the school could have revolved around her, creating a team especially for her, but...

Jiang Ruyi had set her sights on Lu Ran and insisted on bringing him along.

Why?

Because of... feelings?

Thinking it over, this was the only reasonable explanation.

But if that was truly the case, it was even more laughable.

Such a decision would be irresponsible to one's own future prospects, let alone safety.

In reality, Wu Shanshan was right on the mark.

But what Wu Shanshan did not realize was that at that time, Jiang Ruyi had already made the worst plan.

Who doesn't know about the reputation of the Immortal Sheep Believers?

Jiang Ruyi simply didn't want Lu Ran to be disliked by everyone and not be taken into any team.

Until in the end, he couldn't even get an ordinary high school diploma.

As for Lu Ran's remarkable rise, that was a story for another time.

At the beginning of the teaming up, Jiang Ruyi just wanted to take Lu Ran forward, not wanting him to suffer from constant setbacks and live in despondency.

The two had been classmates for a full two years, constantly together.

For the boy who lived alone and practiced in silence at the same desk...

How strong his inner will was, she knew too well.

Indeed, as Wu Shanshan thought, between the future prospects and Lu Ran, Jiang Ruyi had chosen the latter.

"Sister Ruyi!" Tian Tian's pretty face flushed with excitement.

The usually soft and quiet girl shouted out for once.

Finally, Jiang Ruyi deigned to look at the mortals.

Since her appearance, she had turned her head slightly for the first time, looking towards the down and diagonal direction.

When she saw that it was Tian Tian, Jiang Ruyi showed a tender smile on her face, her naturally hanging hand gently patted, though the gesture was very small.

Tian Tian, however, got the message, smiling sweetly as if she had been patted on the head from afar.

The opposite was true for Chang Ying's expression, which was very stiff.

Before, when she was at the school gate looking at the ranking list, she had heard the discussions of her classmates, saying things like "Even if Jiang the Beauty comes back, and the gambler is kicked out of the team, it's still worth it for the gambler."

Did the words come true?

Jiang Ruyi really came back!

Chang Ying stared blankly at Jiang Ruyi, watching the figure that seemed like an exiled immortal, and she lost herself in thought.

"Jiang Ruyi." On the platform, the male teacher looked at the student standing in the air with full admiration.

This world has never lacked geniuses.

The whole school knew that Jiang Ruyi had refused Second-class God-Tianluan and instead condescended to join the Third-class God-Jade Talisman Sect.

Perhaps it was also because of this that Jiang Ruyi became the first student to be summoned by her own god to go under Divine Sculpture to listen to teachings.

"Is it over?" Jiang Ruyi asked softly, looking towards Lu Ran again.

"You're late, the opening ceremony has already started," replied the male teacher, his attitude very good, despite Jiang Ruyi standing in the air, exuding an air of superiority.

In this real and cruel world, the strong always get more care and tolerance.

And those who need to be cared for more, the weak ones, end up facing harsh criticism.

"Victory?" Jiang Ruyi gently looked at Lu Ran.

Her bright, beautiful eyes, with a hint of a smile, looked at Lu Ran, who was still somewhat stunned.

Did he always have a look of doubt after she appeared?

Hmm... looks somewhat silly.

"Brother Lu definitely came first!" Deng Yutang shouted back.

"But I haven't fought yet," said Jiang Ruyi, slowly drifting down to stand at one side of the platform.

The male teacher said, "Both rounds of the competition have ended, and the placements are set.

Jiang student, this isn't following the rules."

"I don't want a ranking," Jiang Ruyi said smiling at Lu Ran. "I'd like to see the level of the first place."

The girl in the white dress smiled gently, like a person who stepped out of a painting, making the audience secretly stirred.

Accordingly, people now looked at Lu Ran differently.

Because of Lu Ran's strength and impressive track record, his believer credits far ahead, unattainable for others.

Thus, the students mostly admired and respected Lu Ran.

But now?

Many eyes changed their flavor.

Envious glances fell on Lu Ran.

"Damn, that kid scored big!"

"Is Lu Ran all you see?"

"Good fellow, not giving anyone else a glance..."

"Jiang the Beauty, don't be deceived by him!"

"Stop dreaming, buddy, Jiang Ruyi has been with him since Lu Ran was nothing."

"What does Lu Ran mean? Why doesn't he speak? What's he playing at?"

On the platform, Lu Ran indeed did not speak and just shrugged his nose.

SNIFF~

It felt as if spring had warmed since Jiang Ruyi's arrival.

With the gentle breeze of spring, Lu Ran smelled a light jasmine fragrance.

Yes, it really was Jiang Ruyi.

Not an illusion.

"Lu Ran!" the male teacher returned and spoke, "After discussion by the school leadership, we've decided to postpone the award ceremony for your match with Jiang Ruyi.

Jiang student has been on an external cultivation for more than half a year, and the teachers would like to see how much she has grown.

Can you still fight now?"

Amidst the expectations of the whole school's teachers and students, Lu Ran pondered for a moment, then suddenly blurted: "Is there a performance fee?"

Everyone: ????

The male teacher laughed outright, clearly amused: "This fight doesn't involve rankings.

You've already won the school's great competition first place, earning 30 believer credits."

Lu Ran, however, said: "That's what I deserve. This battle should also have believer credits, right?"

The male teacher: "..."

The crowd was also stirred; Lu Ran got a whole 30 believer credits, and some students already felt quite distressed.

So the lamb cub is actually greedier than the wolf cub, even daring to ask for a performance fee?

"Just eight or ten credits will do!" Lu Ran turned his head towards the platform's side, looking at the group of teachers, "I have a premonition!

This battle will be very, very exciting! Trust me, leaders, 10 believer credits will suffice.

Ten credits won't make me poor or you rich!

Ten credits can't buy you being shortchanged or deceived..."

"Stop stop stop!" the male teacher hurried to interrupt Lu Ran.

How did he start chanting without realizing it?

The expressions of the teachers were also quite colorful, caught between laughter and tears.

Technically speaking, a strong individual like Lu Ran should have some semblance of a master's demeanor, but this...

Lu Ran didn't feel like he was losing dignity.

Earning points, not ashamed~

Plus, little Ruyi has been away from school for more than half a year, and her believer credits are really low.

What if she can't get into a good university in the future?

"Believer credits are not a trivial matter and need to be discussed in a meeting," said the male teacher after receiving a hint. "The school will consider it carefully.

Both of you must go all out and show the proper spirit."

As he spoke, the male teacher patted Lu Ran's shoulder with a weighty tone, "In this battle, whether the winner or loser can get credits is still under discussion.

But I can tell you in advance, if there's match-fixing, that will definitely lead to loss of points!"

Lu Ran: "..."

They are all crafty people, who can deceive whom?

On the east side of the platform, Jiang Ruyi watched Lu Ran quietly, her smiling eyes tender.

As clever as she was, she understood Lu Ran's intention.

"Let's start!" The male teacher quickly exited the stage and put the whistle in his mouth.

"Whoo—"

The whistle sounded promptly, leaving only a pair of male and female on the platform.

Neither moved immediately, contrary to the tense atmosphere of the previous battles.

"Long time, no see."

Jiang Ruyi looked at Lu Ran with a grin and spoke softly.

Lu Ran silently nodded.

Yes, long time no see.

Looking at that very real figure, once again, he felt like he was living in a dream.

Just came back?

Not even a word in advance, not a single message.

"You." Jiang Ruyi gave a reproaching look, "Why don't you speak?

Since I arrived, you haven't said a word to me."

Lu Ran finally spoke: "Don't talk."

Jiang Ruyi was a bit surprised: "Huh?"

Lu Ran scrutinized the girl from head to toe, eventually, his gaze settled on her familiar and enchanting face and he grinned:

"I missed you."

"Need to miss? I'm standing right here," Jiang Ruyi said that, but her head slightly bowed.

A blush quietly spread across her fair cheeks.

The warm spring breeze passed by, stroking her slightly bashful face and her fluttering hair tips.

"Yeah, missed you even more."

Lu Ran murmured, looking at the beautiful scene.

The girl's blushing face indeed beat a thousand words.

"What... what?"

"Wow! Is it that sweet?"

"Learned something new..."

