

Old Gods 241

Chapter 241: King Yan's Hall?_2

The Moon Gazer's pupils contracted slightly, feeling a chill run down her spine!

Who is it?

When did this person sneak up?

The night rain drizzled, and amidst the chaos, the Moon Gazer truly hadn't noticed anything!

In her sight, a dark shadow quietly moved forward, his body slightly tilted.

He held a pair of Black Ice Blades in his hands, advancing silently through a cascade of crimson silk.

Crouching and standing, moving forward and back.

His figure shifted, darting left and then right.

The Moon Gazer was startled!

It was during this moment of shock, she heard a crisp "snap."

A red cloth harshly whipped her face and then wrapped around her head.

"Zi!" the Moon Gazer hastily raised her hand.

Under the enhancement of Divine Technique-Slaughter Blade, her dagger fiercely tore through the cloth.

Then seeing the dark shadow silently closing in, swiftly evading, she immediately understood what "maintain the status quo" meant.

"Maintain the status quo! Maintain the status quo!"

The Moon Gazer relayed the command to her teammates through her invisible earpiece.

She was both alarmed and delighted, a slice of unrealistic fantasy rising in her heart.

Was this Lu Ran, the "Undisputed in the Rain Alley"?

It must be Da Xia's genius, Lu Ran, right?!

Yes, it must be him.

Although she couldn't see his face, he had a mini camera on his temple, moving forward step by step amidst the surge of crimson silk...

It had to be him!

"Ah ah ah!"

On the southeastern main battlefield, a Biwu believer howled in sorrow and anger, still outputting spells with the Caster believer.

"Hehe~"

Tangled Silk Shadow laughed indulgently, releasing her cruel nature, toying with the puppet in her hand.

Now and then, she even tempted the branches to deal a fatal blow to herself.

In the nick of time, she would use Red Sash believers as human shields.

Her body twisted along with the Nuosha Dance, but the red threads from her fingertips never ceased!

There was no doubt, Tangled Silk Shadow was toying with her prey, humiliating the Human Clan.

The sad, crying appearance and the helpless look of the people brought her immense joy.

But this wasn't enough!

She wanted those angered humans to use branches to stab their comrades.

She wanted to see the Human Clan's spirit collapse, weeping bitterly.

She also wanted to savor, enjoy every moment of the Red Sash believers struggling under her silk threads.

Not enough,

not close to enough...

Clearly, Tangled Silk Shadow's kind had high intelligence.

Compared to mindless Evil Dogs or Soul-splitting Demons, Tangled Silk Shadow was not in a hurry to consume the human's fresh blood and tender flesh.

Her psychological needs could surpass her material needs.

Why was the southeastern side called the main battlefield?

Because there were masses of red silk and red cloth strips there, resisting the invasion of branches.

Nuoshasha believers sought to break in to save others, naturally targeting the weakest defenses, which happened to be on the west side.

Lu Ran had obviously penetrated from the west side.

Thanks to this, he managed to push forward relatively smoothly.

But since he got in front of Nuoshasha believers, more red lines and cloth strips appeared, forcing Lu Ran to use the Divine Weapon.

"Shua~"

A flash of blade light swept by, cutting down three red cloth strips.

Evil Technique-Silk Tether acted autonomously against enemies, and when cut, it didn't cause too much reaction from the Evil Demon itself.

Moreover, there was a Nuoshasha believer nearby, frantically tearing at the fabric threads.

Yet Lu Ran still dared not make any big moves.

His goal was to rescue, to get as close as possible to Tangled Silk Shadow before she could react.

Closer,

and closer...

With only thirty meters to go, Lu Ran had already covered half.

"Hmm?"

Suddenly, Lu Ran faintly heard Tangled Silk Shadow's suspicious voice.

Lu Ran's heart tightened—had he made too much noise?

Decisively, he surged forward with Immortal Fog spreading beneath his feet.

"Zi—"

Lu Ran nearly skimmed the ground, fiercely throwing his swords forward.

At the same time, Tangled Silk Shadow turned her head to look.

Her beautiful red pupils suddenly widened.

"Sou~"

"Sou!" The Cold Night Sword and Dawn Blade spun and flew forward through the barriers of red lines.

One sword aimed at the Evil Demon, one knife stopped a meter in front of Tangled Silk Shadow.

The Dawn Blade left a dream-like light red rosy cloud.

"Ya!!"

Tangled Silk Shadow yelped in pain.

She didn't have time to react, and the silk threads manipulating the Red Sash believers were severed by the swiftly spinning Dawn Blade!

As for the Evil Demon itself, the Cold Night Sword encountered strong resistance.

The red dress autonomously defended, loyally protecting its master.

From the side of the dress, masses of threads surged out like red waves, ferociously blocking the Cold Night Sword.

An astonishing amount of threads!

The mighty Divine Weapon was completely submerged in the red waves.

This encounter was entirely different from the last.

Indeed, the Divine Weapons were sharp, but they lacked enough momentum.

Most critically, the vibrant red dress had not been frozen by Jiang Ruyi, which allowed the "red waves" to surge out.

Overjoyed, the Biwu believer quickly stretched out branches, attempting to retrieve his comrades.

But before he could act, Sun Zhengfang had already made his move!

A Chinese parasol tree burst from the ground, its lush branches enveloping the Red Sash believers.

"Mee!!!"

Lu Ran's cry almost synchronized with Tangled Silk Shadow's.

He was casting spells, but also screaming in agony.

In that final moment, to get closer and add momentum to the Divine Weapon, he recklessly dashed forward, flinging the Divine Weapon while being lashed back by countless silk threads!

Evil Technique·Silk Tether was essentially a defensive technique.

But those fine red threads brutally shredded Lu Ran's water armor!

"Whew..."

Lu Ran was thrown back, rolling repeatedly on the ground, covered in mud, wailing in agony:

"Mee, Mee, Mee~~~"

"Kill!" Sun Zhengfang half-knelt on the ground, pressing one hand to the earth, and shouted angrily.

Jiang Ruyi's face was cold as she hurled one Frost Talisman after another.

Wei Long, clad in a Big Red Robe, rushed forward rapidly, summoning chains while a red mist erupted from his feet, piercing toward the Evil Demon.

"Pa Ji~"

Lu Ran, tumbling repeatedly, lost his camera, which fell onto the muddy ground.

Finally stabilizing, Lu Ran lay prone on the ground, his face buried in a small mud pit.

Mud stained the small lens, briefly losing the first-person perspective.

Thanks to the night rain, the screen gradually cleared.

Countless eyes saw Lu Ran up close, covered in mud.

People also saw the blurred background, saw the swinging tree whips, the spreading frost, the bursting red waves.

The screams of the Evil Demon, the battle cries of the Human Clan.

The sound of the wind, the rain, the bursts...

This moment, even the live comments dwindled by ninety percent, people staring blankly at the scene, forgetting to speak.

"Pa!"

Suddenly, Lu Ran slapped the ground, lifting his mud-splattered face from the small pit.

His breathing was short and hurried, seemingly enduring intense pain.

Then in the next moment, people heard a familiar sound:

"Mee!!!"

The sound of a sheep, the Demon's cries ceased.

In the distance on the battlefield, Tangled Silk Shadow was once again distracted by Lu Ran.

Prisoner Demon believers tore apart her Evil Technique-Silk Tether.

That Cold Night Sword, under the control of its mistress, ultimately pierced through the Evil Demon's chest...

In an instant, it seemed as if the world quieted down.

Only the relentless night rain pouring on Lu Ran's body, mingled with specks of mud, sliding down his face.

On the channel, the sparse conversation signaled the eve of a stormy onslaught!

As the frame played out, countless people behind the screen cheered and surged with excitement...

Numerous live comments fluttered past, crossing across the screen that held Lu Ran, as if to replace the rain and cleanse his dirt-smudged face.

"Did they rescue him? Was the person rescued?"

"Rescued! The Biwu tree has grown out, enveloping the Red Sash believer!"

"Just... snatched the person right out of Tangled Silk Shadow's hands?!"

"Lu Ran! Lu Ran!"

"Damn impressive!! Real man!!"

"Would rather storm King Yan's palace than touch the silk threads? Today, I, Lu Ran, just did! Mee!!!"

"Mee!!"

Chapter 242: Kill!

"Lu Ran!"

Jiang Ruyi floated down, half-kneeling beside Lu Ran, supporting his arm with one hand.

"Ugh." Lu Ran grinded painfully, kneeling on the ground, feeling as if his body was falling apart.

What a mighty Evil Demon·Tangled Silk Shadow!

What a formidable Evil Technique·Silk Tether!

So powerful indeed.

As a member of the Human Clan, Lu Ran naturally did not wish to see the Evil Demons grow too strong.

However, as the "owner" of the God Demon Sculpture Garden, the stronger Tangled Silk Shadow's power, the stronger Lu Ran's servants would be.

And in the future, the power of Ran Sect would grow stronger!

Another point made Lu Ran inwardly sigh with regret.

That Tether Silk Robe was too heavy; wearing it would severely hinder Lu Ran's speed.

Until this day, Lu Ran's style of fighting had been set in stone—speed was the core.

Once he donned the Tether Silk Robe, it would be like destroying his own foundations.

The more he thought about it, the more Lu Ran felt a pang of regret.

Who wouldn't want to wear that bright red gown and strut around impressively?

Indeed, there were only zero and countless times when it came to cross-dressing.

Since wearing the Night Charm Robe, Lu Ran no longer cared about wearing such a feminine, revealing red dress...

As long as it could enhance his combat strength, that was what mattered!

Who cares what I'm wearing~

"Are you okay?"

The girl's soft voice carried a hint of distress as she looked at him.

"Little Lu." Sun Zhengfang and Wei Long also rushed over, "Where are you hurt?"

"I'm not hurt," Lu Ran reached for the camera nearby, muttering, "it just hurts a bit."

His murmured words, mixed with the pitter-patter of the rain, drifted into thousands of households.

The listeners found it both amusing and distressing.

Such words, should they be coming from a Heavenly Pride?

Other students participating in the battle were all trying their hardest to show their robust and resolute sides.

Yet from Lu Ran's mouth here comes a "it hurts a bit"?

Had Lu Ran spoken such words earlier, he probably would have been criticized to pieces!

After all, he was one of the hundred carefully selected by Da Xia, which meant, in some sense, he represented the face of Da Xia.

But just before Lu Ran said this, he had just blazed a trail through Ghost Gate and forcefully brought back a comrade!

In the streaming channel, the barrage of comments came in waves, yet few had anything negative to say about Lu Ran.

Instead, there was more emotion and praise.

"Ran Shen is so genuine! Never pretends!"

"He's crying out in pain, but when storming King Yan's palace, didn't seem to flinch, did he?"

"Looks like Tangled Silk Shadow is much stronger than Night Charm, seeing how badly the kid got beaten, bleating so loudly."

"Saving someone and killing an enemy aren't the same level of difficulty; how many controlled by Tangled Silk Shadow can survive?"

"That's true! The Red Scarf Believer purely got lucky."

"Watching the livestream while kicking my Immortal Sheep Believer husband, he keeps kneeling and crying, not daring to fight back, not a backbone in sight, it's infuriating!"

"Lu Ran is a being worthy of Yan Zhi's respect! He condescended to join the Immortal Goat Sect, can he be compared with other useless people?"

"A few more Heavenly Prides and Da Xia's divine rankings are about to change..."

Just as Lu Ran was fitting the camera properly, a wave of energy fluctuation suddenly came from above.

The closeness of the distance made the teammates aware of it too.

The group tensed, only to see a string of Da Xia characters emerge within the pulsating energy.

Moon?

One by one, the characters for "moon" glowed with a pearly light, like the bright moonlight.

Everyone breathed a sigh of relief, except for Sun Zhengfang, they all stepped back to allow the string of "moon" characters to form a circle, enveloping Lu Ran.

Caster Divine Skill·Moonlight Spell!

This skill was extraordinary, injecting vitality into the target, speeding up the healing of wounds.

"Thank you, thank you all..."

The Caster Believer approached from a distance, tears streaming down her face, her voice choked with emotion.

Sun Zhengfang placed his hand on Lu Ran, his palm emanating a gentle green light, meticulously examining Lu Ran's body:

"Take the two teammates with you; we'll send you to the nearest shelter."

"Captain Sun!" A Biwu Believer rushed over, releasing a dense mass of branches, wrapping around the unconscious Nuoshasha Believer and Red Scarf Believer.

As Moon Gazers from Rain Alley City, they naturally recognized the higher-ups from Yunshan City.

And their gazes once again fell on Lu Ran.

Gratitude, admiration, relief, fear...

It was hard to imagine such complex and full emotions on one person's face.

Just think, before the patrolling team arrived, how desperate these people's hearts must have been.

Perhaps, they were on the verge of mental breakdown, tormented by Evil Demon·Tangled Silk Shadow...

"Fortune follows after a great disaster," Lu Ran looked towards the two and said solemnly.

"Yes, yes." The female Caster Believer nodded vigorously, covering her eyes with one hand, already sobbing uncontrollably.

A simple sentence, but it triggered a complete emotional outburst in the woman.

People didn't know that this Caster female Believer and the Red Scarf Believer were a couple.

Hot tears overflowed through her fingers, the middle-aged woman like a fragile child at the moment.

"No time to waste!" Sun Zhengfang withdrew his hand and commanded, "Let's go!"

As the command was given, the six-person group, carrying two unconscious casualties, sprang into action.

On the way, Sun Zhengfang spoke seriously, "We need to change our tactics!"

Everyone perked up, listening attentively.

