

Old Gods 251

Chapter 251: The Scent of Paper Figures

Lu Ran's appearance caught the attention of many soldiers, who looked at him closely.

It was clear that many recognized him as Da Xia's genius.

After Chen Jingjing paid her respects to the gods, she went to negotiate with the soldiers.

Lu Ran, on the other hand, went straight to the trunk to fetch weapons.

"Are you okay?" A graceful figure approached him.

"Hm?" Lu Ran turned his head and saw the side profile of Jiang Ruyi.

Jiang Ruyi picked up the Silent Night Blade and looked at Lu Ran. "You've been very quiet all the way here."

Lu Ran silently nodded, sighing inwardly.

I'm not doing a very good job as a son, am I?

All along, his mother had been an immensely strong presence in his heart.

The sudden situation had caught him off guard, and unfortunately, he was too weak to do anything about it.

"Is it because of Auntie?" Jiang Ruyi came behind Lu Ran, helping him secure the scabbard of his blade.

"Yes." Lu Ran picked up the Dawn Blade and handed it behind him.

"Jingjing said we can only stay in the Demon Cave for seven days," Jiang Ruyi whispered softly, carefully arranging Lu Ran's equipment.

Lu Ran understood her meaning and turned to look at the young girl. "After the training is over, will you accompany me back to Beijing to see her?"

Jiang Ruyi smiled lightly and nodded, "Sure."

Her eyes were clear and her smile was enchanting, causing Lu Ran to lose his train of thought momentarily.

Chen Jingjing couldn't help but glance at Jiang Ruyi a few more times.

"Excuse me." Si Xianxian inappropriately squeezed over, pulling a two-meter long Black Luminous Stone Hammer from the trunk.

She also had some inappropriate thoughts about wanting to explore West Sea and experience the local customs.

But Si Xianxian was too embarrassed to say...

"Let's go," Chen Jingjing reminded.

"Let's go!" Lu Ran led the way, followed by his two teammates catching up to Chen Jingjing's pace.

Soon, Lu Ran felt the influence of being "Heavenly Pride."

Wherever he went, soldiers looked at him as if he had grown flowers on his face.

Lu Ran was also secretly relieved, thankful that he had worn a hat and mask on the plane earlier, otherwise he would have been mobbed at the airport.

Under the guidance of a soldier, the group of four descended the spiraling stone stairway.

The gate of the Demon Cave below resembled a Starry Sky Curtain, mysterious and profound.

"Whew~"

As they entered, a gust of night wind passed by, messing up Lu Ran's short hair.

His eyes narrowed as he saw a bright moon hanging in the distant sky.

While Lu Ran was admiring it, a cloud drifted by, gradually obscuring the moon.

Such a perfect moment!

After enjoying for a while, Lu Ran surveyed the terrain of the Demon Cave.

What met his eyes was an endless expanse of mountains and forests.

"Everyone, please pick up the pace," a leader soldier's urging voice came from below.

"Oh," Lu Ran responded loudly, quickly making his way downhill.

The group descended about a hundred meters before they finally set foot inside the grand Stone City.

Two middle-aged male soldiers stepped forward briskly. They looked to be in their mid-forties.

The leading soldier introduced himself, "My name is Li Ming, Dust Shadow Believer, River Realm First Rank.

This is Li Xin, Biwu Believer, River Realm Second Rank.

We will accompany you throughout this training mission."

Lu Ran looked at their somewhat similar faces, wondering.

These two must be brothers, both Jiang Realm Great Powers.

Among them, a Dust Shadow Believer?

A Dust Shadow Believer willing to engage in worldly affairs is of strategic value, a true rarity!

And the military in this Demon Cave was willing to dispatch such personnel as leaders for their own team?

Lu Ran sensed that this was likely special consideration from the military.

After all, during his previous training in the Night Charm Demon Cave, there had been only one Biwu Believer leading the team.