"Damn, is this what you call an opening ceremony? Luring the dog in for a killing?"

"Ah, I'm so mad! I want to pee in their river of love..."

Chapter 216: Year after year

"Cough cough." A light cough came through the microphone, reverberating throughout the venue.

The male teacher's voice rang out again, "You may begin."

Jiang Ruyi gathered her thoughts and looked across the distance, grasping the hilt of her sword behind her back:

"This battle, I'm afraid, won't be very exciting."

"Oh?" Lu Ran looked at the girl in the white dress with great curiosity.

Jiang Ruyi was not one to speak without consideration, so...

Did she really have that much confidence?

The girl drew the Black Ice Sword she carried on her back and placed it in front of her.

Through the cool and clear blade, her beautiful eyes gazed at the figure opposite her, "It's yours that you lent me."

"It's not that I couldn't give it to you." Lu Ran smiled, "But this is my family heirloom, and if you take it, well..."

Lu Ran hesitated, there were too many people around, no need to say it here.

He immediately changed the subject, "If you didn't come back, I was thinking of reporting to the Divine People Bureau to catch you at Jade Gate Pass."

"Go ahead." Jiang Ruyi playfully spat at Lu Ran.

Lu Ran thought for a while and said, "If you really want it... huh?"

His words abruptly stopped as gasps of astonishment erupted from the audience at the same time:

"What the...?"

"A Divine Weapon?"

"My gosh, a Divine Weapon! Did Class Leader Jiang cultivate an Artifact Spirit?"

"I can't believe I'm seeing a Divine Weapon in a high school campus..."

On the chairman's podium, Jiang Ruyi suddenly released her grip on the sword hilt.

The Black Ice Sword floated in the air beside the girl.

Wu Shanshan was dumbstruck, staring at the scene in disbelief.

As one of only two students in the school respected by the Second-class God, Wu Shanshan naturally knew about Jiang Ruyi's talent.

Despite Jiang Ruyi being apprenticed to the Third-class God-Jade Talisman, deep down in Wu Shanshan's heart, she had always compared herself with Jiang Ruyi.

Now looking at her...

Jiang Ruyi seemed to have far surpassed herself.

It was common knowledge that believers who went to cultivate at the feet of Divine Sculpture were likely to advance rapidly.

But such an achievement was astonishing!

To have cultivated a Divine Weapon at such a young age?

How could this be possible?

"With this, even if I wanted it back, that would be impossible now." Lu Ran murmured to himself, both shocked and delighted.

The Cold Night Sword, a relic of his mother, was indeed closer to cultivating an Artifact Spirit than the Dawn Blade left by his father.

When Qiao Yuansi gave the Cold Night Sword to Lu Ran that day, standing at the entrance of his apartment building in Rain Alley City, he was deep in thought.

At that time, neither Lu Ran's Dawn Blade nor Silent Night Blade showed any reaction, only the Cold Night Sword hummed in response to Lu Ran.

Even from that scene, it was clear that under the influence of his mother, the Cold Night Sword had already developed a certain amount of spirituality.

Jiang Ruyi went away for five months and forged a Divine Weapon?

That's not quite right!

Now, the Cold Night Sword acknowledged only Jiang Ruyi as its master, forever making that family heirloom hers.

What's done is done~

"Whew!"

Suddenly a surge of qi billowed, and from within the Cold Night Sword emerged a shadowy figure.

It was clearly Jiang Ruyi's image.

She opened her beautiful eyes and gazed softly at Lu Ran, her figure flickering before vanishing.

Though her gaze was on Lu Ran, that dreamlike silhouette made everyone marvel endlessly.

"Sorry, I have to use the Cold Night." Jiang Ruyi said with a look of apology, "She's been longing for this day for a long time."

As she spoke, Jiang Ruyi extended her finger and lightly tapped the blade, advising:

"Be gentle."

"Buzz!" The Cold Night Sword trembled lightly, then suddenly turned, pointing straight at Lu Ran.

"Eh?" Came a soft cry from among the crowd, from Chang Ying.

She felt her Dawn Blade quiver in her arms and fly out of its sheath in an instant.

The next moment, a streak of dawn swiftly passed over everyone's heads, like smoke and mist or soft gauzy silk.

"Ding!!"

A crisp sound as blade and sword collided heavily.

In an instant, both the sword and the blade were flung aside, suspending left and right of the chairman's podium.

Jiang Ruyi widened her eyes slightly, and a strange silence fell upon the audience.

But soon, the sports field completely exploded:

"Fuck! Two? Two Divine Weapons?"

"Lu Ran has a Divine Weapon, too?"

"Ah??"

"Lu Ran really held back then! When he was fighting against Ma Tianshuan and Wu Shanshan before, he never summoned his Divine Weapon."

"No mate, isn't your focus a bit skewed?"

One student held his head, his face filled with disbelief: "These are Divine Weapons! In our poor and remote place, to see two at once?"

On the side of the chairman's podium, the school leaders exchanged glances, delighted, but also quite shaken.

This group of students is truly extraordinary!

If this was Beijing or Chang'an, that would be one thing, but this is the small, dilapidated Rain Alley City...

"Clap!"

Lu Ran grabbed the Dawn Blade that flew towards him.

The brilliant light from the Black Ice Blade dazzled the eyes.

Lu Ran flicked the blade, looking at Jiang Ruyi with a smile, "No need to hold back, the teacher just said that throwing a match means deducting points."

Your score isn't that high to begin with..."

Fighting with little Ruyi, and asking her to be gentle?

Would that not be at the expense of my dignity?

"Fine." Jiang Ruyi watched Lu Ran, her eyes full of unusual brightness, her fingertips lightly fluttering.

The Cold Night Sword suddenly accelerated, stabbing straight towards Lu Ran.

Lu Ran flung the Dawn Blade straight out.

In a flash, the blade and sword tangled fiercely, fighting together as one.

These weapons, belonging to Lu Ran's parents, finally met on the battlefield after more than a decade.

But not as comrades-in-arms fighting side by side, rather as sparring partners.

Nor were the spirits within the blade and sword Lu Xing and Qiao Wanjun.

Time passed, year after year.

The couple first parted by life, then by death.

The Dawn Blade and Cold Night Sword fell into the hands of the next generation.

These carefully nurtured blades finally shone with unprecedented brilliance in the hands of Jiang and Lu.

It was as if destiny had its protections from the previous generation.

Protecting the new generation's outcome to be different from the old one.

"Ding~ Ding~"

The sounds of blade and sword clashing were incessant.

"Zzz--"

Lu Ran moved quickly, surrounded by swirling mist, wielding the Silent Night Blade, circling around the battle between blade and sword, charging towards Jiang Ruyi.

Jiang Ruyi flicked her slender fingers, and one of the four White Jade Stones encircling her, marked with blue-purple electricity, immediately flew forward.

Jiang, the beauty, was no longer the girl who used to draw talismans on the spot.

The four White Jade Stones surrounding her were none other than the Jade Talisman Formation!

It allowed Jade Talisman Believers to prepare talismans in advance for immediate use.

Furthermore, the circling talismans also provided their master with powerful defensive capabilities.

If anyone dares approach Jiang Ruyi too closely...

Then choose!

You could either be frozen by frost, blasted apart by flames, electrocuted until charred, or churned to dust in quicksand.

And such a Jade Talisman Formation could grant the caster the power of flight.

Truly formidable!

"Zzz~ Zzz~"

Lu Ran sharply swerved aside, not daring to be careless, avoiding the Electric Shackles Talisman at a distance.

Sure enough, he heard a crackling of electricity behind him.

The White Jade Stone did not hit the ground but exploded in the air.

River Grade Divine Method-Electric Restriction Talisman did not need to hit the target directly; the caster could detonate it at will.

Furthermore, the River Grade Divine Method was no longer a single-target output but an area of effect damage!

That single Electric Restriction Talisman immediately erupted into a "Blue-purple Thunder Ball".

With a diameter of at least 5 meters!

Inside the spherical area, countless streams of electricity ran rampant in all directions, terrifying to behold!

"You're really not holding back, little Ruyi?" Lu Ran turned his head towards his rear flank and shouted.

Jiang Ruyi let her hand fall naturally, as an Electric Shackles Talisman quietly appeared between her fingers, filling the gap in the Jade Talisman Formation.