Sun Zhengfang rapidly said, "Lu and Jiang, you two have Divine Weapons, we need to make good use of this advantage.

Let your Divine Weapons fly high, keep them in the air, giving them enough distance to charge."

"Yes!"

"Yes," Lu Ran and Jiang Ruyi responded simultaneously.

Sun Zhengfang continued: "Next time we encounter Tangled Silk Shadow, I'll immediately summon the Biwu tree, releasing as many branches as possible.

Use lots of branches to pull the enemy's red silk threads, creating the main battlefield. Wei Long!"

"Present!"

"As soon as the main battlefield opens, cut in from behind Tangled Silk Shadow! Initiate Divine Technique·Blood Sea Chaos straightaway and strip her of her dress!"

"Yes!"

"You two seize the opportunity, control the Divine Weapons to finish off Tangled Silk Shadow," Sun Zhengfang looked towards Lu and Jiang again.

One after another, the orders were given precisely.

Sun Zhengfang demonstrated the quality of a qualified warrior, and after two battles, based on team members' capabilities, he devised a battle plan.

Within this plan, Wei Long played a critical role.

Sun Zhengfang thought to himself: If only Wei Long had movement techniques like Lu Ran's, naturally, he would be able to penetrate the red silk array more swiftly, and the success rate would be higher.

But you can't have your cake and eat it, can you?

As an Immortal Sheep believer, Lu Ran didn't possess soft control techniques like "Blood Sea Chaos"...

Jiang Ruyi suddenly spoke up: "I can keep outputting.

From another position, draw away the red silk threads, reducing the pressure on Wei."

Lu Ran added: "I'll go call out to ensure Tangled Silk Shadow's attention is all on me."

The effective defense distance of the Evil Technique-Silk Tether was 30 meters, but the attack distance of the Evil Technique-Silk Thread was far beyond 30 meters!

Lu Ran had just witnessed the pitiful state of the Red Scarf Believer, entangled by the red silk threads and controlled by the Evil Demon.

He couldn't let that happen to Wei Long.

"Alright!" The moment Sun Zhengfang finished speaking, a flute sound was heard.

The melodious flute sound was grating to their ears.

For a moment, everyone's complexion changed.

Lu Ran's expression was especially hard to look at; there was undoubtedly a Jade Flute Believer nearby.

In the battlefield, the last thing Lu Ran wanted was to encounter such comrades!

Six-class God-Jade Flute, the sculpture depicted a man in a white robe, with elegant demeanor and gentle temperament.

As a Stone Sculpture, he held a stone flute.

But through the divine shadow and self-proclaimed name, people knew that the flute was made of an unknown white jade.

The Jade Flute faction was not skilled in offense, known instead for their support abilities.

This ear-piercing flute sound, barely an offensive technique, could disturb one's mind, even causing mental illusions.

To pressure the Jade Flute Believer to such an extent, was ample evidence of the life-and-death moment being experienced!

After all, the sound of the flute didn't distinguish between friend and foe!

In other words, either the Jade Flute Believer didn't care about his teammates' lives and deaths, or that group of Moon Gazers, except for the Jade Flute Believer, had all been killed in action!

Both scenarios were sufficient to plunge everyone's hearts into despair.

"Hmm..."

At a crossroads, a woman in a red dress gently rubbed her wet hair, with a slight frown and a light nasal sound emitting.

Her every move carried a bewitching charm.

The frown only seemed to make her more endearing.

The flute sound, it seemed, had affected her somewhat.

But it didn't stop her from moving forward!

Just tens of meters ahead of her, a Moon Gazer held a phantom flute, a look of sorrow on his face as he continued to blow into it.

"Thump!"

Tangled Silk Shadow's feet landed on the wet asphalt, her footsteps dull due to the weight of the long red gown.

Suddenly, the floating red threads in the sky fell silently.

Her feet were covered by the long skirt, but her steps became soundless once more.

Tangled Silk Shadow had disengaged the Evil Technique·Silk Tether.

Her attire seemed unchanged, but that torn and tattered long gown was now a mere ordinary garment, no longer heavy.

Just like the Night Charm Evil Skill·Night Charm Robe.

Before your blade can land on Night Charm's body, it's difficult to tell with the naked eye whether Night Charm has used the Evil Technique·Night Charm Robe.

Whether Night Charm or Tangled Silk Shadow, their appearances were naturally so.

"Hmm~"

The piercing flute sound gave Tangled Silk Shadow an unbearable headache.

She opened her eyes sharply, her red pupils glaring fiercely at the Human Clan ahead...

"Whoosh!!"

Tangled Silk Shadow lunged forward, light and graceful.

With a forward stretch of her hand, five thin red threads shot out from her fingertips, targeted at the Jade Flute Believer!

The speed of the Evil Demon-Tangled Silk Shadow wasn't slow by itself, the only limitation was that Tether Silk Robe.

The Jade Flute Believer suddenly widened his eyes, and the flute sound abruptly stopped!

While the sinister shadow and silk threads had yet to reach him, her gaze, emanating a faint glow from her red eyes, had already intertwined with that of the Jade Flute Believer's gaze in a fleeting moment.

Evil Technique-Silk Pupil!

An evil technique that could drag people into the world of illusions, a powerful skill that could torment and ravage people's minds.

Indeed, the more beautiful things are, the more dangerous they can be.

Such a charming woman was deadly all over, a touch meant death!

The Jade Flute Believer didn't even have the chance to flee, immediately being frozen in place, his complexion stiff and ashen.

Tangled Silk Shadow's lips curled up in a cruel smile.

"Bleat!!!!"

"Huh?" Tangled Silk Shadow turned her head abruptly, spotting the swiftly arriving Human Clan.

Lu Ran's face was ashen as he looked at the crossroad where three twisted corpses lay.

Among them, a headless body lay desolate, fresh blood still oozing from the severed neck.

To add insult to injury, a piece of broken talisman floated above the headless corpse.

Even in death, the talisman did not dissipate...

Two other bodies were entangled with each other, as if they had killed each other.

"Kill!" Sun Zhengfang cried out in shock and rage.

"Sss—"

Lu Ran was consumed with anger, mist swirling around his feet!

He clutched the Silent Night Blade tightly and charged forward:

"Bleat!!!"

Chapter 243: Remembrance and Enmity

The sound of sheep bleating had a surprisingly startling effect!

Tangled Silk Shadow, who had just been mocking, now changed her expression and glared angrily.

Her attention had been entirely arrested by Lu Ran, and she abandoned the Jade Flute Believer, who had been dragged into the Illusion Realm, flinging her palm in Lu Ran's direction.

"Hu~"

Five red silk threads pierced straight toward Lu Ran, who...

His expression was unpleasant as he glimpsed another dimensional world.

Lu Ran activated Divine Technique·Pupil of the Netherworld, intending to hide Evil Technique·Caged Fire behind his pupil to limit Tangled Silk Shadow's movement.

But when he opened his pair of Dead Sheep Eyes, he witnessed a scene of sorrow.

Jade Flute Believer seemed to be alone.

But beside him, three ghostly shades stood guard.

They were the Dead Souls of three Moon Gazers, the three comrades of the Jade Flute Believer!

They were now Dead Souls, unable to influence the real world.

But the three Heroic Souls refused to leave, stubbornly remaining beside their comrade, even positioning themselves in front of the Jade Flute Believer, hoping to intercept the red threads.

The Heroic Souls got their wish.

While they couldn't stop the red threads, the threads indeed shifted in direction, sparing the Jade Flute Believer.

Because...

Lu Ran had arrived!

Not only did the red threads stab toward Lu Ran, but the three Heroic Souls also felt a terrifying suction force.

"Little Lu!"

Sun Zhengfang saw Lu Ran getting closer and closer to the red threads and couldn't help but exclaim in alarm.

Lu Ran's feet stirred with a mist, and a surge of wind buoyed his shoes, leaping to the side.

Night Charm Evil Technique·Night Dance!

"Zi——"

Lu Ran made almost a 90-degree turn, truly surprising Tangled Silk Shadow.

She was unable to contain her rage, her right hand still releasing Evil Technique·Silk Thread, and her left hand suddenly flung out.

Evil Technique·Silk Thread Needle!

Needles fell like rain, pouring down.

"Me~~~"

Lu Ran made another 90-degree turn, heading straight for the Jade Flute Believer, who had empty eyes and a pained expression.

Seeing this scene, Sun Zhengfang finally breathed a sigh of relief.

To kill the enemy was false; to rescue was true.

In fact, in a world unseen and unheard by others, someone had long ago alerted Lu Ran.

"Child, don't be rash!"

"Careful, careful!!"

"Back off! Lu Ran, don't..."

Urgent and indignant voices came from the mouths of the three Heroic Souls.

Just like before, although to no avail, the three of them still made every effort.

Until they saw that Lu Ran had rescued the Jade Flute Believer, who was under the spell of illusion, their emotions became even more intense, some even weeping with joy.

They did not want to see their last remaining comrade follow in their footsteps or see that peerless Heavenly Pride perish here.

"Me!!"

Lu Ran, cradling the Jade Flute Believer, fled wildly through the beautiful red rain.

The voices of the Dead Souls, mingled with the drizzling rain, reached Lu Ran's ears.

It made his heart feel increasingly sorrowful.

He didn't recognize them.

Putting aside identities like Moon Gazer, Divine Technique follower, student, and so on, on this 15th night, everyone had the same name—Human Clan.

"Zi!"

The sound of a blade piercing flesh abruptly rang out.

Two swords in tandem pierced into Tangled Silk Shadow's back of the head, instantly shattering her beautiful skull.

In the night sky, Jiang Ruyi's expression was icy, her eyes cold, staring at Tangled Silk Shadow's skeletal remains.

Plans never change as quickly as situations.

Jiang Ruyi did not follow the orders step by step, even though Sun Zhengfang had already cast Divine Technique·Biwu Tree beside her.

Jiang Ruyi seized the opportunity, with a slight thought, directly commanded the Silent Night Blade to launch a fatal blow.

The Silent Night Blade, having been summoned by its master, shot down from the night sky, and the Dawn Blade sensing its companion's movement, immediately followed.

Of course, Jiang Ruyi's judgment was correct!

When everyone arrived on the battlefield, to capture the Jade Flute Believer, Tangled Silk Shadow had voluntarily cancelled Evil Technique·Tether Silk Robe.

And after Lu Ran entered the scene, Tangled Silk Shadow was "hard controlled"!

Her focus was entirely on Lu Ran, always in an offensive stance, wanting nothing more than to personally torment the young lamb to death.

It was precisely for this reason that Tangled Silk Shadow did not recast Evil Technique-Tether Silk Robe.

Without that proactive defensive robe, Tangled Silk Shadow's life was frightfully fragile...

"Good!" Wei Long gave Jiang Ruyi immense approval.

Seeing this scene, Sun Zhengfang immediately walked towards the skeletal remains of the Moon Gazers.

At this moment, his heart was bleeding.

In the distance, Lu Ran slid forward tens of meters on the wet tarmac before slowly coming to a stop.

He did not look at the skeletons, nor did he harbor any illusions because he had already seen the Dead Souls.

"She's dead! She's dead!"

"Good! She died a good death! Hahaha!"

"We...Why us? Why am I not under control?"

Mixed voices of joy and confusion drew nearer to Lu Ran.

The cold night rain drenched Lu Ran's body, hitting his yellow raincoat and making a tapping sound.

Lu Ran bowed his head, cradling the Jade Flute Believer, and said in a low voice,

"I will get him to the shelter safely."

"You?"

"Lu Ran? Can you...you?"

"Can you see us? Can you see us?!" Three Dead Souls drew nearer to Lu Ran.

Lu Ran turned around, his gaze passing through the phantasmal Dead Souls in front and looking towards the distant skeletons.

Although he disguised it well, the words he spoke earlier were indeed addressed to the three Heroic Souls.

Shock, yearning, and... hope.

An array of expressions appeared on the faces of the three.

The last thing Lu Ran wanted was for any hope to appear on the faces of the Heroic Souls.

The Dead Souls would uncontrollably drift towards Lu Ran, and that was an undeniable fact.

On such a basis, the Dead Souls would always harbor some unrealistic fantasies, like clutching at a life-saving straw.

Indeed, Lu Ran could see them.

But he was only capable of seeing them, unable to do anything more.

"Lu Ran, help me! We can still fight! Still fight!"

"Save...you can see me, Lu Ran; you can see me!"

"Don't let me go, Lu Ran, don't, I'm not ready to die! I still have a child; he's only 13 years old, he has not yet become a believer, I haven't seen him wed and have children..."

Lu Ran's heart trembled mightily, his breathing suddenly becoming somewhat rapid.

Before his father left...

Did he also harbor the same thoughts?

"Hu~"

In another world, specks of Energy Fluctuation.

Dead Souls were continuously absorbed into Lu Ran's pair of lifeless Dead Sheep Eyes.

"Pass on in peace."

Lu Ran's voice was low, with a trace of sorrow, reaching into the ears of the three Heroic Souls, and through the micro cameras, transmitted to countless homes.

Of course, people couldn't see the Heroic Souls, but they could see the Moon Gazer skeletons scattered across the streets.

Inside the channel, there was no longer laughter, only a chorus of farewells:

"Pass on in peace!"

"Pass on in peace..."

"Heroes, pass on in peace!"

"I can't bear to watch this, it's making me cry, I really can't bear to watch this..."

"Kill! Lu Ran, kill, kill, kill! Annihilate those Evil Demons!!"

Lu Ran suddenly lifted his eyelids, hearing a sharp shriek.