Chen Jingjing spoke up indifferently, introducing herself: "Sword One Believer, River Realm, Chen Jingjing."

Somehow, Chen Jingjing didn't mention her specific level of strength.

However, just the mention of River Realm was enough.

Chen Jingjing gestured to her side, "These three are trainees."

Lu Ran and the others promptly introduced themselves.

"I recognize you," Li Ming's gaze fell on Lu Ran.

"Thank you both," Lu Ran said modestly.

Li Ming's response was beyond Lu Ran's expectation, "It's our honor."

Si Xianxian quietly nodded in agreement.

Of course, it was an honor to be able to lead Da Xia's genius through training and ensure Lu Ran's safety.

The brothers distributed lighting and communication devices and then led the way towards the east gate of Stone City.

Along the way, Li Ming repeatedly emphasized discipline, asserting that even if Lu Ran was Heavenly Pride, he could not violate any rules.

Otherwise, they would be directly expelled from the Demon Cave.

Lu Ran nodded repeatedly, meanwhile growing more confident.

Having a Dust Shadow Believer in the team ensured everyone's safety!

That dark Other Shore Flower could always lead everyone to slip away from the battlefield at any moment.

It was practically a bug!

The group exited through the east gate and noticed a few torches extending toward the entrance of the forest.

"Our destination is Yan Zhi Village," Li Ming stated from the back of the group, "Just follow the torches."

"Yan Zhi Village?" Lu Ran couldn't help but be curious.

"Yes," Li Ming explained, "In the Demon Cave, the terrain is relatively uniform, and any unusual environment tends to attract the attention of Evil Demons.

Over the years, we've learned that the Yan Zhi Clan has a particular fondness for desolate ancient houses.

Therefore, we have built many villages and constructed several houses in the forest."

Lu Ran was intrigued: "Just like the Night Charm Clan prefers lakes, always gathering by the waterfront?"

"Something like that," Li Ming nodded, "Our soldiers regularly patrol each Yan Zhi Village, exterminating any Evil Demons within."

The Yan Zhi Village we are heading to is the one closest to our main city."

Well then~

Lu Ran grinned: "Building villages for them?

Wouldn't it be easier to just create a lake or destroy a piece of forest to create an unusual environment?"

Li Ming shook his head: "Unusual terrain indeed attracts the attention of Evil Demons, but it won't make the Yan Zhi tolerate staying long.

They mostly just glance and leave.

Desolate ancient houses are different."

Lu Ran was puzzled, turning to look at the soldier: "You mean the Yan Zhi can actually stay inside them?"

Li Ming nodded: "It's possible.

Some Yan Zhi may even fight fiercely over ownership of these houses, engaging in deadly conflicts with each other."

Lu Ran: ???

Jiang Ruyi and Si Xianxian exchanged glances, today they had learned something new.

Evil Demons fighting among themselves wasn't surprising.

After all, each was ferociously brutal, sparing no quarter with each other.

But Evil Demons from the same clan generally don't turn weapons on each other.

Ultimately, this is because these demonic minions originate from the same Evil Demon Sculpture.

Moreover, on the night of the 15th, different species of Evil Demons are also less likely to fight among themselves.

Humans are the real prize, the ultimate temptation for them; why would demons bother with their own kind?

Moreover, deep down, Evil Demons are also programmed to collect human fear.

Jiang Ruyi suddenly spoke up: "Since the Yan Zhi Clan is quite fond of ancient houses, can't we build such places in our cities too?"

The girl's idea was clear, to use the property of the Yan Zhi Clan appropriately.

On the 15th night, lure the Yan Zhi to these ancient houses rather than letting them wreak havoc in the city.

Li Ming was willing to address the young people's queries: "Our world is far more varied and vibrant compared to this monotonous and barren Demon Cave."

Moreover, the Yan Zhi are essentially Evil Demons.

Once they appear in a city, their attention is completely on humans; they wouldn't care about any ancient houses."