She tilted her head slightly, and the normally gentle and quiet girl seemed rather playful:

"I'm afraid of throwing the match and getting points deducted by you."

It was clear when Lu Ran brought out the Divine Weapon, Jiang Ruyi was exceedingly happy.

That state even seemed happier than when she forged her own Divine Weapon.

Lu Ran weighed the Silent Night Blade in his hand and with a strange expression said, "I actually have plenty of points, don't worry about deductions.

I might even be a hundred or two points above my classmates."

The crowd: ???

"You... you're still insulting me?"

"Not at all! I'm just an audience member, just watching a duel, why hit me with a sneak attack?"

"Damn, am I also part of you guys' play or what?!"

"I'm against this engagement! I disapprove!!"

Jiang Ruyi gave Lu Ran a teasing look and flung a White Jade Stone at him, "Be more humble."

Lu Ran's eyes narrowed.

From the sparks that burst out, Lu Ran could tell that it was a Bursting Flame Talisman!

Among all the God Sects and all the Divine Techniques, Lu Ran was most familiar with the Jade Talisman Sect's skills.

He also knew the power of the River Grade·Bursting Flame Talisman!

Lu Ran did not dare to be reckless either and instantly moved to the side.

Jiang Ruyi followed the trajectory of the Bursting Flame Talisman with her gaze, her fingertips lightly tapping.

"Boom boom boom!"

The Bursting Flame Talisman exploded with a roar, flames rippling out

Just like a tidal wave of fire, raging and surging in all directions, its might astounding!

Unfortunately, River Grade Divine Methods could not yet allow the master to freely control and change the flight path of the White Jade Stones.

However, disciples of the Jade Talisman Sect are all strong in the later stages!

If Jiang Ruyi is fortunate enough to advance to River Realm, then the White Jade Stones will flow as freely as flying swords and wind blades.

By then, if the White Jade Stones make a round without killing the enemy, they can fly back and re-enter the Jade Talisman Formation to continue revolving around the master...

Quite frugal~

"Zzz--"

Shadows flitted, and Immortal Fog wafted.

Jiang Ruyi stood still, her lofty stance astonishing everyone, but also stirring concern in their hearts.

"Move out of the way! Don't be careless!"

"That guy is ruthless... Woah!"

Jiang Ruyi suddenly pointed to the ground, a White Jade Stone wrapped in fine sand dropped directly beneath her.

"Whoosh~~"

This flow of sand appeared out of nowhere.

The battlefield environment changed in an instant, torrents of fine sand surged like raging rivers.

Jiang Ruyi stood in the midst of the river of yellow sand, rising and falling with the waves, waiting for Lu Ran's attack.

Lu Ran indeed charged into the rushing sands.

In an instant, streaks of sand shot out from the river, entwining the enemy like whips!

And Lu Ran...

"Zzz--"

From the moment Lu Ran lunged from the edge of the river, his feet never touched "water", as he pushed forward relentlessly!

Of course, Lu Ran dared not touch it.

Even with all his caution, he was still at risk of being caught by the sand and buried alive in the quicksand!

His feet would surely sink deep and he would be unable to extricate himself if he dared touch the ground.

"As expected." Jiang Ruyi picked up the nearby White Jade Stone, frost spreading across its surface, cold to the bone.

In her line of sight, Lu Ran's figure grew ever larger.

For this scene, Jiang Ruyi seemed not the slightest bit surprised.

This tactic could keep enemies tens of meters away from Jiang Ruyi on any battlefield.

But not him.

The young woman showed no hint of regret or fear, her lightly smiling face instead seemed to be appreciating Lu Ran's heroism?

She gently squeezed the Frost Talisman between her slender jade fingers...

Before the White Jade Stone could shatter, a sheep's bleat rang out:

"Mee~~~"

Jiang Ruyi's breathing faltered, her heart skipped a beat!

Authentic Divine Skill·Voice of Compassion!

In truth, this skill wasn't really strong.

For those powerful and resolute in will, no amount of crying and pleading could sway them.

Is Jiang Ruyi a person of firm will?

Of course!

But the problem is, Divine Technique·Voice of Compassion has a terrible characteristic—it kills the familiar!

Chapter 217: plays

This sheep's bleat was Jiang Ruyi's death knell!

Her heart was in disarray, which naturally slowed her movements.

However, the Cold Night Sword was not slow!

As a Divine Weapon, its existence differed from the ordinary and was unaffected by the Divine Technique·Voice of Compassion.

"Whoosh!"

With a sound that tore through the air, the Cold Night Sword thrust forward rapidly, sending shivers down the spine.

In fact, the moment Lu Ran leapt from the edge of the quicksand, the Cold Night Sword had already detached from the melee and galloped to the rescue.

"Hmm?" Lu Ran tensed up inside.

As he kicked toward Jiang Ruyi, he wielded his sword to chop to his side and behind.

He had immense respect for Divine Weapons!

He desperately invoked the Evil Technique-Soul Splitting Power, fearing that his weapon would be knocked away or his body pierced through.

"Ding!"

The clash of sword and blade was excruciatingly shrill.

In the end, the Cold Night Sword was still flung aside.

Rather than saying it was slashed down by Lu Ran, it was more accurate to say it was cleaved away by the pursuing Dawn Blade.

"Ah!"

"Get out of the way, quickly..."

To the side of the chairman's stand, the crowd parted to make a path once more.

Jiang Ruyi, kicked away, did not skip across the ground like Wu Shanshan, turning into a stone "skimming" on water.

She remained floating above the heads of the crowd, speeding backward through the air.

The Jade Talisman Formation granted her the ability to fly, but that proud defense did not come to fruition.

Lu Ran was indeed fast and accurate!

That kick had snuck between two White Jade Tokens, landing heavily on Jiang Ruyi's arm.

"Good heavens~"

"That look in Jiang's eyes..."

"Damn it, Lu Ran, how could he bear to do it!"

After being kicked by Lu Ran, Jiang Ruyi became much more lucid.

Consequently, her eyes, deep and distant, gazed toward the figure standing at the edge of the chairman's stand.

Her slightly injured appearance and somewhat resentful eyes nearly broke everyone's heart!

Indeed, beauty is justice!

Under the stage, the crowd was abuzz with excitement.

Lu Ran had not incited such public outrage when he fought Wu Shanshan...

It seemed that Jiang's beauty and aura were indeed a bit too much.

"Meh~~~"

Standing at the edge of the chairman's stand, Lu Ran looked toward the white-robed girl flying backward and spoke again.

Jiang Ruyi held her breath for an instant.

Again?

"Hmm..." With one hand clutching her forehead, she tried to suppress her surging emotions with reason.

"Whew~"

The Cold Night Sword promptly arrived, presenting its hilt, which slipped into the girl's palm.

"Master!"

A voice nearly identical to the previous one echoed in Jiang Ruyi's mind.

Jiang Ruyi's body trembled slightly as she struggled to concentrate.

Jiang Ruyi was somewhat invigorated, but the students below suffered.

They weren't as familiar with Lu Ran, nor did they have a deep emotional connection with him.

The problem was, most of these students were from the Stream Realm!

They weren't Evil Demons, didn't harbor extreme emotions like ferocity or cruelty; thus, they quickly succumbed to the "Enchanting Demon Sheep" on the stage.

"Let's gather around the Precious Lotus!"

"Captain Wu has the Cang Dragon over here, this spot works too!"

"Wuu~~~"

Suddenly, a horn sounded, echoing inside and outside the school.

Momentarily, the minds of the creatures stabilized, and the students who had sunk into trance were rescued.

"Hmm?" Lu Ran turned his head, looking toward the other side of the chairman's stand.

A male teacher held an ethereal horn, having just finished playing.

"I'm still fighting!" Lu Ran said dissatisfied.

The male teacher was expressionless: "If you keep yelling, the students are going to help you gang up on Jiang Ruyi."

Lu Ran: "..."

The now-lucid crowd looked at Lu Ran afresh with indignation, feeling deceived in their emotions!

"Disaster, what a disaster!"

"Punch him, Jiang, give him a good beating!"

"Mocking me again, woo woo~ I'm just an onlooker, you mock and play me, I won't watch anymore woo woo~"

Indeed, Lu Ran was a calamity.