Tangled Silk Shadow, with a ferocious face, thrashed about, uncontrollably floating towards Lu Ran.

"Go, to the shelter!" Sun Zhengfang, holding back his grief, shouted loudly.

He also released a multitude of branches, entwining them around the three bodies.

"Lu Ran?" Jiang Ruyi's voice came from the night sky, awakening Lu Ran.

He looked up.

And the sight of Lu Ran biting his lips, his eyes brimming red, made Jiang Ruyi's heart flutter.

It also caused a slight palpitation in the hearts of countless viewers behind the screen.

The death of the three Moon Gazers, the people present, could grieve as much as they may.

But, Lu Ran was in this cursed city, battle-hardened, having experienced untold life and death, also bidding farewell to many valiant spirits.

Is this appearance of Lu Ran...really normal?

Of course, the answer is no.

All because of those few words.

"He is only 13 years old."

"He has not yet become a believer."

"I haven't seen him marry and have children..."

"Lu Ran, let's go." Jiang Ruyi landed beside Lu Ran, gently taking his arm.

Her eyes gentle, she softly said, "Let's take the wounded back to the shelter."

"Mm, let's go." Lu Ran shook his head vigorously, as if to shake off the words echoing in his mind.

The soul of Tangled Silk Shadow had already been admitted to the Sculpture Garden; Lu Ran, carrying the wounded, rushed with the squad to the nearest shelter.

Half a minute later, the group charged into a shelter.

As they emerged, each person bore a "moon" symbol around them.

What the group did not expect was that as soon as they stepped out of the door, just ten meters in front, there was a surge of energy.

"Zi—"

Mist churned beneath Lu Ran's feet, Silent Night Blade in hand, he charged into battle.

Gone was his sorrowful demeanor, replaced with a face full of gloom.

Beneath the Pupil of the Dead World, nestled a flickering wisp of Black Fire.

A flamboyant red figure rapidly materialized, naturally sensing the fierce killing intent behind her!

Her body surged with energy, subconsciously wanting to unleash Evil Technique·Tether Silk Robe, but...

"Zi!"

The sharp Silent Night Blade swept across Tangled Silk Shadow's throat.

Her beautiful head flew high, lips slightly parted and eyes wide in astonishment!

She had just come into the world and hadn't had the chance to wreak havoc before being swiftly beheaded.

Unjust?

No.

The mere ten meters of space, with her back to Lu Ran.

It didn't matter what kind of Evil or Demon you are; as long as you dare to materialize, the blade in Lu Ran's hand would most certainly land on your neck.

"Pfff!"

The headless body remained in place, blood spurting from the neck, splashing Lu Ran's face, in full view of countless others.

"Kill!!!"

"Yes, Ran Shen! Just like that, kill! Gratifying!"

"Dare to wreak havoc in our realm, threaten our homes, spare none!"

"Kill, kill, kill, kill, kill, kill!!!"

Angry and murderous sentences scrolled across the blood-stained screen.

The flamboyant red figure shattered abruptly into mist, blood dissipating into wisps of blue smoke.

Vast amounts of energy were absorbed by Lu Ran into the Divine Power Pearl at his neck.

"Ah, ah, ah, ah!"

The soul of Tangled Silk Shadow screamed in fury, desperate to tear apart the Human Clan who were so close.

Lu Ran silently watched with a pair of forbidding horizontal pupils, gathering the Dead Soul into the God Demon Sculpture Garden.

Tangled Silk Shadow,

Like the other Evil Demons, you will ultimately become my faithful Servant.

And all those other original Evil Demon sculptures, wait.

Wait for me to take my Servants and visit, one by one...

Lu Ran, amidst the thick mist, turned around to rejoin his squad, and looked at them: "Let's go."

Sun Zhengfang swung his large hand and announced resolutely: "Go!"

Kill!

Chapter 244: Proud

The rain kept pouring down, heavier and heavier.

In Rain Alley City, Lu Ran and his small team zipped through the streets and alleys.

Since figuring out a set of suitable tactics, the four-man squad had significantly improved their efficiency in killing enemies.

However, the atmosphere amongst the team had become increasingly somber.

Tonight, Rain Alley City suffered heavy casualties.

The Tangled Silk Shadow clan was exceedingly dangerous, their Evil Technique lethally harmful.

In terms of the number of casualties among the Human Clan, this night was only second to the night of October 15th last year, the Night of Ghosts of the Barbaric Woman.

The Barbaric Woman continued to lead not because the Tangled Silk Shadow's strength was insufficient.

But because the Tangled Silk Shadow clan took too much pleasure in their play!

They constantly thought about toying with the Human Clan, tormenting their prey.

Truth be told, without this cruel mentality, the casualties among humans could have been several times worse!

"Everyone, assemble!" Suddenly, Sun Zhengfang's voice sounded in the night sky, "Piaoxiang Cake City entrance!"

Down on the street below, shadows with Immortal Fog hurried over.

Lu Ran skidded sideways, slowing down while keeping an eye on the shopfront in the distance.

More red silk threads filled the sky, and another group of people desperately resisted.

Lu Ran carefully surveyed the battlefield, and after confirming that no soldiers were caught by the red threads, he breathed a sigh of relief.

Immediately after, Lu Ran employed the Divine Technique-Desolate Sound:

"Mee~"

In the dim night, a goat's bleating sound pierced through the layers of rain, drifting into the ears of the Tangled Silk Shadow.

"Hm?" Tangled Silk Shadow's demeanor changed, her charming and seductive appearance vanishing without a trace.

Her playful eyes turned extremely venomous, as she viciously turned her head to look towards the distant street.

In the pouring rain, beneath the streetlamp.

A figure clad in a yellow raincoat stood out conspicuously.

"Here he comes, Lu Ran is here!"

"Hold on! The patrol team's brothers have arrived!" Four Moon Gazers were overjoyed, their spirits greatly lifted.

That distinctive goat bleating sound had become a kind of symbol.

Rain Alley City was really small.

Small enough that in the Divine People Bureau - Moon Gazer rankings, not all types of Believers were equipped.

In this tiny territory, on the battlefield of life and death, when you hear the sound of goat bleating...

The one who comes can only be that person—Lu Ran!

To go back to the point, even if the scope is expanded to include Wu Lie River Province or the entire territory of Da Xia, those capable of fighting on the battlefield from the Immortal Sheep Believers were likely to be just Lu Ran alone.

Divine characteristics, Immortal Goat Sect Rules, and the disciples' temperaments, all these factors combined made it impossible for Immortal Sheep Sect disciples to fight on the battlefield.

Immortal Sheep Believers were weaker than each other, that was an indisputable fact.

Once past the newbie protection period, or after graduating from high school, Immortal Sheep Believers would avoid sparring, dueling, or entering the Demon Cave for experience like the plague.

Compared to them, what about Lu Ran?

He carved a path through the bloodshed and was specially recruited into the patrol team.

He fought through nights of the fifteenth, earning himself the reputation "Unmatched in Rain Alley."

In the end, he even fought his way into the ranks of Da Xia's geniuses!

Therefore, this sound of goat bleating was indeed very emblematic.

It could be seen as the mark of Rain Alley City.

"Ah, ah, ah!"

The tempting red lips of the Tangled Silk Shadow let out a piercing shriek.

Sun Zhengfang had descended to the ground, and a Chinese Parasol Tree sprung up from the earth.

After dropping off Sun Zhengfang, Wei Long flew through the sky with practiced ease, heading for the Tangled Silk Shadow's back.

Jiang Ruyi flew to the side of the Tangled Silk Shadow, tossing out one Bursting Flame Talisman after another.

What does it matter if the night rain pours down?

Those talismans might not ignite the long red dress, but they could blast the red cloth and threads to pieces!

Jiang Ruyi had a clear target, the same as Sun Zhengfang. Both were forcing that Tether Silk Robe to release as many red cloths and threads as possible, to engage both of them.

In this way, they were creating an opportunity for Wei Long to break through.

It had to be said that the Tether Silk Robe was indeed powerful!

Sun Zhengfang released so many branches, and with Jiang Ruyi and other Moon Gazers attacking from the side, the long red dress was unafraid, facing multiple adversaries alone.

The resplendent long red dress firmly helped its owner stand firm, warding off all annoyances from its surroundings.

"You beast!"

Wei Long let out a stern cry, plunging directly into the Tether Silk Robe's defensive domain.

Did Wei Long's unbridled Battle Roar not fear drawing the Tangled Silk Shadow's attention?

The answer was... no fear!

As long as Lu Ran was present,

The Evil Demon's eyes would not see anyone else!

"Whoosh~"

"Whoosh~!" Five threads rapidly stabbed towards Lu Ran.

In those beautiful eyes of the Tangled Silk Shadow, a red luster flickered, betraying a hint of merciless intent.

The previously coquettish beauty, at that moment, seemed like a ghastly specter with a twisted visage.

"Mee~"

Lu Ran, with the Silent Night Blade in hand, casually twirled the blade, his legs slightly bent.

A sidestep, a duck, a flash of the blade.

Several red threads were cleanly cut by the Silent Night Blade, infuriating the Tangled Silk Shadow even more.

But Lu Ran was as relaxed as if he were strolling in his courtyard.

With his mouth emitting a plaintive bleat, his hands demonstrated sharp and ruthless swordsmanship.

Just five red threads think to ensnare me?

You can't!

Go back and call for Yan Zhi.

If her palms held a little Paper Mache Man, then maybe I really might not be able to escape...

"Snap! Snap!"

"Boom boom boom!" The sound of branches snapping and explosions thundering was non-stop.

Despite many Moon Gazers casting their spells together, entangling the long red dress,

When Wei Long made his move, a portion of the red cloth and threads still attacked him.

A mighty Prisoner Demon Believer of River Realm·Fifth Rank naturally wasn't vegetarian!

Wei Long swung his Big Red Robe fiercely, his feet stomping hard on the ground.

"Huh!!"

Below Wei Long's feet, it was as if a Blood Sea Chaos surged forth, spreading violently in all directions, tumultuous and overwhelming.

Prisoner Demon Divine Skill·Blood Sea Chaos!

Wei Long strained to keep the Blood Evil Clothes spread, blocking the assault of the red cloth and threads.

In the midst of the blood sea, only this Prisoner Demon Disciple could remain unimpeded by the turbulence.

Suddenly, everyone noticed that the numerous red threads fluttering in the sky had softened?

Subsequently, the ends of the threads rose again, and then plummeted.

It was like a poor signal reception...

Clearly, the tumultuous surging of the blood sea was disrupting the energy within the Tangled Silk Shadow, hindering her casting.

"Go." Jiang Ruyi quietly uttered a word.

In the night sky, the Cold Night Sword stabbed down swiftly, followed closely by the Dawn Blade.

"Ahhhh!"

The Tangled Silk Shadow screamed in rage, devoid of her heavy garments; her fighting style changed, charging straight towards Lu Ran.

However, chains suddenly emerged, not only blocking in front of the Tangled Silk Shadow but also wrapping around her neck.

The word Prisoner Demon was not a misnomer.

Within the "Domain" of the Prison Demon Disciple, it was truly difficult for an Evil Demon to escape.

"Zi!"

"Zi..." The blades flashed past.

In the layers of the rain, a pair of blades drew a long line of blood.

Cruel, yet beautiful.

The careful observer would also notice that the Blood Chains around the Tangled Silk Shadow's neck had extended sharp spikes.

Prisoner Demon Divine Skill·Blood Chain Stab!

Each sharp spike pierced the Tangled Silk Shadow's neck, creating one blood-curdling wound after another.

Whether it was a pair of Divine Weapons that killed the Evil Demon or the Prison Demon Disciple who did the piercing...

It didn't matter.

What was important was the Evil Demon's demise, each additional attack move a layer of protection.

The battlefield gradually quieted down, but Lu Ran's channel was ablaze.

"Clean and efficient, like clouds flowing effortlessly! Thrilling!!"

"Damn, now every time I hear a goat bleat, my blood starts boiling..."

"No, that sound is too bizarre!"

"There's a problem! Other Immortal Sheep Believers are begging for mercy, but his is taunting? There's a big problem!"

"That's Lu Ran's special use of the Voice of Compassion, you guys are clueless!"

On the rainy night street, in front of the cake shop.

The Tangled Silk Shadow's body shattered into a mist, which Wei Long absorbed into the Divine Power Pearl.

Lu Ran stepped forward slowly and drew the Dead Soul of the Tangled Silk Shadow into his eyes.

"Is everyone okay?" Captain Sun walked out from the Chinese Parasol Tree, scanning the group.

"We're okay."

"We're good, Captain Sun!" Several Moon Gazers responded in turn.

"Good." Captain Sun nodded, "Stay safe, let's move out."

At the team leader's command, Wei Long carried Captain Sun aloft.

Jiang Ruyi followed closely, while only Lu Ran, with fog swirling beneath his feet, weaved through the streets and alleys.

"Take care!"

"Take care!" Voices came from behind Lu Ran, filled with deep concern.

Lu Ran sighed softly, quietly closing his eyes, listening carefully to the voices of this world as he continued to rush to the next battlefield.

Rational tactics help the group defeat the Evil Demons time and time again.

The cooperation of the four-member team grew more tacit, their combat efficiency continually rising.

Sun Zhengfang, Wei Long, Jiang Ruyi, Lu Ran.

Each person displayed their mighty grace, especially Prisoner Demon Believer-Wei Long, who shone brightly in these special tactics!

The Night of Ghosts of the Tangled Silk Shadow clan lasted nearly two hours.