Jiang Ruyi silently nodded.

It made sense. Weren't there plenty of ancient buildings in human cities?

If such structures really had great appeal to the Yan Zhi, Da Xia would have already promoted it widely.

"Jingjing," Lu Ran called out.

Chen Jingjing turned around to see Lu Ran nodding with a smile: "The three of us are training, you can stay behind the group, no need to lead the way for us."

"Yes," Chen Jingjing immediately stepped back.

Despite being a distinguished and haughty disciple of Sword One, and holding a position as a Jiang Realm Great Power, she was surprisingly obedient.

Si Xianxian noted this scene, amazed:

"I just realized today, Lu Ran is quite the young master."

Lu Ran strode forward, grumbling: "Right, you, the maid, follow safely behind.

I, the young master, will shield you and attract hostility, leading the way up front!"

"Hahaha~" Si Xianxian couldn't help but laugh out loud, teasing, "Thank you, young master!"

"Muttering nonsense!" Lu Ran muttered, diving into the forest.

As Si Xianxian's laughter subsided, the forest again sank into silence.

Only the night wind passing through the trees brought the rustling sound of leaves, adding an eerie atmosphere.

Lu Ran placed his hand over his shoulder, drawing out the Silent Night Blade, his nerves taut as he followed the small path through the forest.

After a long march, Lu Ran suddenly found himself in a clearing.

He quickened his pace, and just before leaving the forest, his eyes narrowed slightly.

A desolate village?

It looked quite substantial from a distance.

Under the night sky, the bright moon bathed each house, large and small, in a broad cold light.

At the entrance to the village, a huge stone bore three blood-red characters — Yan Zhi Village.

"Wow~" Lu Ran looked at the blood-colored characters, truly enlightened.

Behind him, the group quickly emerged from the forest.

Li Ming, looking at the tranquil Yan Zhi Village under the moonlight, timely said, "Our troops just cleared this area.

We can enter the village to look around, get familiar with the terrain, and then set up an ambush, waiting for the Yan Zhi to walk into our trap."

Lu Ran suddenly spoke up: "Someone's there."

Li Ming: "What?"

Lu Ran stepped towards the village, leaving the group behind, and quietly sniffed, whispering:

"Yan Zhi."

Li Ming and Li Xin exchanged glances, Chen Jingjing also slightly raised her eyebrows.

Under the moonlight, Yan Zhi Village lay completely silent, and no one had detected even a hint of energy fluctuations.

Yet here was Lu Ran, at the village entrance, informing everyone that there were Yan Zhi inside?

You're...

Yes, you're Heavenly Pride.

We all know you're incredibly powerful, ranked seventh in Da Xia.

But isn't this a bit too supernatural?

Chapter 252: Rouge Paper Skull

Desolate Village, silent as death.

Lu Ran's steps were light as he walked along the earthen road, looking at the dilapidated houses on either side of the street.

The low earthen walls were riddled with cracks, as if a gentle push would cause them to collapse.

The adobe houses within the yards were no better, their walls also riddled with obvious cracks, some even with weeds blowing in the breeze.

"This atmosphere."

Lu Ran couldn't help but silently praise in his heart.

The military has something to offer, the scene is quite on point, it's very immersive.

In the distance, at the central position of the village, there even stood a twisted-neck tree...

Behind him, Si Xianxian was completely numb.

Do they really have to do this?

It's like being in a horror movie.

"Young Master." Si Xianxian looked at Lu Ran's back and asked in a soft voice, "Have you found it yet, where is the Yan Zhi?"

She tightly held onto Jiang Ruyi's arm, nervously looking around.

This scene was amusing, the tempestuous girl from the Fierce Heaven Clan, always fearless against Evil Demons, was a prolific demon slayer!

However, as she walked through this moonlit small village, she was actually scared?

Indeed, that was the case. At this moment, Si Xianxian only wanted the Yan Zhi to show up quickly so she could enjoy a swift kill!