As a believer from the River Realm, given enough time...

He could indeed toy with the hearts of Stream Realm youths at will.

As for ordinary people, they were even less of a match.

With the chairman's stand situated at the center of the playground, the onlookers from outside heard quieter sheep bleats.

Otherwise, some might have already been overwhelmed with compassion and rushed in to protect Lu Ran.

It seems that the teacher blew the horn also for the sake of the onlookers outside.

"Whew~"

Suddenly, Lu Ran sensed a surge of energy.

He quickly retreated, glancing to the side.

He saw Jiang Ruyi holding the Cold Night Sword, gracefully approaching.

She extended her delicate fingers, sliding them slowly across the blade.

In an instant, the pitch-black and transparent Cold Night Sword glowed with fiery red luster, with endless stars splattering outward.

Jade Talisman Divine Skill·Bursting Flame Talisman!

In that moment, Lu Ran saw the way his late father once fought.

Enchantment!

Lu Ran whispered softly, "Meh~"

Jiang Ruyi's eyes were deep, and she whispered softly, "Bad person."

Lu Ran: "..."

Lu Ran fell silent, and the crowd below was dumbfounded!

Lu Ran's sheep bleating could be erased with the sound of the horn and various auxiliary Divine Skills.

But those soft words from Jiang Ruyi?

That was not Divine Technique, but it was enough to elicit feelings of compassion.

Today's audience had indeed suffered greatly!

The emotions of the students fluctuated high and low, swung left and right, toyed with repeatedly by the pair on the stage.

"Whew!!"

Jiang Ruyi, holding the long sword, immediately charged at Lu Ran.

Poor child, cornered, she no longer chose a slow death but decisively charged forward.

Although she was a noble from the River Realm, she really had no resistance against the Voice of Compassion.

Jiang Ruyi had no choice but to seek an alternative approach, wielding a Divine Weapon.

With the stirring reminders from the Artifact Spirit, she still had the strength to fight!

Otherwise, she would have been ground into losing her will to fight by Lu Ran, utterly ensnared by his magic.

"Ya~!"

With a shrill cry, Jiang Ruyi wielded the Cold Night Sword, unleashing a crimson moon arc.

Endless star sparks scattered, each one breathtakingly beautiful.

"Damn!" Lu Ran's footsteps churned with Immortal Fog as he rapidly distanced himself from Jiang Ruyi.

The Jade Talisman Sect had made considerable achievements in the technique of Enchantment.

At any moment, Jiang Ruyi could detonate the enchanted Black Ice Sword!

Once done, a fiery inferno would spread from her center in all directions.

Jiang Ruyi, indeed at the explosion's epicenter, as the caster, would have significant immunity to the damage.

The White Jade Token with the Bursting Flame Talisman, encompassed within her Jade Talisman Formation, could absorb the encroaching flames.

This was why, when facing Lu Ran's assault earlier, she dared to crush the Frost Talisman with one hand.

Once the talisman shattered, Lu Ran might be immobilized by frost, but not Jiang Ruyi!

"Meh~" Lu Ran retreated hastily, once again emitting the Voice of Compassion.

"Hum!" The Cold Night Sword in Jiang Ruyi's hand hummed vibrantly.

The girl, with a complex expression, bit her lip and thrust her left hand forward.

From the Jade Talisman Formation, a Frost Talisman shot toward Lu Ran.

"Pfft..."

A burst of snow exploded, mist enshrouding the surroundings.

"Lu Ran's too fast, Jiang can't catch up..."

"Didn't you see Captain Jiang setting up with the Frost Talisman? The arena will eventually be covered in frost, slowing down Lu Ran."

"Ran is being countered! Jiang Ruyi, wielding an enchanted sword, is like a bomb that can't be touched."

"It doesn't matter if it's touched, as long as Jiang spares him and doesn't detonate the blade."

"What's this? Ran is being countered again?"

"The Immortal Sheep sect has only one Immortal Hoof; Lu Ran is just fast, nothing else, he's countered by everyone!"

"No, Ran must be throwing the match! With the fierceness he displayed killing the Cang Dragon and facing Wu Shanshan, I don't believe he can't get close to Jiang!"

"Bro, open your eyes and see what Jiang has in her hand! That is a Divine Weapon! How could Wu Shanshan compare to Jiang Ruyi?"

Lu Ran: "..."

Lu Ran grinned wryly at the frequent discussions from the crowd below.

If it wasn't for you spectators, I would've launched a flurry of Night Charm Blades...

Striking not only Jiang Ruyi but also her Jade Talisman Formation, and shattered them all!

Hmm... never mind, it's better to keep the beauty.

She's useful.

Under the bright daylight, Lu Ran, a petty crook, naturally wouldn't dare to act recklessly.

Moreover, the outcome of this battle wasn't so important.

As long as the school leaders were appeased and awarded some points, the mission would be accomplished!

More importantly, Lu Ran was truly delighted with Jiang Ruyi's growth.

"Zzz—"

As Lu Ran continued his desperate escape, thoughts raced through his mind.

He was soon to participate in the Heavenly Pride.

Given Jiang Ruyi's performance, could she accompany him as a "photographer"?

This way, her performance would certainly be noticed by the public.

Jiang Ruyi's believer points were already few, and if she could be directly recruited by a higher institution based on her merit, nothing could be better.

Once before,

It was Jiang Ruyi who bore a tremendous risk, stubbornly insisting on teaming up with Lu Ran despite the school and others' dissuasions.

Now,

Lu Ran must return the favor!

He lacked the capability to compensate for Jiang Ruyi's lost points over the past five months.

But Lu Ran could try to provide her with a platform!

This battle was being recorded by a teacher on the side.

Later, the video could be submitted to the Divine People Bureau, with the help of school leaders backing the request to let Jiang Ruyi join the patrol team.

If all else failed, they could seek out the Big Nightmare for help.

A figure of Jiang Realm's great power should carry significant weight.

A muffled "Thud."

Lu Ran's fleeing figure suddenly stopped, blades in hand, fiercely charging toward Jiang Ruyi.

The lamb, seemingly driven into a corner with no way out, no longer opted for a slow death but decided to charge straight forward.

"Whoosh~ Whoosh~"

Jiang Ruyi waved her left hand rapidly, sending two Jade Tokens flying at Lu Ran.

"Zzz—"

Mist whirled at Lu Ran's feet, showing his determination!

Despite the frost clinging to him and the hindrance to his movements, he still dodged agilely, narrowly evading the two attacking talisman.

In the thick fog, two figures closed in on each other; blade and sword aimed to clash!

Evil Technique·Soul Splitting Power, activate!

I can fly, but you can't stay on the stage either.

Ran Shen, of course, cares about face... well, mostly afraid we both might lose points~

"Meh~~~"

Lu Ran stomped on the ground, waves of air tumbling.

Evil Technique·Soul-splitting Demon Hoof, activate!

"Ding!!"

The heavy collision of swords rang with a piercing sound.

Unexpectedly, there were no explosions, no spewing flames.

Only one person with a sword was sent tumbling away.

Lu Ran was stunned.

Oh no! Oh no...

He intended to make her hesitate, prevent her from detonating the Cold Night Sword early, avoid getting blown back himself.

But he "bahhed" too hard!

Jiang Ruyi didn't dare detonate the Cold Night Sword?

Unacceptable!

"Zzz—"

Lu Ran bounced off the ground, and with the aid of the Immortal Hoof, lunged at the tumbling Jiang Ruyi in mid-air.

Just detonate it!

"Boom!!"

Waves rippled, flames burst forth.

Ah~

That's more like it.

Chapter 218: thousand times

"Whoosh—"

The shrill whistle echoed throughout the venue.

The male teacher announced loudly, "Jiang Ruyi, wins!"

The playground burst into commotion.

"Jiang the beauty is amazing! Strong comeback!"

"Finally, someone has dealt with that little lamb, hahaha!"

"Fixed match! Impossible, my Ran Shen can't lose, it must be a fixed match, I'll report this!"

"No, how did Lu Ran's kick send Jiang Ruyi flying out? That's unscientific!"

"That's my master's special application of Divine Technique-Immortal Hoof." Tian Tian said with a proud look.