As the time passed midnight, everyone clearly felt that the frequency of appearances of the large red figures sharply decreased.

Despite the reduced sightings of Tangled Silk Shadow, other Evil Demons continued to invade the Human Clan city, wreaking havoc for a while.

However, having been through the baptism of battle with the Tangled Silk Shadow clan, facing familiar foes like Evil Dogs, Ghostly Eyes Ghosts, and Soul-splitting Demons now seemed easier.

Until three o'clock in the morning, Rain Alley City gradually quieted down.

The rain eased, as if the small city was whispering sobs.

Once more, the group reached the outskirts of Hexi Park, stepping onto the narrow and small overpass.

"Hu..."

Lu Ran let out a deep breath, stepping onto the spot where the Tangled Silk Shadow had first appeared.

It was right here at the bridgehead that he encountered the first Tangled Silk Shadow.

Only a short night had passed... or more accurately, just a few hours, but Lu Ran felt as if days had gone by.

This night, so much had happened.

Some were maimed, some had perished, and some wept in the rain.

Images lingered in Lu Ran's mind, refusing to fade.

Lu Ran stood at the bridgehead, his teammates also stopped, calm and quiet.

At this point, there was no need to rush through the city; the demons that invaded like a tidal wave had receded just as quickly.

"Lu Ran." After a while, it was Captain Sun who finally called out to Lu Ran.

"Present!"

"Let's patrol, the night's not over." Captain Sun reminded softly.

"Mm." Lu Ran murmured an acknowledgment, feeling a gentle hand on his back.

Lu Ran turned his head and saw Jiang Ruyi's profile.

The girl was looking up at the night sky.

Lu Ran followed her gaze and saw the tallest building in Rain Alley—the Wu Lie Building.

The spreading mist couldn't hide the shining light from the top of the building.

This beacon-like presence, after weathering the night's wind and rain, remained dazzling.

"She would be proud of you." Jiang Ruyi said softly.

The girl certainly knew who had recommended Lu Ran for the "Heavenly Pride" shortlist.

She spoke softly, adding: "Whether it's the patrol team or the Heavenly Pride."

Lu Ran silently looked at the Wu Lie Building, watching the bright light beneath the night sky.

Would she?

She might.

Chapter 245: Solution to 2.2 million worries

At dawn, Lu Ran, dragging his weary body, opened the door to his home.

A petite figure shot towards him, as if to greet its master or perhaps to seek comfort.

However, the tabby cat suddenly stopped, watched Lu Ran for a moment, then streaked away, hiding far from him.

Lu Ran silently switched to slippers, not making it difficult for the little one.

He was well aware of the heavy murderous aura enveloping him.

Even though it was already daytime, his heart still could not calm down.

"Lord Immortal Sheep."

Lu Ran entered the small bedroom and stood before the shrine, formally greeting it.

"Disciple killed many Tangled Silk Shadows last night, and also sent off the souls of many Human Clan believers."

"Not bad," a deep voice echoed in Lu Ran's mind.

It was clear that Lord Immortal Sheep was quite satisfied with Lu Ran's performance last night.

Lu Ran immediately asked, "Lord Immortal Sheep!

Do you think I should activate the Evil Sculpture of the Tangled Silk Shadow clan?"

The White Sheep Jade Carving pondered for a moment, then slowly said, "This clan possesses remarkable abilities and indeed makes for excellent servants.

Having Tangled Silk Shadows by your side in the future can protect you somewhat."

Lu Ran nodded secretly. Indeed, Lord Immortal Sheep's thoughts were similar to his own.

The White Sheep Jade Carving shifted the topic: "However, while you are in the River Realm, you can only activate five Evil Sculptures.

Now that you have already controlled the Night Charm Evil Sculpture, you can activate four more.

Choose carefully."

"Yes!" Lu Ran clasped his hands together, bowed, and then proceeded to the bathroom.

He turned on the shower and bathed under it, his thoughts whirling rapidly.

Although there were four spots available, one had already been reserved.

The Evil Demon-Yan Paperman Sculpture was a must-activate for Lu Ran!

When Lu Ran arrived at the River Realm-Third Rank, he would be able to learn the Immortal Sheep Divine Technique-Body of Substitute.

Lord Immortal Sheep had clearly mentioned that this core Divine Technique, together with Yan Paperman's Evil Technique-Paper Mache, might create a chemical reaction.

This meant that Lu Ran had only three activation spots left.

Some days ago, Lu Ran had taken an interest in the Prison Sky Demon clan, particularly impressed by its few Prison Sky Hands.

Inside the Evil Demon Sculpture Garden, the sculptures of the Barbaric Woman Clan and the Straw Demon clan were in a pre-activation state.

Once activated, both these Evil Sculptures could advance to the River Realm initial stage, just like the Tangled Silk Evil Sculpture.

Quite the dilemma~

"Tangled Silk Shadow..."

Lu Ran muttered to himself, washing his body.

From the perspective of servants, the combat strength of the Tangled Silk Shadows and the Barbaric Woman Clan undoubtedly far surpassed that of the Straw Demon clan.

From the perspective of Evil Techniques, the skills of these two clans were stronger and more helpful to Lu Ran.

Especially the Tangled Silk Shadow clan, their configuration of Evil Techniques was simply superb!

The Evil Technique·Silk Thread controlling the human body, the Evil Technique·Silk Pupil tormenting the mind, and the Evil Technique·Tangled Silk disturbing the enemy's internal energy.

All these were very suitable for Lu Ran.

There was also the Evil Technique·Silk Tether which could help Lu Ran face enemies and save his life at critical moments.

Of course, that robe was too heavy for Lu Ran to wear in regular combat.

Could Lu Ran don the flamboyant red dress at the brink of death?

No, probably not.

After all, when Lu Ran advanced another level, he would learn the Instant Teleportation Technique.

If truly in danger, Lu Ran would definitely use instant teleportation to escape, so there seemed little need for the Tether Silk Robe.

It appeared that the Evil Technique·Silk Tether should rather be used as a "scene-exploding" technique?

Lu Ran could dive into a crowd of enemies, instantly activate the Tether Silk Robe, and thousands of red threads would whip around to launch countless foes away in an instant!

After disrupting the enemy's formation, Lu Ran could cancel the Evil Technique·Silk Tether and continue normal combat.

"Right." Lu Ran nodded to himself.

The more he thought about it, the more he agreed.

Lu Ran's combat system was already set and should not be easily changed.

His current configuration of techniques was already quite good; what remained were minor adjustments.

Now, the focus of Lu Ran's activation of sculptures should be placed on the future "servants," "assistants" perspective.

The Tangled Silk Shadow clan was undoubtedly an excellent assistant and could become a tactical core!

"In this light, the priority of the Tangled Silk Shadows should be higher than the Barbaric Woman..."

Lu Ran turned off the shower, wiping his wet face.

After clearing his thoughts, Lu Ran was not in a hurry to activate the Tangled Silk Evil Sculpture.

After all, only after cultivating the Evil Sculpture to the River Realm could Lu Ran create Evil Demon minions.

And considering Lu Ran's current level of strength, the battles he was involved in offered no space to summon Evil Demons.

Cameras were almost shoved up to Lu Ran's face for close shots.

If he summoned a Tangled Silk Shadow...

Wouldn't he be arrested on the spot?

"Heh heh." Thinking about it, Lu Ran couldn't help but shake his head and laugh.

However, he did need to prepare in advance.

Tomorrow he would contact Little Yuanxi to ask the ladies and gentlemen of Beijing if they could find a Tangled Silk Demon Cave for a good slaughter.

Make ahead preparations, first cultivate the Tangled Silk Evil Sculpture to the River Realm... wait a minute!

Tangled Silk Shadows had to be downgraded in priority!

The highest priority should be the Evil Demon-Yan Paperman clan!

Should he head to the Yan Paperman Demon Cave to lay the foundation for the upcoming River Realm-Third Rank?

Sigh, there's so much to do.

Truly a happy dilemma...

Lu Ran contemplated silently, dried his body, changed into a set of dry clothes, and returned to the bedroom.

He was just about to go to bed when he suddenly thought of something.

Lu Ran paused his steps and came before the shrine again:

"Lord Immortal Sheep, you said earlier that once I learn the Instant Teleportation Technique, I would be qualified to venture into certain places.

Disciple would like to ask, exactly which places are those?"

The words fell, Lu Ran waited a long time, but could not get an answer from the deity.

He didn't know whether there were undisclosed reasons Lord Immortal Sheep couldn't reveal, or if it simply didn't want to waste words.

Lu Ran felt somewhat helpless: "Disciple just wants to know, in that region, whether I can freely use Evil Techniques, whether I can summon Evil Demon servants for battle.

Or should I still proceed cautiously to avoid fatal trouble?"

Suddenly, a deep and hoarse voice echoed in Lu Ran's mind:

"Whether you can go there still depends on your performance."

"Ah?" Lu Ran was somewhat stunned.

Such words, Lord Immortal Sheep had never spoken to Lu Ran before.

Since coming to Lord Immortal Sheep, Lu Ran had been the favored one.

Lord Immortal Sheep's words always hinted at grooming him as a successor.

Yet now, Lord Immortal Sheep suddenly mentioned that it would depend on Lu Ran's specific performance?

Was Lu Ran not performing well enough?

If there had to be a shortfall mentioned...

Had he never offered incense or sacrifices to Lord Immortal Sheep?

But Lu Ran thought too much; Lord Immortal Sheep clearly did not care for those mundane things.

Only to hear the deity seriously speak: "The Instant Teleportation Technique merely grants you initial eligibility to venture out.

Whether you can use it properly, how much your combat power can increase, still needs to be proven.

Until you demonstrate significant ability to protect yourself, I will not allow you to go and die."

Lu Ran: "..."

Is that place so dangerous?

Even with Instant Teleportation, is survival not guaranteed?

Lu Ran was quite incredulous and asked, "Even after activating Yan Paperman's sculpture and learning your Divine Technique·Body of Sin, that's still not enough?"

Lu Ran was incredibly curious, but no matter how much he inquired, Lord Immortal Sheep just wouldn't elaborate.

Left with no choice, Lu Ran changed his approach: "Lord Immortal Sheep, what can I obtain by going there?"

"What you need most."

"What I need most?" Lu Ran scratched his head.

What did he need most?

Divine Weapons? Magic Artifacts?

Or perhaps, was there some treasure there that could greatly enhance one's strength?

"Lord Immortal Sheep." Lu Ran looked pitifully at the small shrine, "Please tell me, Lord Immortal Sheep..."

Perhaps tired of Lu Ran's nagging, or maybe because Lord Immortal Sheep approved of Lu Ran's consistent performance, the deity finally revealed a bit: "Origin Energy."

Hearing this, Lu Ran's heart startled!

The only resource for cultivating sculptures to advance – Origin Energy?

Lu Ran thought again and asked in confusion: "How is this different from training in a Demon Cave?"

I can also obtain the Origin Energy of demons by capturing their spirits, right?"

Lu Ran's eyes narrowed, only to see the face of the White Sheep Jade Carving turn slightly malicious.

A deep and hoarse voice echoed in Lu Ran's mind:

"Who told you, it's the Origin Energy of demons?"

Lu Ran: !!!

In that moment, he finally understood why Lord Immortal Sheep had been so secretive.

Just like before, in the Sculpture Garden, when Lu Ran sensed something across the river.

At that time, the Black Fire Sheep Head had warned Lu Ran that he was not mentally prepared yet.

It turned out, Lu Ran really wasn't ready!

When he discovered that there were divine sculptures standing in the Sculpture Garden, Lu Ran was completely baffled.

Now Lord Immortal Sheep told Lu Ran that there was an extremely dangerous area where they could steal the Origin Energy of deities...

Lu Ran stood rooted to the spot, unable to speak.

Where was Lord Immortal Sheep sending him?

Not to a deity's lair to dig up a divine sculpture's roots, right?

The White Sheep Jade Carving solemnly said: "Typically, that is a region shallowly tread by River Realm believers."

Hearing this, Lu Ran perked up: "You mean, believers of other sects also go there to train?"

"A few chosen ones."

"Oh." After receiving an affirmative response, Lu Ran let out a sigh of relief.

Having said that, Lu Ran couldn't help but revisit an incident that occurred in Beifeng City.

After Shuangzi breached into the Divine Ruins, she was transported away.

Could it be that she went to that place?

The deep voice echoed again in Lu Ran's mind: "Cultivate, grow, integrate all your techniques.

Let me see your strength."

Lu Ran's expression became solemn, and his reply rang clearly: "Yes!"

He bowed, then walked to the bed and buried himself in it.

"Baa~"

Seconds later, a fluffy little head peeked through the doorway.

"Come, sleep with me for a while." Lu Ran waved his hand, embracing the tabby that jumped onto the bed.

He closed his eyes, gently stroking the cat, thoughts swirling in his mind.

Lord Immortal Sheep, is truly a domineering lord!

If it doesn't want to speak, no matter how much I coax or pester, it won't disclose anything, and might even punish me.

Since Lord Immortal Sheep revealed a bit...

Does it mean that at this point in time, it wants me to delve into and activate divine sculptures?

At least, Lord Immortal Sheep seems to be reminding me to be mentally prepared.

The Origin Energy of the deity clan, used to cultivate the divine sculptures in the Sculpture Garden...

Thinking of this, Lu Ran's mind visualized the horrific scenes of last night's battlefield.

A tattered spirit token, annoying like a fly, buzzing back and forth above the corpses of the believers.

"Spirit Token."

Lu Ran gently pinched the tabby's ears.