This deadly silent Desolate Village was truly frightening.

"Shh!" Lu Ran sent a silencing command, his gaze landing on a large mansion.

He seemed to know why the Yan Zhi Clan was cannibalizing each other.

Inside the desolate small village, everywhere were dilapidated adobe houses, a sight of "poor folk homes".

Only a few buildings were out of place.

Take, for instance, to the left front of where Lu Ran was, there stood a sizable mansion.

The grand house was not a roughly made adobe house, but a wooden structure of a traditional Chinese residence.

The mansion gate was even more imposing, painted red.

Bathed in moonlight, the red mansion gate glowed with a vivid brilliance.

Eerie, and eye-catching.

The Yan Zhi who came to this place would naturally choose such a mansion to stay in.

Wouldn't that make it easy to strike?

"That house." Lu Ran whispered, picking up his pace.

"Sister Xian'er." Jiang Ruyi whispered softly.

"Hm?"

"It's just the Yan Zhi, don't scare yourself," Jiang Ruyi soothed in a low voice, "Go easy later, don't demolish the house."

Si Xianxian: "..."

Indeed, she was not afraid of Evil Demons.

Her fear stemmed from childhood traumas, from her own imagination.

"Creak~~~"

Si Xianxian shuddered suddenly, turning her head to look.

She saw Lu Ran standing in front of the mansion gate, gently pushing open a crack in the red door.

Moonlit desolate village, a mansion with a red door.

Si Xianxian finally couldn't hold it in any longer.

"Go to hell, die for me!" Si Xianxian cursed under her breath, hammer in hand, striding forward.

This moment, the traits of the Fierce Heavenly believers were fully revealed, utterly uncontrollable!

One second she was terrified, the next she erupted in rage.

"Sister Xian'er!" Jiang Ruyi exclaimed in a low voice, instinctively reaching out to grab Si Xianxian, but came up empty.

Jiang Ruyi failed to stop the feisty girl of the Fierce Heaven Clan, while Lu Ran, standing at the mansion gate, extinguished the "Explosive Barrel".

Lu Ran's brows furrowed, his voice soft and low: "Don't move!"

Just as Si Xianxian raised her leg, wanting to kick open the door, she froze in place.

On one hand, Lu Ran's Divine Technique took effect.

On the other hand...

After such a long time, Si Xianxian almost instinctively followed Lu Ran's command.

Lu Ran placed his hand on Si Xianxian's head, pulling her face to his.

He whispered in her ear:

"Baa~~~"

Face to face open... well, ear open wide!

Si Xianxian's figure swayed, those fiery eyes quickly softened, and a sense of compassion rose in her heart.

Voice of Compassion, truly deadly to those familiar!

Ear open wide, a direct hit!

Sister Xian'er felt pity and love for Lu Ran, wishing she could give her all, her life, to care for this "cub".

Yet Lu Ran was unapologetic.

"Don't mess around." His hand still on her head, he pushed her back.

"Uh." Si Xianxian's upper body leaned back, staggering, and Jiang Ruyi caught her in her arms.

Even though she was treated so roughly, the fierce girl of the Fierce Heaven Clan still didn't show any anger.

Watching, a few onlookers were dumbfounded!

Had the Fierce Heavenly believer been bewitched?

It turned out, Si Xianxian really shouldn't have been afraid of ghosts.

Rather than worrying about demons and evil spirits, she should be more concerned about Lu Ran...

That was inevitable.

Firstly, Lu Ran was now at River Grade, and the Divine Technique he cast was also at River Grade.

Secondly, the longer the contact and the better their relationship, the less ability Si Xianxian had to resist.

Lastly... who else would stick to someone's ear and endlessly plague them?

"This..." Li Xin turned to his older brother.

Li Ming inwardly marveled, eyeing Lu Ran's back intently.