As she spoke, she looked around.

In the sky was the still-flying figure of Jiang Ruyi.

On the ground, was the continually sliding figure of Lu Ran.

Strictly speaking, Lu Ran had fallen out of the competition area.

Although Jiang Ruyi was further from the grandstand, she could fly...

Since she hadn't touched the ground, she wasn't out of bounds!

Tian Tian looked left and right, her gaze sweeping over a man and a woman, getting more delighted by the second.

Sister Ruyi is finally back~

They are really a perfect match!

"Huh—"

High in the sky, Jiang Ruyi's flying figure abruptly stopped, standing mid-air.

The Jade Talisman Formation had a strong effect; the previously exploding flames were completely absorbed by the White Jade Stone.

The blast-induced shockwave was solidly blocked by the water armor.

After this fierce confrontation, Jiang Ruyi still stood with a proud demeanor, gracefully elegant.

As for Lu Ran...

Well, he's still alive.

Gradually, applause and cheers rose from the playground.

"The grand competition officially ends! All units, line up!" The male teacher returned to the grandstand, loudly maintaining discipline.

As he spoke, he looked up at the sky, "Jiang Ruyi, you... you can float if you like!"

It's just right to show everyone what a real powerhouse looks like."

Jiang Ruyi: "..."

She immediately flew down.

The girl obviously misunderstood, thinking her behavior was too presumptuous and had displeased the teacher.

Little did she know, the teacher was setting up a target...

"Next, I invite the top three students to come up and receive their rewards."

The teacher on the stage spoke loudly while Tian Tian stealthily approached Jiang Ruyi. "Sister Ruyi!"

"Long time no see." Jiang Ruyi waved away the surrounding White Jade Stones.

This allowed Tian Tian to get even closer.

True to form, Tian Tian moved sideways, grabbed Jiang Ruyi's arm, and secretly sniffed her clothes.

Was she smelling the familiar scent?

"Hehe~" Seeing Tian Tian's cute manner, Jiang Ruyi couldn't help but smile.

"Sister Ruyi, have you grown taller?"

Tian Tian looked up, her expression exactly as it had always been when looking up at her idol.

"Maybe it's because of the change in environment." Jiang Ruyi nodded slightly.

Before she left, she was 172cm tall; over five months, she grew 2-3 centimeters.

Tian Tian smiled sweetly, "It seems Sister Ruyi has been eating well."

Jiang Ruyi chatted quietly, "The lamb goji berry soup in Yumen Pass... hmm."

She paused, glanced towards the grandstand.

Noticing Lu Ran receiving his award, she relaxed and whispered, "The goji berry soup there is really good."

Tian Tian couldn't help but cover her mouth and giggle, whispering, "If there's no meat, it should be called goji berry water."

Jiang Ruyi slightly raised her eyebrows, looking at the girl beside her.

She could feel that Tian Tian had become more cheerful and wasn't as meek as before.

"Um." Tian Tian, apparently unable to withstand the gaze of the goddess, guiltily bowed her head.

Jiang Ruyi felt somewhat helpless.

Just after praising her, why has it gone back to this...

Jiang Ruyi softly said, "I see Chang Ying is in our team."

"Yes, teacher arranged for her to come in after you left."

"Have you been bullied?"

"No, no, Chang Ying is really nice..."

The two chatted quietly, and before long, Lu Ran returned to the team holding a River Grade Divine Power Bead.

"Hmm?" Just as Lu Ran was about to join the line, a strange phenomenon occurred!

The Cold Night Sword behind Jiang Ruyi suddenly lunged out.

However, the Cold Night Sword did not stab towards Lu Ran but hung upside down and circled around him.

"This?" Lu Ran looked at Jiang Ruyi.

Jiang Ruyi appeared not to hear, still watching the grandstand.

Lu Ran: ???

What's so interesting about a speech?

After a full 3 seconds, Jiang Ruyi still stared forward, acting as though Lu Ran didn't exist.

Lu Ran grasped the hilt of the Cold Night Sword and pretended to examine the blade, muttering softly:

"Pretend not to see, a thousand times in the corner of my eye."

Jiang Ruyi instantly broke character.

Her face flushed slightly, and she glared at Lu Ran, neither too harshly nor too lightly.

"Oh!" But by now, Lu Ran's attention had shifted from Jiang Ruyi.

The hilt of the Cold Night Sword was icy cold.

The emotions conveyed by the Sword Spirit were even more befuddling to Lu Ran.

Lu Ran had expected the Cold Night Sword to show some defiance or hostility.

Never did he expect such gentleness from the Cold Night Sword?

Though Lu Ran couldn't hear the Artifact Spirit speak, he could feel bits of joy and traces of longing.

What was this situation?

The Divine Weapon belonging to Jiang Ruyi should be conveying these emotions towards me?

If this is the attitude of the Artifact Spirit, then Lu Ran believed he could completely wield this divine weapon!

Lu Ran thought so and acted accordingly.

The result truly left Lu Ran astounded!

He was really able to wield the Cold Night Sword!

"Ah?" Lu Ran's mouth hung open slightly.

Why?

"Lu Ran!!" Suddenly, from the grandstand, the male teacher's voice boomed.

"Present!"

"When a leader is speaking ahead, what are you playing at? Stand straight and listen!"

"Ah?" The Cold Night Sword suddenly slipped from his grasp, flying towards the grandstand.

"Stop!!" Jiang Ruyi was shocked and immediately shouted sharply.

In an instant, the Cold Night Sword hung suspended in mid-air.

Below the sword, the gathered students paled, hurriedly moving aside.

The sudden scene plunged the campus into silence.

A Divine Weapon, naturally, is a treasure every student dreams of owning.

And its dangerous nature was beyond question!

"Sorry, teacher." Jiang Ruyi apologetically nodded, "I'll keep it under control."

The male teacher was stunned.

Was Jiang Ruyi putting on an act?

If she wasn't dissatisfied, would the Cold Night Sword have attacked?

But from Jiang Ruyi's behavior, the decision of the Cold Night Sword seemed unrelated to its master.

This...

It was important to note that Lu Ran also carried a divine weapon, the Dawn Blade on his back.

It hadn't moved because Lu Ran held no animosity towards the teacher and hadn't issued an attack command.

The same question troubled Lu Ran.

As the leader continued his speech on the grandstand, Lu Ran turned slightly and looked at Jiang Ruyi.

The girl was tightly gripping the Cold Night Sword, lightly scoffing at Lu Ran.

Lu Ran: "..."

He seemed to understand something.

In the philosophy of the Beifeng Sect:

The sword is an extension of the Sword Holder's thoughts, a tangible manifestation of their spiritual will.

And the state of being that one aims to achieve while nurturing a Divine Weapon coincides with this philosophy.

In other words,

The Divine Weapon - Cold Night Sword, trained by Jiang Ruyi's hand, had recognized Lu Ran as someone very special!

So, when Lu Ran first held the Cold Night Sword, he could sense the bits of longing and traces of joy from the Artifact Spirit.

The more he thought about it, the more awkward Lu Ran felt.

During our previous duel, when you sliced at me, wasn't it decisive and swift?

Ah, women!

Wait, it seems to be an Artifact Spirit?

Well... Whatever, its form is female.

The leader's lengthy sermon finally ended, and the opening ceremony was drawing to a close.

Following the teacher's announcement of this month's training tasks, the student formations disbanded.

"Man, the training task for the senior third term is worth 20 points!"

"The difficulty has also increased, right? We have to go kill Evil Demons from the River Realm."

"Yeah, in the future, we might not be able to get full marks each month."

"If we had a Divine Weapon, that would be great~"

"Ha, dream on..."

The students chattered among themselves as they left the campus.

Lu Ran and his group didn't want to draw attention and headed straight for the classroom building.

The group of five quickly returned to an empty classroom.

Jiang Ruyi looked around the familiar classroom, her eyes lingering on her old seat, a hint of nostalgia in her gaze.

"Welcome back, President Jiang." Deng Yutang finally found an opportunity to come beside Jiang Ruyi.

"Yeah." Jiang Ruyi smiled and politely nodded.

"Hello, President Jiang." Chang Ying didn't dare approach and simply waved her hand.