In the memory, the strange Moon Gazer turned into Chang Ying, exposed on the street.

Her eyes empty, staring at the sky, her body still fluttering with a disgusting rotten token.

"Strength, strength..."

"Meow!"

"Sorry." Lu Ran accidentally pinched the cat's ears too hard. He bowed slightly, kissing the small head of the tabby.

Sadly, this troubling scene would bother Lu Ran for a long time.

Strength!

Must train harder, grow faster, even faster...

Only strength can resolve all worries!

Chapter 246: Is it such a bad thing to be mad?

Lu Ran cradled the tabby cat and fell into a deep sleep.

He still had no idea that his performance from the night before had set the outside world abuzz!

Major news outlets scrambled to cover the story; terms like "Lu Ran," "Immortal Sheep Believer," and "Rain Alley" had become hot keywords.

The name Lu Ran was especially on fire.

"From a small town comes an Immortal Sheep Believer, the unprecedented prodigy of Da Xia!"

"Lu Ran, a human youth that made even the Yan Zhi creatures cry with envy!"

"Supreme youth of Rain Alley City, casually blessed with divine impartation!"

"My blood built the city's walls—why worry about aloofness or madness?"

"Public Notice: Be cautious in worshiping the faction of the Immortal Sheep—not everyone is Lu Ran!"

The relentless media coverage caught people off guard.

The night of February fifteenth showcased the remarkable performances of fifty participating talents.

Many indeed witnessed Lu Ran's meteoric rise, marveling at the astounding debut of this disciple of the Immortal Sheep.

But, many more had not tuned into Lu Ran's channel.

There was a deep-rooted stereotype about Immortal Sheep Believers, with a clear picture of what these individuals were like.

Doubts, disdain, indifference, pity, or embarrassment...

Whatever the mindset, many purposefully overlooked the existence of Lu Ran.

However, as articles poured out and internet users on forums spread the word, a divine-like disciple of the Immortal Sheep burst into the public eye.

People were stupefied!

The world came to a slow realization that things were not as they had assumed.

It made sense—Da Xia had carefully selected a hundred battle participants; how could there be any pretenders among them?

The issue was...

People could reluctantly accept that disciples of the Immortal Sheep had overcome their inherently weak nature and redeemed themselves on "Heavenly Pride."

That was already the limit of what people were willing to believe!

But whether it was through news reports or the countless messages from eyewitnesses, they were telling the world:

This was not the uplifting story of a timid boy's self-redemption.

Quite the contrary!

It was about a prodigy who already shined brightly, whose legend began on a perilous night.

On the official "Heavenly Pride" website, Lu Ran's channel entered repeat mode.

Staff worked overtime, adding snippet after snippet of his amazing moments into the feed.

Attracting unaware viewers, video after video was opened, with live comments and messages skyrocketing.

"What's this? He really took on Night Charm by himself??"

"Insane, either I'm crazy, or the world has lost its mind..."

"No way! He's facing down seven Night Charm Blades head-on?"

"My life must be too stressful—it's all an illusion..."

"How dare he? Is his life worth nothing that he dared to venture into the Tether Silk Robe for a rescue?"

"I was wrong, so wrong. I thought him fighting Night Charm alone with the Night Charm Blade was tough enough, this..."

"I've braved the King Yan's palace, saved the lives of the Human Clan! Tangled Silk Shadow can't take them away, my word!"

"Miehh!!!"

Truly became famous after one battle!

Initially, Lu Ran had a certain reputation only in Rain Alley City, but within one night, he was a sensation.

On the sixteenth day of the lunar calendar, people were staying at home or in shelters with nothing to do, further facilitating the spread of Lu Ran's fame.

People eagerly dug up information about him, discovering his past.

Before them was a youth, estranged from his parents from a young age, and whose father passed away early, entering their view.

In the context of these peculiar times, Lu Ran's life story was not extraordinary.

Countless others had similar experiences.

And because of this, many felt a strong empathy toward him.

Unlike most, young Lu Ran chose to live alone, leaving his mother's embrace and the capital of Da Xia, returning to his small hometown, Rain Alley City.

This unyielding attachment to his hometown stirred emotions in others.

Perhaps this legendary story had begun from there.

Adding vivid colors to the legend was the event that had happened on the first day of June at the God Worship Platform.

Papers from the afterlife falling, chilling winds blowing!

How many from the Human Clan had managed to summon an Evil Demon at the God Worship Platform in forty years?

It was a rarity!

Lu Ran's talent was undoubtedly terrifying.

The course of the story took everyone by surprise.

With deities above, not a single one showed willingness to claim this exceptionally gifted youth.

It was not until the very moment before Yan Zhi's vast hand touched Lu Ran that divine light suddenly flashed!

The Nine-class God, Immortal Sheep, arrived!

The lowest-ranked, least regarded deity in the hierarchy of Da Xia.

Among Da Xia's divine beings, the most inclusive yet also the most criticized.

People then realized, it wasn't that Lu Ran purposely selected the lowest-ranked Immortal Sheep.

Rather, the Immortal Sheep chose Lu Ran!

From the start, Lu Ran never had a choice!

He could become an Immortal Sheep Believer, fall into demonhood and be slain on the spot.

Otherwise, Lu Ran would have to struggle to survive as a mere mortal.

From this angle, the Divine-Immortal Sheep undoubtedly saved Lu Ran's life!

Only then did people begin to understand why this supposed Immortal Sheep Disciple was neither weak nor timid.

And why he did not avoid battles or cry for mercy...

Because Lu Ran wasn't just any typical Immortal Sheep Disciple.

He was the product of Divine-Immortal Sheep's vast Compassion and an incredible find for the Immortal Sheep faction!

Thus,

An incredibly contradictory combination was born.

A youth with unique talents, not favored by deities.

The much-maligned, lowest-ranked divine being, Immortal Sheep.

This paradoxical pair, eight months later, shocked the whole of Da Xia.

From Lu Ran's various performances on the battlefield, anyone with eyes could see:

Divine-Immortal Sheep was exceedingly indulgent towards this fortuitous disciple.

Exactly how indulgent?

Avoid battles?

Not at all! If you wish to kill, go kill!

Begging for mercy?

No need! That pitiful Voice of Compassion—turn it into a taunt that invites enemies to battle!

The Immortal Hoof intended for fleeing?

Use it to plunge into the fray!

What about the ability to Sound Positioning? It was unclear whether that was a guarded secret technique of the Immortal Sheep...

Of all the countless Immortal Sheep Believers, Lu Ran stood undeniably distinct!

With the deity's overindulgence came the shining Heavenly Pride of Da Xia.

Among countless media reports, one article was shared the most, or rather, one line spread the widest:

"Supreme youth of Rain Alley City, casually blessed with divine impartation!"

Why was Lu Ran so unique, capable of shocking the world with such flair?

Divinely taught!

Coddled by the deity,

Permitted by Lord Immortal Sheep!

...

Night had returned, and the city lights were just beginning to glow.

Lu Ran slept soundly, utterly exhausted from the night's battles.

Ultimately, it was his grumbling stomach that awakened his resting body.

"Umm..."

Lu Ran let out a groggy hum and opened his bleary eyes.

The tabby cat in his arms was still deep in slumber, merely having shifted position.

Lu Ran carefully extracted his arm and reached for his silent cellphone by the pillow.

"Wow~" A lot more alert, Lu Ran woke up fully.

His screen was filled with a barrage of messages and missed calls, leaving him somewhat stunned.

Well, it made sense.

Most of his good friends were loyal to different gods, naturally defending the city on the fifteenth.

To watch Lu Ran's battle, they could only replay it the next day or watch video highlights.

Lu Ran tapped the social media app marked "99+" and was met with countless red notifications.

He browsed and settled on Little Yuanxi's messages.

"Oh, you little rascal~"

Lu Ran couldn't help but laugh to himself.

Qiao Yuansi's monologue spanned from morning to evening in the messages.

"Bro, I'm back from defending the city, watching your match now~"

"Wow! Bro, it was so right to train in the Night Charm Demon Cave!"

"But it was so nerve-wracking to watch, you stink, bro! I hate you!"

"Oh my, Sister Ruyi she..."

"My stupid, cold-hearted brother, why aren't you responding? Asleep again? Are you even capable?"

"The Tangled Silk Shadow! Bro, are you insane? What if you get caught in her threads?!"

"I'm gonna kill you!"

"That must've hurt, right? Answer your phone, I want to hear your voice."

"T^T, you stinky bro, call me back..."

Lu Ran scrolled through the messages, feeling the deep concern pouring out from his sister's heart.

Sighing inwardly, he continued to read.

Just then, another call came in.

He was distracted for a second before hastily answering, softly saying, "Mom?"

"Awake?" On the other end, the gentle voice of his mother came through.

It was hard to imagine such a soft voice coming from a stern disciple of Sword One.

From her brief question, Lu Ran could almost sense that his mother must have called earlier?

Guilty, Lu Ran hurriedly said, "Mom, I just woke up. I was so tired last night, the battle was just too grueling.

Sorry, Mom, I forgot to let you know I was safe when I got home this morning."

Qiao Wanjun simply replied, "Don't forget next time."

"Heh heh~" Lu Ran chuckled, quickly adding, "I'm alright, just took a few hits, but no serious harm."

"I saw your performance, it was impressive."

"Oh?" Lu Ran's mood lifted, and he smiled, "I'm just a minor figure, but can I really catch my great mother's eye?"

"Hehe~" Qiao Wanjun couldn't help but laugh, "Your wings are firm, ready to make fun of your mother?"

"No, no, no." Lu Ran quickly said, "My mistake, my mistake."

What he couldn't see was that his mother bore no resentment; her eyes were filled with immense pride.

Qiao Wanjun said, "Your swordsmanship seems to need more polishing."

Lu Ran replied, "I will work hard in training."

"It's my fault; my expectations for you are too high, considering your youth."

"No, not at all; I am Da Xia's genius and should live up to high standards and expectations," Lu Ran answered naturally.

"Mhm." Qiao Wanjun nodded gently, changing the subject, "I believe that girl with the Cold Night Sword has returned to your side."

"Yes, Jiang Ruyi." Lu Ran awkwardly scratched his head, "Our family heirloom can't be reclaimed.

She's cultivated the Cold Night Sword into a Divine Weapon..."

Qiao Wanjun spoke indifferently, "Find a time to bring her to see me."

Instantly, Lu Ran said, "Alright, I'll talk to her. Once the city's lockdown is lifted, I'll bring her to you."

After all, the Cold Night Sword was his mother's weapon, and it was only proper for little Ruyi to personally meet the sword's former master.

"Let me know before you come."

"Sure thing!" After chatting with his mother for a bit more, Lu Ran ended the call.

Staring at his phone, Lu Ran's thoughts began to wander.

If he wanted to venture into special Demon Caves for training, maybe he didn't need to beg for assistance or ask for favors from the young masters and ladies of Beijing?

If he spoke to his mother about it, she could probably arrange something?

Chapter 247: Top Charts!

That night, Lu Ran had spent a long time replying to messages and had a lengthy phone call with Little Yuanxi before finally pacifying his sister.

In the following two days, Lu Ran received even more calls and text messages.

Among them were calls from various top institutions of higher learning in Da Xia.

When Lu Ran first received such a call and heard that the caller was a teacher from a prestigious university in Shanghai, he was quite taken aback.

Then, invitations from various universities came flooding in.

There were also those who sought out Lu Ran through connections with Rain Alley City's high school and city leaders...

Who needs to appear on "Heavenly Pride" several more times?

Just this once, on the night of the fifteenth, Lu Ran had transformed himself, a senior high school student, into a college freshman...

And why hesitate? His performance was dazzling enough, and with the official endorsement of Da Xia, what was there to doubt?

Now, Lu Ran himself was the one hesitating.

He expressed that he needed to think it over and discuss it with his family before hanging up the phone on the various schools.

Lu Ran suddenly realized, could he make demands?

He's the sought-after bachelor, and so many are vying for him—he should see who's offering the most generous dowry...

Of course, as for money, he didn't care for it.

If a university could offer a Divine Weapon or a Magic Artifact, now that would be something~

During these two days, public opinion also exploded.

Lu Ran's name was mentioned repeatedly, and his performance on the night of February fifteenth was turned into various animated GIFs that spread to every corner of the internet.

Within the prestigious list of hundred "Heavenly Pride" participants, each one was an elite among elites, a constellation of shining stars.

Even among such a group, Lu Ran was the standout, with incredible popularity!

Until the eighteenth day of the second lunar month, when "Heavenly Pride" published the results of the participants in the second round.

Lu Ran was at the top of the list!

In an exam out of 150 points, he had scored a whopping 143 points!

That's no small feat!

He had fiercely snatched the fourth place from the tight grips of the elites at River Realm·Fifth Rank and the powerful believers.

Fourth place, of course, was something to celebrate.

After all, the fellow participants you're competing with are all top-notch students in their respective regions.

But...

Was Lu Ran's outstanding performance only worthy of fourth place?

Some cried foul on Lu Ran's behalf.

Others felt that "Heavenly Pride" should relax their grading standards a bit and give more consideration to this young, lower-realm Immortal Sheep Believer.

In other words, this group didn't think Lu Ran was hard done by.

Lu Ran was one of them.

After watching the top three's battles, he couldn't help but be inwardly amazed.

What the hell...

Are they all beasts?

Especially the first-place winner, also a figure of legend.

She was from Guangdong and possessed a Divine Weapon!

Though she was a girl, she had become a disciple of a First-class God-Monk.

In the hierarchy of Da Xia's divine beings, there were two deities that were quite peculiar.