Ever since the Li brothers learned that Si Xianxian was a Fierce Heavenly believer, the two had been on high alert.

They had also mentally prepared for any sudden incidents.

After all, every Fierce Heavenly believer in this world was incredibly unstable and virtually uncontrollable!

But this Immortal Sheep Believer...

His methods were really forceful!

The Fierce Heavenly believer had already erupted in rage, and yet Lu Ran managed to firmly suppress her?

Damn, that's amazing!

The Fierce Heavenly believers were frighteningly powerful, but sadly, they couldn't be employed by Da Xia.

If there could be more Immortal Sheep Believers like Lu Ran, wouldn't Da Xia's military strength soar?

Too bad.

In the forty years since the gods descended, Lu Ran was the only "combat sheep" they had.

Other Immortal Sheep Believers, let alone controlling a Fierce Heavenly believer, upon encountering a raging Fierce Heavenly disciple, the Immortal Goat Disciples would probably kneel on the ground, crying and begging for mercy.

Chen Jingjing quietly watched this scene, her expression becoming serious.

She realized a very serious problem!

Now that she had met Lu Ran, they would become more familiar in the future.

Lu Ran, being Da Xia's genius, with strength already apparent, and the child of Peak Master Qiao...

Chen Jingjing asked herself, she would come to admire Lu Ran more and more, their relationship would likely get better.

Until their relationship grew strong, or Lu Ran's strength caught up, he probably could do whatever he wanted in front of her!

With that thought, Chen Jingjing's brows furrowed tightly.

When it came to Immortal Sheep Believers, people mostly held attitudes of contempt and disdain.

Lord Immortal Goat, as a Nine-level God, recruited Human Clan believers of generally low aptitude, hardly capable of becoming masters.

But Lu Ran was an extreme exception; he was a combat sheep with explosive talent!

One day, people will realize that the Immortal Sheep sect is far more terrifying than the Evil Demon.

At least most Evil Demons would grant a swift end.

While powerful Immortal Sheep Believers would make you lose all personal will and willingly give everything for them...

"Creak~"

Lu Ran continued to push the mansion door until there was enough space for a person to slip through sideways.

He didn't know that he had just shown off, causing an uproar in the heart of a Jiang Realm Great Power.

At that moment, Lu Ran was fully focused, sneakily entering the yard.

He approached the house door, sensing the Evil Demon's aura growing stronger—the Yan Zhi must be in the hall on the other side of the door!

Lu Ran moved several steps sideways, peering through a hole in the window paper that someone had poked, looking inside.

The hall was pitch black.

However, Lu Ran's Evil Technique·Evil Recognition had reached River Grade, enough to help him see through the darkness.

After several months, he finally saw the Yan Zhi again.

Just one glance made Lu Ran's hair stand on end!

The military's setting, could it be any more realistic?

It was clear that soldiers had just cleaned this place; the hall was tidy and quaint.

At the center, there was an Eight Immortals table with Taishi Chairs on either side.

On one of the Taishi Chairs, there sat quietly a figure of a woman.

She was in a Red wedding dress, with a Red Veil over her head.

In the pitch-dark room, that unmoving crimson figure looked so spine-chilling...

It's worth mentioning that the Yan Zhi Clan's phoenix crown and wedding dress was "part of the act" when they appeared.

But the red cloth covering her head was Evil Technique·Red Veil.

This technique is a kind of long-range offensive skill, mostly used by the Yan Zhi Clan to torment the Human Clan.

The Red Veil could float back and forth at the will of the Yan Zhi Clan.

It could smother people's faces, causing them to suffocate to death.

Or it could be wrapped around people's necks, hoisted in midair, hanging them to death.

Just hearing about such methods was enough to feel the cruelty.

And at this moment, that cruel Yan Zhi sat quietly on the Taishi Chair.

Just like a bride waiting for the groom to return and marry her.

"It still has to be you, Yan Zhi."

Lu Ran murmured in his heart, quietly walking back to the front of the house.