"How is the team?" Jiang Ruyi smiled as she looked at the tall Chang Ying.

"Very good." Chang Ying sneakily glanced at Lu Ran beside her, "Very reassuring."

Jiang Ruyi nodded in agreement, also looking towards Lu Ran.

"I have something to tell you." Lu Ran suddenly spoke up.

"What is it?" Deng Yutang was very curious.

With such a beautiful Jiang here, instead of catching up, you want to start a meeting?

Lu Ran sat perched on a desk, "Do you know about Heavenly Pride?"

"I saw it!" Chang Ying immediately said, "I watched it on the fifteenth of the first month."

"I saw it too!" Deng Yutang chimed in, "Those college students are so fierce?"

"Certainly!" Chang Ying nodded repeatedly, "I was so enthralled it went to my head."

My dad told me, after watching the program, it gave him hope to live..."

Lu Ran: "..."

Is the effect really that immediate?

Undoubtedly, Da Xia's official launch of "Heavenly Pride" was a national-level program.

Its preliminary promotions were overwhelming, and after the fifteenth of the first month, the heat from "Heavenly Pride" was almost explosive!

Tian Tian looked to Lu Ran, asking softly, "What's with the program?"

"Next month on the fifteenth, I can't join you all for the city defense."

"Ah?" Deng Yutang's eyes widened, "Brother Lu is going to?"

Everyone looked at Lu Ran in shock.

Lu Ran encouraged them, "Don't hold back, speak boldly!"

Deng Yutang incredulously said, "Brother Lu is going to participate in Heavenly Pride?"

Because Deng Yutang had seen firsthand how formidable those college students were, he was even more skeptical.

He highly recognized and respected Lu Ran's abilities.

The problem was, every one of those fierce college students was from the River Realm·Fifth Rank!

Looking around, not even a single one from the Fourth Rank of the River Realm could be found!

Moreover, they all were competitors from big cities, coming from the top universities of various provinces.

Lu Ran was still just a high school student!

"Yeah." Lu Ran nodded.

"Wow..." Tian Tian's mouth slightly agape.

Deng Yutang's eyes were full of disbelief.

Everyone knew Lu Ran was extraordinarily strong.

But this was Da Xia's officially recognized, handpicked top one hundred "Heavenly Prides"!

Only one hundred spots were available!

What does that imply?

At this moment, they all suddenly realized that such a significant figure was standing next to them!

Lu Ran was now on the same level as those elusive, brilliant Heavenly Prides.

The only difference was, Lu Ran was standing right beside them, visible and touchable.

Jiang Ruyi's eyes were tender with pride, gently watching Lu Ran.

Since she had just been teased by Lu Ran.

So this time, she wasn't using her peripheral vision.

Now it was his turn to use his peripheral vision.

Chapter 219: Divine Weapon Ruyi?

"Heavenly Pride, you don't seem very surprised?"

Lu Ran couldn't help but turn his head to look at Jiang Ruyi.

He saw the young girl nod gently, "Yuanxi told me."

"Oh." Lu Ran muttered to himself, 'This little girl sure is quick with her words, huh?'

Tian Tian timidly asked, "Sister Ruyi, have you always been chatting with Yuanxi?"

Jiang Ruyi smiled at Tian Tian and teased, "What, are you jealous?"

Tian Tian's face turned slightly red, and she immediately lowered her head, realizing that her thoughts had been detected.

"Not very often." Jiang Ruyi spoke softly.

"Mm-hmm." Tian Tian responded repeatedly without daring to look up at Jiang Ruyi.

Jiang Ruyi glanced over the group, "Let's go to Demon Cave for training tomorrow."

"Okay!" Deng Yutang agreed crisply and quickly, "Then the few of us will head back first."

"Oh... oh!" Chang Ying also caught up, promptly embracing the petite Tian Tian in her arms. "Lu Treasure, we'll head off first then!"

"Sister Ruyi, goodbye."

The trio left swiftly, leaving two figures in the classroom.

"Lu Treasure?" Jiang Ruyi turned to look at Lu Ran, with a faint smile playing on her lips.

Lu Ran felt slightly embarrassed, "A historical problem. When we went for training in the black-light Demon Cave, I overdid the Divine Technique-Voice of Compassion."

Jiang Ruyi raised her eyebrow slightly, "The black-light tribe can't hear your call."

Lu Ran waved his hand, "I wasn't trying to control the lamps, but to control people. She's Si Xianxian, a Fierce Heavenly believer, you know, these people are like explosive barrels, uncontrollable."

Jiang Ruyi had a strange look on her face, any unexpected gains?

She looked at Lu Ran and said softly, "Si Xianxian sounds like a girl's name, must be pretty huh?"

Lu Ran: "..."

Jiang Ruyi's smile didn't wane as she gazed lightly at Lu Ran, "It seems a lot happened after I left."

Lu Ran shrugged, "Living, after all, brings stories."

This time, Jiang Ruyi didn't respond.

Suddenly, Lu Ran said, "I even told Si Xianxian that when you return, the two of us will take her to the Ice and Snow World for fun."

Jiang Ruyi looked surprised, "A little girl?"

"Not really, she's a year older than us."

"Why would the two of us need to take her?"

Lu Ran laughed, "If I didn't say that, I'd have to go to the Ice and Snow World alone with her."

Hearing this, Jiang Ruyi felt a sweet sensation rising within her.

"Heh." She didn't show it but just hummed lightly, stepping towards the window sill.

Hmm... wasn't a waste missing you.

Lu Ran still sat at the classroom desk, watching her graceful silhouette: "Later, we went to Beifeng City for training and happened to catch Lord Beifeng creating the Divine Ruins. My Dawn Blade received a certain chance, allowing me to smoothly advance. Your Cold Night Sword..."

Jiang Ruyi raised her hand to grab the sword hilt extending from behind her shoulder. Its touch was ice cold:

"No opportunities needed, when you handed Cold Night to me, it was already full of spirit."

Lu Ran nodded thoughtfully, "Yes, that's my family heirloom..."

Before he could finish, Jiang Ruyi, looking outside, suddenly said, "Everyone's gone, let's go home too."

Lu Ran paused for a moment, then went along with it, "No rush, I'm planning to find the school leaders first, ask them for a favor."

"Hmm?"

"I'm supposed to participate in 'Heavenly Pride', right? I was thinking if we could do it together."

"Me?" Jiang Ruyi slightly raised her head, looking through the classroom window at Lu Ran's ghostly image.

"I'm not capable of securing a spot for you, but you could be a photographer!"

"Photographer?"

"Yes, more people would see you." Lu Ran nodded, "You missed over five months of believer points. Even if the school compensates you, they'd only give you the average points, not top marks. It's tough to get into good universities."

Lu Ran paused, then continued, "We need to think out of the box! The people of Da Xia highly follow 'Heavenly Pride'. As long as we are strong enough and perform spectacularly, we should be able to catch some offers from colleges."

"Mm..." Jiang Ruyi pursed her lips.

She raised her hand, placed her delicate fingers on the windowpane, hovering over Lu Ran's transparent figure and gently traced his features.

Indeed,

wasn't a waste missing you.

"Do you want to participate?" Lu Ran asked, "Don't worry, your strength is definitely enough. You are now in River Realm First Rank, with a Divine Weapon by your side, it'll surely be fine."

"I'm not in River Realm First Rank."

"Ah?"

"I'm in River Realm Second Rank."

Jiang Ruyi watched Lu Ran gaping through the window.

Involuntarily, a smile emerged on her face as she gently tapped his nose with her fingertip.

Unfortunately, that fingertip was tapping on the window glass, Lu Ran was unblessed to feel it.

"You are in River Realm Second Rank?" Lu Ran was indeed a bit dumbfounded.

The grand competition had already concluded and he hadn't noticed that his opponent had advanced to River Realm Second Rank?!

It was because the young girl had been soaring, preventing Lu Ran from directly feeling her actual speed.

And since Jiang Ruyi had her Divine Weapon alongside her, when she wielded the sword, Lu Ran indeed couldn't decipher if it was her own strength or the Divine Weapon's power bolstering it.

"I trained very diligently," Jiang Ruyi's voice was low and soft, "afraid of being left behind."