Lord Jian Yi would hardly ever take male disciples.

The Monk's faction would hardly ever accept female disciples.

Yet this girl had become a disciple of Lord Monk, embarking on a demon-slaying path.

How high was her talent, and how compatible was her temperament, for a First-class God-Monk to break his own rules and accept a female disciple?

Lu Ran watched this girl's fight, which truly exhibited "Golden Body Protection and Three Heads and Six Arms"!

Stationed in Guangdong's Wan City, she too faced a special event—the Night of Ghosts.

One by one, the powerful Prison Sky Demons created unrest in Wan City.

And this female Martial Monk, wielding several weapons with her Three Heads and Six Arms, fought from south to north, from west to east!

Just considering her enemy-slaying efficiency, as well as her effectiveness in helping and rescuing the Moon Gazers, she was indeed far ahead of Lu Ran.

Another point, Rain Alley City was just too small.

Even with a Night of Ghosts and Evil Demon invasions, it's hard to compare to a typical night of the fifteenth in a larger city.

Lu Ran's high score was definitely mostly due to his personal performance!

If one were to consider "battle achievements," Lu Ran's score would necessarily be inferior to the other top-ranked students.

The second-ranked student was a Tianluan Believer.

A Second-class God-Tianluan!

Known for support and Healing.

This Tianluan Believer had a Magic Artifact which matched extremely well with his sect's Divine Technique.

He didn't slay enemies like the "female Martial Monk" before him.

But, this Tianluan Believer saved so many lives and redeemed countless families.

Stationed at Qiantang River's Hang City, he also faced a special event and encountered the rarer "Descent of a Demon Lord."

That huge Tree Shadow Witch spread her branches far and wide, snatching countless lives from the Human Clan.

The Tianluan Disciple, risking his own life, provided salvation for many, casting his ultimate ability!

That bright, shining light turned night into day, bringing hope for "life" to countless Moon Gazers.

How exhilarating!

Third place was a Sword One Believer.

This girl from Sichuan's Jingguan City went completely berserk on the Night of Ghosts...

Her battle style met the public expectations and was chilling to the core!

Often, just one cold glance from her made the viewers beyond the screen feel like they were falling into an icy cave.

Sword Cultivators, straightforward and without any frills.

There's nothing unexpected, only raw power!

No fancy tricks, just lethal efficiency!

Ranked fourth was Lu Ran from the small city of Rain Alley.

His impressive performance amazed the world and earned unanimous praise from the judges.

On the scoring interface, there were a few comments left by judges that stirred people's emotions:

"This is a knife that has just been sharpened, stained with blood and tears, sharp and distinct."

"The pride of Divine Sect, the fortune of Da Xia!"

"For forty years, the Immortal Sheep sect has been full of refined scholars.

You have embarked on an unknown path, with an uncertain future and without predecessors to guide you.

I hope that you will proceed with determination, step by step, to be the leading sheep that breaks new ground."

The judges' comments were indeed interesting and made Lu Ran read them over and over.

Breaking new ground?

The leading sheep?

Lu Ran shook his head inwardly.

He didn't think he could influence the Immortal Sheep Believers or lead the faction on a path of battle.

But Lu Ran did think he might be able to break new ground.

Someday in the future, he might lead some Servants and powerful Believers to destroy the Stone Sculptures of the Evil Demons and eliminate calamities from the world.

Yeah... One day!

After two rounds of "Heavenly Pride," the overall ranking was also released.

With an excellent score of 143, Lu Ran ranked seventh out of a hundred on the leaderboards.

Only 0.2 points behind the sixth-ranked lady, an East Thunder Believer.

Of course, this wasn't the final list; everyone still had four more rounds of "Heavenly Pride" to participate in.

On the day the overall rankings were released, Lu Ran also received a call from Jiang Ruyi.

"Uh?" Lu Ran picked up the phone while looking at the computer screen.

"Congratulations!" Jiang Ruyi's tone was light, betraying a hint of amusement.

"What's there to congratulate?" Lu Ran was happy but grumbled, "Didn't even make the top three."

Jiang Ruyi shook her head with a laugh, softly comforting:

"You're already very impressive."

Lu Ran: "..."

Nice words.

But why did it feel a bit off?

Sensing Lu Ran's silence, Jiang Ruyi misunderstood his mood.

After thinking for a moment, she suggested, "Don't worry, just perform even more outstandingly in the next 'Heavenly Pride.'"

"Uh..." Lu Ran pondered for a moment.

Lu Ran knew that his performance on the night of the fifteenth was good enough.

But it was undeniable that once Captain Fang had studied the team's configuration and traits and developed a battle plan, the patrol team became an efficiently running machine.

And Lu Ran was just one part of that machine.

Important and indispensable.

But he wasn't as dazzling as before when he took on the Night Charm and saved the Red Scarf Believers all by himself.

But that was how it had to be.

When lives hung in the balance and the city was in peril, Lu Ran couldn't disrupt the team's tactics for his own gain.

His love for the city couldn't be expressed in just a few words.

Just as before the fifteenth, Lu Ran had hoped that no special events would occur.

"Lu Ran?"

"Ah, listening." Lu Ran snapped back to reality and changed the subject, "By the way, have your aunt and uncle agreed to let you come to Beijing with me?"

On the other end of the phone, Jiang Ruyi lowered her eyes, her cheeks tinged with color.

The thought of going to Beijing to meet Lu Ran's mother made Jiang Ruyi nervous.

"Little Ruyi, speak up?" A certain annoying voice came through the phone.

"Uh-huh," Jiang Ruyi replied softly.

"What?"

"What do you 'what'?" Jiang Ruyi was a little annoyed, "Your ears are so sharp, how could you not hear?"

Lu Ran: "..."

That makes sense!

Lu Ran said, "Then I'll ask the homeroom teacher for leave. No morning classes for us tomorrow.

Saves us going to school and being gawked at like animals."

"Okay." Jiang Ruyi agreed readily.

In recent days, her phone had been bombarded to the point of annoyance.

Thinking of this, Jiang Ruyi spoke up again, "These past few days, Sister Xian'er has been contacting me non-stop, begging us to take her out.

I did promise her last month at Evil Dog Village..."

Lu Ran said indifferently, "Take her along. You two seem to get along well, and she listens to you.

Wouldn't it be nice to have her by your side to serve tea and pour water?"

"Go." Jiang Ruyi spat at Lu Ran with a laugh.

Hard to tell how Lu Ran's mind worked.

She didn't know that Lu Ran had long considered Si Xianxian a potential disciple.

Jiang Ruyi: "Then this month, the homework assignment for our field training from school..."

Lu Ran: "Let Mr. Deng and the others finish it. Oh, I have something else to tell you."

"Yeah?"

"After visiting my mother, I want to train in the off-limits Demon Cave, to practice and gain experience."

"The Night Charm Demon Cave?" Jiang Ruyi knew about Lu Ran's previous intensive training there.

"Not sure yet, I have to discuss it with my mom." Lu Ran paused, then asked, "Will you go with me?"

The girl's response was without hesitation: "Of course."

Hearing this, Lu Ran's face broke into a smile.

With the change in situation, Lu Ran's mindset shifted as well.

Both he and Jiang Ruyi were from River Realm and had participated in "Heavenly Pride." With a Night of Ghosts event, the two of them wouldn't be taken into a shelter to safely get through the night.

No one wants to see a loved one risk their life.

But Rain Alley City doesn't coddle anyone during the night of the fifteenth!

It's much better to train and strengthen oneself proactively with some assurance than to face powerful Evil Demons passively during a Night of Ghosts.

Lu Ran pursed his lips, saying he wasn't sure where to go yet, though he had a target in mind.

Yan Zhi!

Long time no see.

Wondering how you've been doing lately.

And that little paper mache man, still useful?

Lend it to me for a play...

Chapter 248: Cool Night Secret

Lunar January 19, on the train to Beijing.

Lu Jiang's trio sat in a row, with Si Xianxian naturally taking the window seat, sandwiched between a couple, for fear she might cause trouble.

Unaware of their concerns, Si Xianxian was brimming with excitement, chattering nonstop.

"A bunch of dogs that can't stand to see others do well, I'll curse at them one by one!"

"You didn't see how those people were slandering Lu Ran..."

"Speaking of which, you two really did well, haha, awesome! I've got more confidence when I curse now!"

Jiang Ruyi felt somewhat helpless and gently patted Si Xianxian, whispering,

"Keep your voice down, don't let others hear."

Si Xianxian looked at the two masked and hatted individuals and said, "Ah, no need to be so cautious.

You're all disguised like this, who's going to recognize you!"

Hearing this, Lu Ran pulled his hat down even lower.

Jiang Ruyi continued to advise, "When you meet Lu Ran's mother later, you must be careful not to be too presumptuous."

"Don't worry~" Si Xianxian snuggled comfortably against Jiang Ruyi, her head tilted and resting on the girl's shoulder.

She had finally found a friendship she cherished greatly.

Moreover, this little couple could even take her around to cause mischief.

Si Xianxian had made up her mind that here with Lu Jiang, even if she felt deeply wronged, she would endure and never upset them.

Hmm...that's quite humble of me.

"Comfortable?" Lu Ran's gaze moved from Jiang Ruyi to Si Xianxian.

The fierce heavenly girl seemed like a boss, legs crossed, leaning against Jiang Ruyi, treating the girl like a backrest.

She wore black leather boots, the tips of which kept pointing up, utterly relaxed.

Si Xianxian slightly tilted her head, her beautiful eyes looking at Lu Ran with a hint of playfulness, "What, jealous?"

Lu Ran stayed silent, likewise tilted his head, resting it on Jiang Ruyi's other shoulder.

Jiang Ruyi: "..."

"Hmm?" Si Xianxian sat up straight, looked them up and down, and clicked her tongue in admiration, "You two really do match well."

Sister Xian'er's voice was loud, and her gaze quite bold.

Jiang Ruyi's cheeks slightly blushed, and she gave Si Xianxian a stern look.

"Ha ha ha ha~" Si Xianxian's laughter was as unrestrained as ever, also attracting the attention of other passengers in the carriage.

Suddenly, Lu Ran blurted out, "I think you don't want to go out anymore."

Si Xianxian's smile stiffened, she snorted, and turned her head to look out the window.

Lu Ran closed his eyes, inhaling the faint scent of jasmine, feeling a wave of drowsiness wash over him.

He had been cultivating all of last night and hadn't slept a wink.

Unfortunately, Rain Alley City was less than an hour's train ride from Beijing.

Lu Ran had not enjoyed long, barely drifting into sleep, when he was awakened.

But truthfully, it wasn't very comfortable.

Jiang Ruyi was slender, and there wasn't much cushioning; resting his head on her shoulder felt rather uncomfortable.

Hmm...maybe a lap pillow next time?

Lu Ran thought secretly to himself, clutching his wrapped weapon, and followed the stream of people off the train.

The trio directly took a taxi to Immortal Scenic Garden.

As the vehicle neared their destination, Lu Ran once again saw the towering Sword One Divine Statue against the blue sky and white clouds.

Whenever people saw this massive statue of the divine being, they couldn't help but feel reverence.

Besides gazing from afar, Lu Ran's mind was also lively.

Perhaps, one day in the future, others would look at him in the same way?

As the vehicle stopped at the entrance to the residential complex, the trio alighted.

"Your family is so rich?" Si Xianxian, carrying a huge hammer, looked up at the imposing entrance of Immortal Scenic Garden.

In this season of blossoming spring, the community was lush with trees and fragrant with flowers and birds.

Compared to the dilapidated neighborhood in Rain Alley City where Lu Ran lived, this place was practically heaven!

Not to mention, this place offered direct access to Saint Sword One himself.

"My mom has money," Lu Ran shrugged his shoulders, "After my parents divorced, I stayed with my dad."

Si Xianxian sized Lu Ran up with a look reserved for fools.

Lu Ran: "What's up?"

Si Xianxian: "Mom divorced dad, not you. She didn't cut off the mother-son relationship."

Lu Ran's expression turned odd, and he scratched his head: "That's true."

Si Xianxian rolled her eyes, thinking this guy was beyond help.

Jiang Ruyi, with her more intricate thoughts and better understanding of Lu Ran, could see the real sentiment behind his seemingly illogical statement.

Going by their high school years together, although Lu Ran was never short of necessities, he didn't carry the air of a "second-generation" affluent child.

"Let's go," urged Lu Ran.

His mother must have informed the security beforehand; once Lu Ran stated his purpose, a security guard accompanied them into the complex.

"Wow~" Si Xianxian looked around in amazement, clicking her tongue in wonder all the way, "I always thought... uh, that you lived a rather strapped life."

Jiang Ruyi gently patted Si Xianxian's shoulder, again advising, "When you meet Auntie later, watch what you say."

"Got it, got it," Si Xianxian waved her hands impatiently, "Annoying... ahem."

The fierce heavenly big sister inadvertently revealed her true nature but quickly realized her mistake.

She quickly looped her arm through Jiang Ruyi's, smiling amiably in an attempt to appear well-behaved.

Jiang Ruyi smiled helplessly and, led by the security guard, entered a building and swiped an access card for the elevator.

When the group arrived on the fifteenth floor and stepped out of the elevator, they saw a door of a distant apartment wide open.

A tall figure in a flowing white dress stood quietly at the doorway, hands behind her back.

For a moment, both Jiang Ruyi and Si Xianxian were stunned.

Lu Ran's mother looked quite young, which in itself wasn't that unusual.

But the ethereal grace and unrivaled charm she exuded made them feel utterly inferior.