Too perfect!

Since their last encounter, Lu Ran had seen many Evil Demons, including some that made an impression on him.

The Tangled Silk Clan, with their seductive beauty, enslaving all beings.

The Night Charm Clan, graceful and mysterious, swift and ruthless in their killing.

But these Evil Demons couldn't make Lu Ran's temples throb with excitement!

Thinking it over, only the Yin Flower Dan playing in the dead of night could compete with the Yan Zhi.

Chinese horror is truly the most terrifying!

Under the stunned gazes of Jiang Ruyi and Si Xianxian, Lu Ran gently pushed open the house door.

With the wooden door creaking, the Yan Zhi finally sensed something off.

"Hm?" Her hand lifted the Red Veil.

Lu Ran's eyes narrowed, originally wanting to get even closer, but now he had no time for caution.

He lunged forward, Silent Night Blade in hand, thrusting straight at the Yan Zhi.

Yan Zhi... were you waiting for me?

Here! !! Come!

"Chi!"

The blade pierces flesh!

The sharp Silent Night Blade, however, did not penetrate the Yan Zhi's throat.

After all, her face was still veiled by the Red Veil.

In a critical moment, the Yan Zhi sharply tilted her head, causing the blade to slash on the side of her neck, causing a shallow wound.

"Whoosh~"

The Yan Zhi still sat on the Taishi Chair, when suddenly another figure of the Yan Zhi floated to the side.

Evil Technique·Paper Substitute?

A full set of Evil Techniques, huh?

Lu Ran's eyes were sharp, mist swirling beneath his feet.

"Chi—"

Lu Ran's figure suddenly dashed past beside the Yan Zhi.

"Whoosh~"

A head soared high into the air, blood spurting dramatically.

If slicing the side of the neck wasn't a fatal blow, if the Yan Zhi still could use the Paper Substitute...

Then Lu Ran's behead with this strike, just like on a rainy night with the Big Nightmare, left no chance of survival for the Yan Zhi!

"Whoosh~"

Lu Ran stopped abruptly and looked up.

The phoenix crown chimed with a series of crisp sounds.

Lu Ran reached out to catch a beautiful falling head.

He saw the pale, paper-like face, and the wide, beautiful eyes.

"Ruyi, your true love will never come in this lifetime."

Lu Ran thought silently, looking at the beauty's skull in his arms, letting it crumble into mist.

But you have found where you belong.

You've found the Evil Demon Lord!

Chapter 253: Case is solved...

"Puff~"

The headless body of the Yan Zhi burst into mist.

Lu Ran raised the Divine Power Pearl around his neck and absorbed the wisps of fog into it.

And in a place invisible to others, the soul of the Yan Zhi was also absorbed by Lu Ran into the God Demon Sculpture Garden.

What is meant by leaving no trace behind?

"Is it over?" Jiang Ruyi burst into the room, wearing a headlamp, and quickly checked the surroundings.

"She was under a red veil, and the opportunity was rare, so I went straight for it," Lu Ran, also wearing a headlamp, had not turned it on.

Suddenly, a beam of light hit his face.

Lu Ran squinted his eyes, covering his face with one hand, "What are you doing?"

Si Xianxian then turned her head, using her headlamp to illuminate elsewhere, inspecting the room's decor, "Checking if you are injured."

Li Ming walked in, "Such opportunities are not rare."

"Oh?" Lu Ran's interest was piqued, "Yan Zhi always cover themselves with a red veil?"

"Usually not," Li Ming patiently explained, "But when they occupy a house and rest in it, there is a great chance that they will drape a red veil over themselves."

"I see," Lu Ran nodded.

This clan's characteristic is quite interesting.

Are they that infatuated?

One must know, the Yan Zhi are human-shaped demons not like beast demons with their sharp noses and ears.

Once they cover themselves with a red veil, it's like they've disabled an arm.

I really don't know who they are waiting for.