"Left behind?" Lu Ran smirked, "Your realm is even higher than mine! Does Divine Sculpture nurture so well down here?"

"Indeed." Jiang Ruyi spoke softly, "I was also fortunate. After advancing to Stream Realm Fifth Rank, it only took me two days to break through into River Realm."

Lu Ran's mouth formed an 'O'.

Theoretically, that was no problem.

Not to mention two days, even if you just advanced to Stream Realm Fifth Rank two minutes ago, you could have a flash of insight and enter upgrade mode again.

But...

Two days, that's really too quick!

How long had he taken?

Lu Ran remembered clearly, he reached Stream Realm Fifth Rank on the twenty-third of the lunar November and only had a flash of insight on the eighth of the lunar December!

That's a full half-month!

If on that day, December 8th, he hadn't gone to Wu Lie River bank and hadn't seen that roaring river, he would have undoubtedly remained stuck.

Now that he was thinking back, if time could turn back and Lu Ran were given a second chance, heading directly to the Wu Lie River bank...

Well, it still wouldn't have worked!

The so-called 'flash of insight' is a person's deep understanding, also a sudden comprehension after extensive accumulation.

Lu Ran's experiences in Beifeng City, were seemingly indispensable.

Especially the stories of Yan Shuangzi and Deng Yuxiang, who had immensely moved Lu Ran's heart.

The two friends from the past chose vastly different paths.

One stayed under Divine Sculpture, always listening to the divine teachings.

The other gave up the stairway to ascend, stubbornly returning to his hometown.

Lu Ran, having just happened upon Lord Beifeng creating the Divine Ruins, witnessed with his own eyes Yan Shuangzi stepping into the Divine Ruins, gaining that immense resource!

And thinking of that Deng Yuxiang struggling alone in the rain-soaked alley...

This layer upon layer of emotions and reflections revolving around "hometown" undoubtedly were key influences on Lu Ran's epiphany on the riverbank.

"I relied on the protection of my hometown, looking at the Wu Lie River to advance," Lu Ran gathered his thoughts and inquired, "What about you?"

"Hmm~"

Cold Night Sword trembled lightly.

Jiang Ruyi smiled and lowered her head, "Cold Night and I achieved each other.

She condensed into an Artifact Spirit, promoted to Divine Weapon, and I broke through and advanced to River Realm."

Hearing this, Lu Ran couldn't help but feel deeply moved, it sounds so beautiful?

But, having been through it himself, Lu Ran of course knew the difficulty of advancing to River Realm, and also how hard it is for a Divine Weapon to condense an Artifact Spirit.

Jiang Ruyi spoke lightly and softly.

But her personal goals, spiritual will, including the gentle beautiful exterior harboring that heart...

Certainly were extremely clear and incredibly resolute.

Lu Ran curiously asked, "What was your epiphany with the Divine Weapon?"

Jiang Ruyi looked at someone's figure through the window, suddenly tilted her head slightly, and smiled:

"Not telling you~"

Lu Ran: "..."

He could feel, Jiang Ruyi was becoming more and more like a "person".

At least more lively and playful than when she had just come back.

Or perhaps... well, because there was no one else in the classroom?

Jiang Ruyi's focus gradually shifted, no longer gazing at the figure in the window, but looking into the distance, her eyes slightly unfocused.

In the future, I can't tell you either.

What would happen if you knew and became overconfident and reckless?

"Do you want to be a photographer then?" Lu Ran asked.

"Sure." Jiang Ruyi didn't hesitate, teased, "I'll make sure you look gorgeous."

"No need to specifically make it so." Lu Ran hummed, "I'm naturally beautiful, the foundation is there after all."

Jiang Ruyi finally turned around, shooting Lu Ran a look.

"Come on, let's go talk to the school leaders." Lu Ran tilted his head slightly, indicating the direction of the classroom door.

"Mm." Jiang Ruyi stepped forward, bringing a faint jasmine fragrance as she crossed Lu Ran's desk.

But, just as she was about to step out of the classroom, she suddenly halted.

Jiang Ruyi lowered her head to look at her own right hand: "You..."

It turned out, Lu Ran had secretly picked up the index and middle finger of the girl.

He gently shook them, blurting out, "I'm trying to see if I can swing it."

Jiang Ruyi: ???

In just a few seconds, she had imagined many words Lu Ran might say.

Even her cheeks had slightly reddened.

But... what was all this?

Jiang Ruyi, both annoyed and amused, said, "Do you think I'm a Divine Weapon?"

Lu Ran was still clutching her fingers, swaying them left and right: "Works fine, can swing."

She didn't resist, didn't pull her hand away.

Somebody then became more daring, from clutching the fingers to grasping her entire palm.

This white and delicate hand was cool, soft.

It felt just right when held.

Jiang Ruyi's eyes widened slightly, her cheeks instantly flushed.

Lu Ran chuckled, "You haven't been back for over five months, things have changed a lot here, I was worried you'd get lost."

Jiang Ruyi: "..."

Is that the most reasonable explanation you could come up with?

Lu Ran hurriedly left the classroom.

It turned out,

he could swing a hand, and lead a person along.

Jiang Ruyi walked with her head down, her cheeks burning in waves.

Without saying a word, she let Lu Ran lead, sprinting through the corridors...

Chapter 220: Greedy Flame

Jiang and Lu Ran first sought the head teacher, and then accompanied by Teacher Li Yanzhu, they went to see the school leadership to explain their thoughts.

After receiving the school's support, Lu Ran continually expressed his gratitude and left the school with Jiang Ruyi.

On the way home, Lu Ran thought it over and took out his cell phone to call Captain Sun Zhengfang.

Jiang Ruyi followed by Lu Ran's side, a faint smile on her face as she quietly watched him bustling about.

"Hello, Uncle Sun?" Lu Ran called out.

"What's up, Lu River Realm?" Sun Zhengfang teased, "Any instructions?"

That was a novel nickname.

Lu Ran chuckled, "Uncle Sun, last autumn, one of my teammates was summoned by a divine being and went for further training. Today, she's returned."

"Oh?" Sun Zhengfang searched his memory and recalled such a person.

Due to the Divine People Bureau's interest in Lu Ran, his teammates had also caught the attention of the Watch-Moon Team.

"Uncle Sun, I just discussed with the school leaders, and the school will negotiate with the Divine People Bureau..."

Lu Ran briefly explained the situation, listening to which Sun Zhengfang nodded in approval.

"Since you've asked, Uncle Sun will certainly help you out behind the scenes to make this happen."

Sun Zhengfang felt quite moved and continued, "By the way, what is Miss Jiang Ruyi's current power level?"

Lu Ran: "River Realm·Second Rank."

Sun Zhengfang: "What??"

Lu Ran grimaced and hastily moved the phone away from his ear.

Usually, Lu Ran kept his Evil Technique·Evil Recognition on, and the explosion of sound near his ear truly made his head buzz.

"River Realm Second Rank at the beginning of the final high school term?" Sun Zhengfang was quite delighted.

Lu Ran spoke somberly, "Captain Sun, as the team leader of the patrol squadron, calm down a bit."

Sun Zhengfang was puzzled, "Huh?"

Lu Ran quickly said, "She is a Jade Talisman Believer, very powerful, and can totally keep up with our patrol team's pace, rest assured! By the way, I have to tell you a secret, okay?"

Sun Zhengfang spoke irritably, "What secret? Speak openly and honestly!"

Right away, Lu Ran said, "She has a Divine Weapon."

On the other end of the line, silence fell.

Lu Ran was completely at ease!

Ordinarily, it was others clamoring for his plastic bag, frantically reaching into it.

Today, finally, it was Lu Ran's turn to extend his sinful hand and rummage through someone else's bag, to turn it to his own use!

So this is how great it feels~

No different from rummaging through my own plastic bag!

"Uncle Sun?" After waiting for a long while, Lu Ran looked at the phone screen.

It hadn't disconnected, right?

Eventually, Sun Zhengfang spoke again, "I heard from Little Deng that you have a Divine Weapon. The phenomenon that occurred on the fifteenth of the twelfth lunar month in the east of the city was caused by you and the Dawn Blade."

"Yes, I have one," Lu Ran nodded, "And now I'm telling you she, my classmate, has one too."