"Mom," Lu Ran quickly stepped forward.

Si Xianxian was taken aback.

Mom?

How could you call her that so casually?

If you said this was a mortal incarnation of Divine-Sword One, I'd believe it!

Such a celestial being, and you dare call her Mom?

Aren't you a bit shameless...

"Ranran's here," Qiao Wanjun's stern expression melted away into a gentle smile.

From the deep winter to the vibrant spring,

Qiao Wanju merely changed her expression and altered the seasons.

It wasn't an illusion but a real effect.

A powerful Believer's influence over their surroundings is substantial.

"Mom, this is Jiang Ruyi, and the one with the hammer, that's Si Xianxian," Lu Ran introduced, "I've told you about them before."

"Auntie, greetings."

"Ah, Auntie, hello," Jiang Ruyi and Si Xianxian promptly greeted.

Qiao Wanju glanced lightly at the two girls: "I hear you're a Fierce Heavenly believer."

"Yes, yes," Si Xianxian nodded repeatedly, trying to appear docile and amiable.

This was quite a disgrace to the Fierce Heavenly Sect.

Qiao Wanju looked at her son and chuckled lightly: "You do have your ways."

Lu Ran grinned sheepishly: "It's all hard-won! You don't know how irritable this girl can get..."

Si Xianxian's face darkened, but she didn't dare react.

Qiao Wanju, naturally noticing the Fierce Heavenly believer's restraint, mentally applauded her effort.

Moments later, she turned her attention to Jiang Ruyi.

The young girl had her head bowed slightly, her eyes cast down, adopting a respectful and compliant demeanor.

Qiao Wanjun's gaze then settled on the sword hilt peeking out from behind the girl's shoulder.

"Hum~"

The Cold Night Sword seemed to sense something and floated forward volitionally.

Lu Ran stepped aside as the Cold Night Sword turned around its blade, extending the hilt toward Qiao Wanjun's lowered hands.

The cold hilt gently nudged the woman's fingers, as if seeking her approval.

Seeing that Qiao Wanjun was not averse, the hilt then nestled into her palm.

Such a scene left Lu Ran dumbstruck!

Divine Weapons are known to recognize only one master.

But the Cold Night Sword's cautious, even somewhat humble manner, seemed unbelievable to Lu Ran.

What... what's happening?

"It's been a long time, old friend."

Qiao Wanjun's voice was soft as she extended two slender fingers, gently caressing the cold blade.

"Hum!"

The Cold Night Sword trembled continuously, communicating something unknown to Qiao Wanjun.

The trio stood respectfully at the doorway, not daring to interrupt.

After a while, Qiao Wanjun finally spoke: "I need to leave soon."

Lu Ran: "Ah?"

Qiao Wanjun turned and walked back inside, saying lightly, "Jiang Ruyi."

"Auntie," Jiang Ruyi looked up at her.

"Come."

"Oh, yes." Jiang Ruyi hurried into the house, removed her shoes, and, not even pausing to put on slippers, followed quickly.

It seemed that they were heading for the balcony.

As Qiao Wanjun departed, Si Xianxian let out a big sigh of relief.

Lu Ran sneered: "Didn't know you could be so well-behaved."

Hearing this, Si Xianxian grew slightly infuriated, glaring fiercely at Lu Ran.

Lu Ran asked curiously: "That scared of her, are you?"

"Who, who's scared?" Si Xianxian puffed out her chest, "That was respect!"

"Oh," Lu Ran suddenly looked enlightened and walked into the house, "I thought it was more about bullying the weak and fearing the strong."

Si Xianxian: ???

She clenched her hammer tightly, her breathing growing more rapid, her chest heaving intensely.

"Hey! No, no, no!" realizing things were turning sour, Lu Ran quickly added, "Don't get mad!

I was just joking, not making fun of you."

"Hmm~" Si Xianxian swayed slightly, resting a hand on her forehead.

Meanwhile, on the outdoor balcony on the south side of the house.

"Sit," Qiao Wanjun motioned towards a wooden chair by a small table.

Jiang Ruyi remained standing, quite restrained.

Her gaze passed over the peerless beauty in front of her, just catching a glimpse of the towering Sword One Divine Statue in the distance.

The overlapping silhouettes of a person and a divine being created a peculiar tableau.

Qiao Wanjun didn't insist any further.

She gently released her grip, and the Cold Night Sword slowly floated up, its translucent black ice material shimmering oddly under the sunlight.

Qiao Wanju watched the Divine Weapon, speaking softly, "She's chosen him."

Jiang Ruyi, somewhat flustered, lowered her head, her cheeks turning a deep shade of red.

No one knew how this Divine Weapon was made, not even Lu Ran understood the mystery.

But Jiang Ruyi was clear on one thing, Qiao Wanju knew everything.

Moreover, the path to the Cold Night Sword becoming a Divine Weapon was laid out by Qiao Wanju herself.

From a certain perspective, the Cold Night Sword's master was not Jiang Ruyi.

It was the girl whom Lu Ran had chosen, the girl to whom he had given the sword.

More importantly, if Lu Ran's sincere feelings were ever betrayed, the Cold Night Sword could not become a Divine Weapon.

Qiao Wanju looked at the young girl's shy demeanor and smiled faintly:

"Ever wondered about the domain of the Cold Night Sword's Divine Weapon?"

Jiang Ruyi respectfully responded, "Please enlighten me, senior."

"Senior?"

"Ah, Auntie."

Qiao Wanju slightly raised an eyebrow, "Auntie?"

Jiang Ruyi bowed her head even lower, her cheeks as red as a tempting peach.

Chapter 249: is still too stubborn...

Twenty minutes later, the two returned to the house.

Standing by the living room sofa, Lu Ran and Si Xianxian immediately stood up.

"I'm leaving now," Qiao Wanju said, glancing over the two without breaking her stride.

Clearly, this wasn't the way to treat guests, but the young people didn't dare say much.

On the contrary, Jiang Ruyi was grateful that Qiao Wanju had taken time out of her busy schedule to meet her for a bit of guidance.

"Mom," Lu Ran quickly followed her to the door, crouched down, and began changing his mother's shoes.

Qiao Wanju's face bore a gentle smile; she truly enjoyed this tender care from her child and softly said, "I've prepared a gift for you, it's in your room."

"A gift?" Lu Ran looked up at his mother.

Qiao Wanju gently patted Lu Ran's head, "You'll like it."

"Okay," Lu Ran lowered his head and continued, "Oh, and mom, after I participated in Heavenly Pride, lots of university admissions officers have been calling me."

"Do you want to come to Beijing?" Qiao Wanju asked.

Lu Ran opened his mouth but didn't say anything in the end.

Qiao Wanju noticed her son's silence and didn't press further.

After a moment, Lu Ran stood up, "I have another thing."

"Oh?" Qiao Wanju was quite surprised.

Lu Ran gave an embarrassed smile, "Before, I went to train in the Night Charm Demon Cave. I just happened to use that experience on the fifteenth night a few days ago when I faced Night Charm, and I felt really confident. So I'm thinking..."

Qiao Wanju nodded thoughtfully, clearly understanding her son's intentions.

"Do you have any connections in that area, mom?" Lu Ran probed.

"You want to go to Night Charm Demon Cave again?" Qiao Wanju asked.

"It doesn't have to be Night Charm Demon Cave," Lu Ran thought for a second then listed off a bunch of names, "Prison Sky Demon, Barbaric Woman, Tangled Silk Shadow, Shadow Dancer..."

Qiao Wanju couldn't help but chuckle, looking at her enthusiastic child.

She didn't reprimand him; instead, she quite approved of her son's decision.

In Rain Alley City, anything could happen, and any Evil Demon might appear.

It was good to be well-prepared.

"How about the Yan Zhi Demon Cave?" The little lamb finally showed his fox's tail as he looked at his mother, "I was once weak and got brutalized by the Yan Zhi people.

Now that I am at the second realm of River Realm, I really want to meet the Yan Zhi Clan again."

Qiao Wanju pondered for a moment, then said, "Someone will contact you in a bit."

Lu Ran's face lit up with joy, "Thank you, mom!"

Qiao Wanju also smiled, "You rarely ask for anything.

I'd be too happy to say no."

Lu Ran awkwardly scratched his head.

He wasn't sure if his mother was praising him or chiding him.

Indeed, over the years, Lu Ran had very rarely made any requests from his mother.

Qiao Wanju raised her hand and tenderly stroked Lu Ran's cheek: "Take care of yourself."

"I will!" Lu Ran nodded emphatically.

Qiao Wanju left without another word.

Truth to be told, watching her walk into the elevator wearing that ancient, elegant, long dress felt a bit anachronistic.

"Goodbye, auntie!"

"Goodbye, auntie!" behind him, Jiang Ruyi and Si Xianxian spoke up in turn.

Once Qiao Wanjun was gone, Si Xianxian let out a big sigh of relief.

Lu Ran looked at the girl with a weird expression, "My mom is pretty gentle, isn't she? You didn't have to be that scared."

Si Xianxian didn't bite, changing the subject instead, "Is your family's discipline always this strict, even changing shoes for your mother?"

"Don't even mention it," Lu Ran snorted, "It's all Little Yuanxi's fault."

"Your sister?" Si Xianxian was very curious.

Lu Ran sighed, "My mom is very busy and spends very little time with my sister and me.

Every time she comes home, Little Yuanxi runs to greet her, scrambling to change her slippers, almost dragging her into the house by her legs.

Every time she leaves, Little Yuanxi would change her demeanor and would neither greet nor send her off willingly."

"That real?" Si Xianxian asked.

Lu Ran just shrugged, "One time, mom was headed to Sword One, and we didn't know when she'd return.

Little Yuanxi threw a tantrum, begging didn't work, and she finally stormed back to her room, pouting and stomping her feet.

I could tell mom was a bit angry, so I quickly changed her shoes and saw her out..."

Jiang Ruyi couldn't help but chuckle, understanding in her heart, "Did you save Little Yuanxi from a scolding?"

A scolding?

Lu Ran inwardly shook his head; there were no scoldings, only kneelings, without discussion!

I had to sneak out at midnight to secretly buy Little Yuanxi a hamburger, all anxiously...

Lu Ran thought to himself, "I did avoid punishment, but the habit stayed.

After that, whenever she goes out, she just stands at the door waiting for me... Hey? Wait a minute, don't tell me..."

Suddenly, Lu Ran turned to look at Jiang Ruyi, "Remember when you visited my place the last time?

I forgot to get you slippers and you just stood there, staring at the shoe rack."

Jiang Ruyi, "..."

"It's not a house where family doesn't enter," Lu Ran nodded repeatedly, "It's true, it's destiny!"

Jiang Ruyi gave Lu Ran a look and walked away.

"Oh, right. Mom said she prepared a gift for us." Lu Ran returned to his room, watching Jiang Ruyi's retreating figure, "It's in my room."

Si Xianxian leaned in, whispering expectantly, "You don't have one for me, right?"

"Uh," Lu Ran considered, then said solemnly, "Probably not.

If there is, then we're in trouble."

Si Xianxian, "..."

Right... that makes sense!

The trio arrived at Lu Ran's bedroom, where they saw three boxes about a meter long each on the computer desk.

"Uh oh!" Lu Ran internally sensed trouble.

Are there really three?

Did mom misunderstand something?

But that can't be...

Lu Ran quickly stepped forward and opened one, the first thing he saw was an excellently crafted knife sheath.

It was wooden and exuded a faint aromatic scent.

It was all black with golden decorations, quite exquisite.

Seeing this gift, Lu Ran breathed a huge sigh of relief.

Thankfully, there was nothing for Si Xianxian.

After all, Lu Ran had two knives, and there are three boxes on the desk, matching perfectly.

Sure enough, as Lu Ran opened the other two boxes, he found another knife sheath and a sword sheath, with a similar exterior.

"Here's some text," Si Xianxian pointed at the lower end of the sheath.

Below the golden patterns, Lu Ran saw the gold-stamped character – Solitude.

He immediately looked towards the other two sheaths and found the characters for "Cool" and "Dawn."

"Hu~"

Lu Ran casually summoned, and the Dawn Blade flew in from the living room with a swoosh of wind.

Si Xianxian stepped aside, her eyes filled with envy as she watched the handle fall perfectly into Lu Ran's palm.

A Divine Weapon...

When can I own one of my own?

Does that Black Luminous Stone Hammer have the makings of a god?

"Ziiing!"

The blade slid into the sheath, fitting perfectly.

The more Lu Ran looked at it, the more he liked it, and he casually strapped it to his back, trying out different positions.

Should I cross them on my back?

Or tilt both sheaths to the same side, parallel?

"Hum~ Hum..." Lu Ran's phone in his pocket suddenly buzzed.

He took out the phone, saw an unfamiliar number, and answered right away, "Hello?"

"Is this Mr. Lu Ran?" a young woman's voice came from the other end.

"Yes, I am!" Lu Ran stepped back and walked to the bed.

"I just received an order from Peak Master Qiao, saying that you wish to train in a special Demon Cave?"

Lu Ran was taken aback, "Qiao... Peak Master?"

He had heard of Qiao Feng, who could slap forth a golden dragon with his palm.

Cool for sure, but not as cool as the Martial Monk Believers.

After all, Qiao Feng is fictional, but a Martial Monk Disciple kicking out a real golden dragon is reality!

So, what is Peak Master Qiao... Wait a minute!

Peak Master?

Jinghong Peak?

My goodness!

Lu Ran was completely taken aback, plopping down onto the bed.

Thinking back, he should've caught a glimpse of it during his visit to Jinghong Peak.