No, that's not the right term to use.

The Yan Zhi minions are all made from the original statue of the evil demon, their habits deriving from it.

So...

Who is this ideal gentleman that the Yan Zhi themselves are waiting for?

Lu Ran pondered but couldn't think of any kind of demon that dressed as a bridegroom.

"Lu Ran." A man's voice came from outside the door, most likely Li Xin.

"Here!" Lu Ran immediately walked outside.

As he had just stepped over the threshold, he sharply raised his head!

In the night sky, a bright moon hung high.

Against the backdrop of the full moon, a figure draped in a Big Red Robe floated high in the air.

The night wind gently blew her flowing skirt and lightly tinkled her phoenix crown.

And from Lu Ran's angle, the entire figure of the Yan Zhi was encircled by the moon.

Beautiful yet horrifying.

Full of artistic conception!

Lu Ran even thought about taking out his phone to capture the scene.

It was too beautiful.

Apart from the bride's face being a bit pale, there really was nothing wrong with it...Hm?

Lu Ran slightly furrowed his brow as he noticed the Yan Zhi staring intently at him, her eyes void of anyone else.

"What?" Lu Ran was confused.

Before he came out, soldier Li Xin was standing in the courtyard, and Chen Jingjing was on guard atop the roof.

As a demon, upon seeing these two humans, the Yan Zhi should have been filled with a killer intent, not shifting her gaze.

Yet, as soon as he appeared, the Yan Zhi immediately changed her target?

Lu Ran was puzzled; he hadn't performed Divine Technique·Desolate Sound.

Why had her hatred shifted towards him?

"Hiss..."

The Yan Zhi let out a low sound, rushing down from the night sky directly towards Lu Ran.

Behind Lu Ran, a White Jade Stone suddenly flew out.

"Whiz~"

Jade Talisman Divine Skill·Bursting Flame Talisman!

Jiang Ruyi, surrounded by four White Jade Stones, stepped briskly out of the house.

"Whiz!!"

The Big Red Robe worn by the Yan Zhi rustled noisily.

She reached out a hand and stretched her wide sleeve towards the Bursting Flame Talisman.

Evil Technique·Yan Paper Sleeve!

The powerful Bursting Flame Talisman was directly absorbed by the Yan Paper Sleeve.

Like a clay cow entering the sea, there was no further sound.

Not even a spark splashed out!

Lu Ran silently nodded, thinking to himself: Marvelous!

Marvelous indeed!

Such an evil technique should be used by me!

"Humph." The Yan Zhi snorted coldly, flinging the Big Red Robe fiercely.

Evil Technique·Red Wedding Dress!

The hem of the red dress became massive and long, like an overwhelming tide of red waves, sweeping down below.

It seemed she wanted to crush all the humans to bits?

"Heh." Another cold snort came from behind Lu Ran.

Si Xianxian stepped forward briskly, pushing Lu Ran aside, while the giant hammer she held swung fiercely upwards.

A virtual hammer shadow, burning with raging flames, roared into the night sky.

"Boom!"

The fire exploded, and shockwaves billowed.

But that wasn't all!

Si Xianxian swung the Black Luminous Stone Hammer repeatedly.

Her weapon was only two meters, but the virtual hammer shadows she swung extended three meters.

Fierce Heavenly Divine Skill-Bursting Sky Vault!

"Bang! Bang!"

"Boom..."

The Yan Zhi had impressive defensive power against evil techniques.

But today she met her match against a Fierce Heavenly believer with explosive output!

"Die for me!" Si Xianxian gritted her teeth, swinging the hammer with a powerful wind.

I don't care about your Red Wedding Dress!

With me here, you can forget about having your wedding today!

"Crack!!"

Amid the continuous explosions, a particularly grating sound could be heard.

The Red Wedding Dress was blasted apart!

The Yan Zhi was reduced to her original form, still clothed in a dawn blade but no longer an Evil Technique·Red Wedding Dress.