Jiang Ruyi followed at Lu Ran's side, giving him a quick glance.

She'd like him to be more low-key, but his proud and show-off demeanor was quite amusing after all.

Sun Zhengfang's tone became serious, "That's great! With two Divine Weapons in our team, we don't need to augment our numbers. The bureau's personnel can be distributed to other teams to improve our comrades' survival chances."

Lu Ran became serious as well, speaking firmly, "Yes, Captain Sun. Two genuine Divine Weapons!"

Saying this, Lu Ran looked toward the graceful girl beside him, "A Heavenly Pride about to dazzle."

"Heh," Sun Zhengfang who had just gotten serious, now laughed, "You're getting less and less humble! No, I have to speak with Little Deng, she needs to keep you in line."

"What?" Lu Ran was taken aback but then realized, "I didn't mean me... well, I did say a little less. Two Heavenly Prides, both!"

Sun Zhengfang: "..."

"Thwack."

Jiang Ruyi couldn't hold back and patted Lu Ran on the shoulder.

"Uh," Lu Ran said softly, "Okay, let's just say one then."

"Beep beep beep..."

The phone line buzzed with a busy signal.

Lu Ran hung up but before he could put the phone in his pocket, an incoming call arrived.

Yo, who could this be?

Seeing the caller ID, Lu Ran immediately answered, "Sister Xian'er?"

"Sigh..." On the other end, a relieved sigh from a girl could be heard.

Jiang Ruyi curiously watched Lu Ran.

Lu Ran, with his Evil Technique-Evil Recognition active, was naturally attentive to his surroundings.

He simply turned on speakerphone and said, "Go ahead, speak?"

On the other end came an annoyed voice, "What are you busy with? You don't reply to messages and your phone is unreachable?"

Lu Ran: "..."

Jiang Ruyi raised her eyebrows slightly. Such a tone was quite impolite.

But what was to come was even less polite.

Si Xianxian's voice was sweet but her demeanor incredibly irritable: "Turn on the mic! Speak!"

Lu Ran grimaced, "I'm listening! Calm down and speak nicely."

"Hmph," Si Xianxian snorted, "Did you enter the Demon Cave?"

"Not at all, what's wrong?"

"That's good," Si Xianxian breathed a sigh of relief, "Last month, I couldn't evade the grip. If you don't take me out to have fun this month, I'm going to explode!"

Jiang Ruyi grew even more curious upon hearing the word "take."

Si Xianxian asked, "Where are you going this month?"

Lu Ran replied right away, "Evil Dog Village."

"Why Evil Dog Village again?" Si Xianxian pouted discontentedly, "The world is so big, and you're just stuck in the rain alleys, aren't you?"

Lu Ran thought it wasn't bad; he could take the opportunity to cultivate the Evil Dog Sculpture to the River Realm!

Later, he could sneakily summon dogs to play~

Si Xianxian continued to grumble, "Have you been to Chang'an City? Have you strolled through Hushang City? The scenery of Mount Song and Guangzhou, you've seen them all..."

Jiang Ruyi lifted her eyelids, gazing lightly at Lu Ran.

Lu Ran felt his scalp tingle!

"No!" Lu Ran interrupted her, "This time, we're going to the buffer zone beyond the fifth wall, or the selection zone beyond the sixth wall. The school also mentioned that our first station as believers was Evil Dog Village. Now that the lower term of grade twelve has started, the school places the first station again at Evil Dog Village. They say it's to remind us to remember our initial purpose and be consistent..."

"Ey, fine fine fine," Si Xianxian said impatiently, "Evil Dog Village it is, you wait for me, I'm booking a ticket."

Lu Ran immediately said, "Jiang Ruyi is back."

"Oh?" Si Xianxian's intonation changed, suddenly interested, "Has the main lady finally returned?"

Jiang Ruyi looked startled.

What...what's this?

Lu Ran too was startled, "Don't talk nonsense; what's all this mess!"

The main thing is, I don't have a concubine, do I?

"Aiyo, I got it, I got it," Si Xianxian chuckled brightly, "Look at you, so timid. I'll explain well and won't let your little girlfriend misunderstand."

"It's more than that," Lu Ran insisted, "You also need to curb your lousy temper and avoid conflicts with others."

"No problem," Si Xianxian promised readily, "But don't forget the agreement between us."

Lu Ran was irritated, enunciating each word, "Si Xianxian, you better talk to me nicely!"

"Hehe~" Si Xianxian couldn't stop laughing, "You promised me that when she returns, you two will take me to the snow world for fun."

Lu Ran huffed, "It's spring now; wait for next year."

"Don't wait for next year!" Si Xianxian suddenly panicked, "We can change the place. Life fades away day by day, and maybe any day now, I'll be gone without having seen the world."

The words of urgency from the girl made Jiang Ruyi see her in a new light.

Lu Ran said, "We'll see how you behave."

"Put your heart at ease a thousand times over!" Si Xianxian guaranteed vehemently, "I promise not to be at odds with her, can't I cheer her up?"

Lu Ran was dubious.

Si Xianxian quickly said, "But if she's envious because I'm pretty, that's not my fault!"

Lu Ran also smiled, "Put your heart at ease a thousand times. Your appearance is the only pretty thing about you, and the rest isn't worth seeing."

Si Xianxian gritted her teeth, "Lu! Ran!!"

Lu Ran straightaway said, "Book tomorrow morning's ticket; I'll come to the station to pick you up."

"But I want to slap you now!"

"Book tomorrow morning's ticket," Lu Ran's tone was no longer negotiable, he softly repeated, "I'll pick you up."

Si Xianxian fell silent for a while and then whispered, "Okay, fine."

After she hung up, Jiang Ruyi looked at Lu Ran with a smile that wasn't quite a smile, "Fierce Heavenly believers are usually hot-tempered and unruly. It's clear she has a strong personality. But why do I feel like she listens to you a lot?"

Lu Ran looked a bit awkward.

Would you believe me if I said this was a result of my efforts?

"Hm?" Jiang Ruyi let out a faint nasal sound, tinged with hints of skepticism.

Lu Ran said softly, "I thought you'd focus on words like 'main lady' and 'little girlfriend'..."

Jiang Ruyi's eyes widened slightly, as if she just realized that these things were said.

Lu Ran immediately said, "Let me tell you a story!"

Jiang Ruyi turned and walked away, her clothes fluttering, "Who wants to listen?"

Lu Ran watched Little Ruyi with a smile, feeling she was more human now.

When she first returned to campus that morning, she indeed had an ethereal quality as if she was unaccustomed to worldly affairs. It seemed her days under the divine sculpture must have been quite austere.

Lu Ran followed, recounting the past she didn't know:

"That was at Black Grave Mound, next to the Evil Nest..."

Because Lu Ran didn't want any misunderstandings, that's why he chose a hands-free call just now.

Holding on to this idea, Lu Ran certainly intended to tell the whole story.

By the time they arrived at the gate of the Rain Alley Home Community, Lu Ran had clarified the whole story.

"Would you like to come in and sit?" Lu Ran politely invited.

"No, I'm going back," Jiang Ruyi shook her head, continuing on her path.

Lu Ran watched her figure: "But I still haven't heard your story."

Jiang Ruyi's silhouette, with four White Jade Stone Tokens, slowly rose, "I... have no story."

Lu Ran looked up, watching the gradually drifting white-dressed girl, "Five months, no stories?"

High in the sky, Jiang Ruyi paused.

A few seconds later, the Cold Night Sword she carried on her back suddenly floated toward Lu Ran.

"What does this mean?" Lu Ran looked up at Jiang Ruyi.

"Your requested story."

"Just this one?" Lu Ran grasped the Divine Weapon and swirled it into a flourish.

The girl drifting away in the air suddenly turned around, lowering her head to look at Lu Ran.

Her beautiful eyes held a hint of reproach as she murmured softly:

"Greedy."

Lu Ran's ears were too keen; he heard the words faintly voiced from her lips.

Just as he was somewhat taken aback, he felt a stirring in his heart.

Holding the hilt of the Cold Night Sword, he once again felt the Artifact Spirit's emotions.

It was a feeling he had experienced before.

It was...a trace of joy.

By the time Lu Ran came to his senses and looked up at the sky again, the celestial figure had already drifted far away.