Why else would other disciples of Sword One be laborers there, while his mother stood alone on the back mountain, with no one daring to disturb her?

Wasn't it obvious that her identity was different?!

Peak Master, oh boy!

Including Jinghong Peak, there are a total of nine Spirit Mountains blessed by Divine-Sword One around Beijing.

Each mountain is managed by a Sword One Disciple, also known as a Peak Master.

Qiao Wanju was one of the nine?

For all this time, Qiao Wanju had never talked about anything work-related to her children, including her own abilities, which were never mentioned and were a well-kept secret.

Now, Lu Ran unexpectedly heard this title and realized belatedly that he was a child of such stature.

On the other side of the phone, the woman's voice held a hint of confusion, "Are you the son of Ms. Qiao Wanju, Mr. Lu Ran?"

"Yes, it's me," Lu Ran promptly replied.

The woman said, "Ms. Qiao has given her orders. May I know which Demon Cave you would like to go to?"

Lu Ran collected himself and asked, "Your surname, please?"

"No need for formality, it's Chen."

"Sister Chen, you can call me Little Lu," Lu Ran replied courteously, "I want to go to the Yan Zhi people's Demon Cave, is that possible?"

"There is no Yan Zhi Clan Demon Cave near Beijing; I will need some time."

"Alright, thank you, Sister Chen," Lu Ran responded.

"Mm," the woman named Chen answered softly, "Also, congratulations on your excellent results in Heavenly Pride.

Your mother hasn't been in a good mood recently, and it's been a long time since I've seen her so happy."

Lu Ran raised his eyebrows slightly; it was clear this woman had a close relationship with his mother.

Otherwise, she wouldn't have said such things.

Especially since Sword One's disciples were each incredibly aloof, how could they bother with such matters?

Lu Ran urged, "Sister Chen, just calling me Little Lu is fine. Don't be so formal."

Pausing, he added, "I will need to train in other Demon Caves in the future, so I'll be counting on you."

"Hehe." Sister Chen gave a light laugh, "Alright, Little Lu.

I'll let you know in advance; Peak Master Qiao has ordered that I accompany you throughout your training in the Demon Cave.

Wait at home for now; I'll come to pick you up from Immortal Scenic Garden once we have concrete details."

"Okay." Lu Ran responded dazedly and ended the call.

"What's the matter?" Si Xianxian eyed Lu Ran's strange expression and couldn't help but ask.

Jiang Ruyi was also quite curious, holding the sword sheath and silently watching Lu Ran.

Lu Ran scratched his head and after a long while managed to say, "I guess I've been too proud."

"What do you mean 'too proud'?" Si Xianxian was puzzled.

Lu Ran was filled with wonderment, not expecting his mother to be such an esteemed figure.

Just now, Qiao Wanju had said it right: You rarely ask for anything.

If Lu Ran hadn't been so proud, insisting on making his way in Rain Alley City, if only he had asked his mom for this and that earlier...

Wouldn't he have realized something was amiss much sooner?

Chapter 250: Is the name of the disease Lietian?

In the afternoon, Lu Ran finally received a phone call.

The trio quickly got their gear ready and headed to the entrance of the residential complex.

Both Jiang Ruyi and Lu Ran brought the gifts given by Qiao Wanjun.

Jiang Ruyi chose to hang the sword sheath at her waist, while Lu Ran had two knife sheaths slung diagonally across his back, in parallel and both slightly leaning towards the right shoulder.

At the gate of the Immortal Scenic Garden, everyone saw a black sedan.

A tall figure stood next to the car.

"Chen Jingjing?" Lu Ran stepped forward.

The young woman in front of him perfectly fit the stereotype of a Divine-Sword One follower—a cold beauty.

Her demeanor was noble and as cold as ice.

She looked quite young, about twenty-four or twenty-five, wearing a white tracksuit that emphasized her tall, slender frame.

Her skin was excessively pale, giving off a "glowing white" kind of vibe.

This inevitably reminded Lu Ran of the Forget Spring Believers deep in the Qiantang River · Bamboo Sea Demon Cave.

He wondered if Li Rouyin was doing well lately, whether she had put on more Copper Coins.

Hmm... let her collect more Dead Souls as well.

Find a chance to go there and ask for some food.

"Little Lu." Chen Jingjing's icy countenance softened considerably, and she revealed a gentle smile.

The trio felt as if they were bathed in a spring breeze.

It turned out that Divine-Sword One followers could be pleasant, depending on whether you were worthy enough.

"Thanks for the trouble, Chen Jingjing," Lu Ran nodded in thanks, "and for accompanying us on this trip."

Considering her status, he did not presume to shake her hand.

The most common greeting in the mundane world, the handshake, was completely inapplicable to Divine-Sword One followers.

Ever since learning that he was the "son of a Peak Master," his attitude had shifted slightly.

He became more cautious with his actions, fearing he might bring shame upon his mother.

"Get in the car, we're heading to the airport," Chen Jingjing's gaze swept over the two girls behind Lu Ran as she smiled and nodded.

Everyone put their weapons in the trunk, with Lu Ran sitting in the front passenger seat and the two girls, Jiang and Si, in the back.

"Chen Jingjing, I still don't know your full name," Lu Ran spoke up as the vehicle started moving.

"My name is Chen Jingjing, the 'Jing' from Beijing," the woman said with a smile. "You can also call me Sister Jingjing. 'Chen' sounds a bit old."

Lu Ran: "..."

What happened to the aloof and proud Divine-Sword One followers?

Heh, women.

Indeed, they are all concerned about age.

In the backseat, Si Xianxian held onto Jiang Ruyi's arm and whispered in the girl's ear:

"This chick is so pretty, you'd better keep a close eye on Lu Ran."

Jiang Ruyi: "..."

It's not just the one in front of us!

Jiang Ruyi trusted Lu Ran, but she couldn't help but feel a twinge of sorrow in her heart.

All of Sword One's female disciples were of this type.

Each one more outstanding and beautiful than the last.

Today, Jiang Ruyi also learned that Lu Ran's mother held a high position and was a master of a peak.

Under Qiao Wanju, one could only imagine how many young and beautiful juniors there were...

In the front passenger seat, Lu Ran awkwardly twitched his mouth.

Si Xianxian's voice had indeed been very soft, but whether Chen Jingjing could hear it, given her abilities, was uncertain.

Lu Ran quickly changed the subject: "Are you and my mother close, Sister Jingjing?"

"Peak Master Qiao often takes good care of me and keeps me by her side," Chen Jingjing responded softly.

Lu Ran turned to look out the window, letting out a soft sigh: "Peak Master..."

Chen Jingjing had her suspicions and realized that this child, Lu Ran, did not know much about his mother's situation.

After hesitating for a moment, she still spoke up: "Currently, Ms. Qiao is not officially a Peak Master.

But she will be in the future, so everyone refers to her as such in private."

"Oh?" Lu Ran turned his head with curiosity.

Chen Jingjing said, "Jinghong Peak has not yet been enshrined by the Divine Being, so it is not yet counted as a part of Spirit Mountain within our sect's sphere of influence.

Ms. Qiao's title as Peak Master is missing the final step."

Lu Ran frowned slightly: "Lord Jian Yi's incarnate Stone Sculpture has not yet been placed on Jinghong Peak?"

Chen Jingjing shook her head gently.

Lu Ran: "Is there a problem with that step?"

Chen Jingjing: "We are also trying to investigate and pray day and night, awaiting the arrival of the Divine Being."

Lu Ran did not respond again, instead looking back out the window.

The nature of a Sword One disciple was clear; Chen Jingjing was not likely to be talkative.

Combining this with what she had said on the phone: "Your mother hasn't been in a good mood lately. It's been a long time since I've seen her so happy."

One could conclude that Chen Jingjing was indeed a close person to Qiao Wanjun and really cared for her.

Perhaps, in her heart, she thought that Lu Ran's comfort would be more effective than anyone else's in easing the ever-frowning Qiao Wanjun by a bit.

Lu Ran wasn't foolish; he naturally realized the seriousness of the issue.

His mother seemed composed on the surface, but her heart must be in great distress.

The Divine-Sword One had explicitly ordered his disciples to prepare a mountain.

But now, the mountain was ready, and yet Lord Jian Yi was reluctant to come.

All this time, as the primary responsible person, Qiao Wanjun would inevitably endure huge pressure and face great criticism!

So... what exactly was the reason?

Chen Jingjing revealing this was meant to encourage Lu Ran to comfort his mother.

Little did she know, Lu Ran was not an ordinary Believer!

Ordinary believers wouldn't dare blame the Divine Being, even if you lent them ten thousand guts.

They would introspect and see where they might have fallen short.

Whether it was a lack of devotion, insufficient Power of Faith offered, or not enough flourishing incense, it was something that might have displeased the Divine Being.

Believers would look for reasons within themselves.

Lu Ran was completely different!

He dared to contemplate the unthinkable, considering the problem from various angles.

Why did Lord Jian Yi go back on his word?

Having declared his intention to consecrate the ninth Spirit Mountain, why does he now seem to shun it?

Is this a power play between Gods, or between Gods and Da Xia, or is there an issue with the Divine Being himself?

Could it really be that his mother was at fault?

Lu Ran was highly skeptical of that latter possibility.

After all, anyone could see how dedicated his mother was to the Sword One Sect.

The inside of the car was silent.

Lu Ran was lost in thought, and the others did not speak up.

It wasn't until they arrived at the airport that Chen Jingjing broke the silence, alerting everyone to get off.

Chen Jingjing had already bought the flight tickets; their destination was West Sea Province.

This province was located in the west of Da Xia, far from Beijing, and would be too time-consuming by car.

Flying was quick, and in just two and a half hours, the four-person group arrived at the capital of West Sea Province—Qingtang City.

Chen Jingjing had made all the arrangements; after collecting their checked weapons, they barely stepped out of the airport before boarding a business vehicle that had been waiting for a long time, heading directly for the eastern outskirts of Qingtang City.

To be honest, Lu Ran felt increasingly guilty.

The better Chen Jingjing managed everything, the more Lu Ran felt the care and attention from his mother.

He reflected on himself...

He seemed unable to relieve his mother of any burden.

Indeed, if it weren't for Chen Jingjing's shared information, Lu Ran would be completely unaware of the suffering and pressure his mother was enduring.

"Oh my god."

In the backseat of the business vehicle, Si Xianxian was dumbstruck, murmuring under her breath.

As they drove into the eastern outskirts and approached a military camp, a huge Stone Sculpture came into everyone's view.

Jiang Ruyi spoke softly: "Finally realizing it?"

Si Xianxian was bewildered: "Ah..."

Si Xianxian, as a Believer, was not quite up to snuff.

The moment she got the flight ticket and knew their destination, she should have realized—they were about to be graced by a holy presence!

Including Qingtang City, some areas in West Sea Province were under the domain of Divine-Lie Tian!

And yet, it was only when the vehicle nearly arrived under the feet of the Divine Being that Si Xianxian reacted...

Well, that was quite deserving of a beating.

"Little Lu." Chen Jingjing called softly.

"Sister Jingjing." Lu Ran snapped back to reality.

Chen Jingjing took a deep look at Lu Ran: "We're about to enter the Demon Cave. Adjust your state of mind."

She felt she had been somewhat reckless and should have waited until after the experience was over to disclose these things to him.

She hadn't expected that Lu Ran's thoughts would be so heavy, silent for most of the journey, drastically different from when they first met.

Hmm... Perhaps it's better to be cautious.

The state of Peak Master Qiao, as seen by several Sword One Disciples close to her, was a matter of heartfelt concern.

If this continued, the Peak Master might even destabilize her own mental state.

That was a major taboo!

A truly strong Cultivator could not simply crash their way up like the minions of the Stream Realm and Mist Realm.

With Lu Ran's strength and realm, he hadn't yet encountered these things.

But Qiao Wanju had already embarked on a path to reach the pinnacle, and the requirements for her inner self and spiritual level were extremely high.

No mistakes were tolerable!

"Hoping that Lu Ran can help Peak Master Qiao," Chen Jingjing thought to herself.

"Ma'am, we've arrived," said the driver, steering the car into a parking space and coming to a smooth halt.

"Let's get out," Chen Jingjing opened the door first and stepped out.

She brought her hands together and bowed slightly towards the Divine Statue.

As a Sword One Disciple, such etiquette was already sufficient.

Si Xianxian, who followed, knelt down immediately, mumbling words like "my offense" and "blessing."

Jiang Ruyi also brought her hands together, while Lu Ran looked up, carefully admiring the demeanor of Divine-Lie Tian.

Even though it was only an incarnate Stone Sculpture, it gave Lu Ran a visual shock and spiritual tremor.

The Divine-Lie Tian had a style reminiscent of a chieftain from an ancient tribe.

Rugged facial features, a dense beard, long hair tied up at the top of his head into a bun.

He was robust, with a great war hammer in his right hand, commanding and reverent, gazing down upon all beings.

An ancient and age-old aura blew in his face, making it somewhat difficult for Lu Ran to breathe.

Divine-Lie Tian!

Lu Ran stared up in contemplation, heaving sigh after sigh.

What a majestic and ancient statue, what a Divine·Lie Yan!

The Yan Zhi of the Demon Cave should indeed be guarded by a God of such caliber.

The only issue was,

From the image and temperament of Lie Tian, Lu Ran couldn't sense the slightest hint of vehemence.

Instead, he conveyed an incredibly stable and solemn feeling.

Is it a case of knowing the godly face but not the godly heart?

Or, perhaps...

Is violence just your lie?