The Yan Zhi do not inherently possess the ability to fly.

As the Evil Technique-Red Wedding Dress was shattered, she plummeted downwards.

Si Xianxian's hammer hadn't stopped!

"Hiss!!"

The Yan Zhi's expression completely changed, furious.

Seeing the virtual hammer shadow flying toward her, she reached out once more.

The sleeve expanded, absorbing three or four virtual hammer shadows.

"Oh my?" Si Xianxian's eyes widened in disbelief, determined not to accept this, swinging her hammer even more fiercely.

The Yan Zhi quickly stabilized her fall and stood aloft in the air.

Her attire remained unchanged, but everyone knew she had initiated the Evil Technique·Red Wedding Dress once again.

"Hiss!!"

The Yan Zhi cried out in desperation.

Finally, she knew to dodge.

The Yan Paper Sleeve could not absorb hammer shadows indefinitely.

If too many were absorbed in a short span of time, it would lead to an explosion if it couldn't hold any longer!

"Die!!"

Si Xianxian squeezed the word through her clenched teeth, her anger growing as she fought.

Lu Ran remained unusually quiet, silently watching the scene.

On the one hand, he wanted Jiang and Si to get some practice.

On the other, Lu Ran was preoccupied with heavy thoughts.

He realized something was very wrong!

The Yan Zhi was locked in a fierce battle with Si Xianxian, yet amidst the critical fight, the Yan Zhi's gaze still occasionally shifted to his direction?

As if she feared he would sneak away.

What was the reason?

We are all human, all flesh and blood, the taste should be similar.

Why did the Yan Zhi only focus on me?

"Swish~swish!"

Jiang Ruyi once again raised her left hand, two Jade Tokens zooming toward the night demon.

The Yan Zhi immediately sidestepped to dodge.

However, this time she miscalculated!

"Boom!"

The Bursting Flame Talisman did not hit the demon but exploded beside her.

The fire suddenly flared, flames rolling.

The Yan Zhi's color drained!

She instinctively reached out to the side, and the red sleeve embroidered with dragons and phoenixes expanded once more.

Fire and explosive shockwaves were all absorbed into the sleeve.

"Sizzle~sizzle~"

Following the Bursting Flame Talisman was the Electric Shackles Talisman!

Unlike the rolling flames, the Electric Shackles Talisman spread rapidly.

Streaks of electricity, like thin snakes, wriggled through the sky; even though some were absorbed by the sleeve, the majority formed an area with a five-meter diameter filled with an electric field.

The Yan Zhi's pupils contracted violently!

Her body trembled, unable to move.

Despite the dawn blade protecting her, currents covered her face and penetrated her clothes.

"Bang!"

The virtual hammer shadow finally smashed into the Yan Zhi's head.

Fire covered the bloody sight, instantly burning away the exploded head.

"Hmph."

Si Xianxian held her hammer, completed a half-turn, and struck the ground forcefully with the handle.

She tilted her chin up slightly, an air of arrogance about her.

"Don't just stand there looking dumb," Lu Ran urged, "Go and absorb that energy.

You throw that hammer around like it's free, how will you survive?"

Si Xianxian, full of herself, responded, "What do you know? This is called the victory scene for the MVP!"

Lu Ran: ???

Actually, before this fifteen-day mark, Si Xianxian didn't understand this either.

Since she watched Lu Ran's performance in "Heavenly Pride," she learned a lot from the barrage of comments.

When Lu Ran single-handedly defeated Night Charm, drawing his blade, stepping back, and flourishing it;

When Lu Ran rescued his comrades, rising from the mire, crying out to the sky;

When Lu Ran killed Tangled Silk Shadow, catching the returning Dawn Blade and wiping the blood-stained blade with two fingers...

Amid the barrage of comments like "Amazing," "Ran Shen," "666," etc., she always saw the phrase:

"Victory scene for the MVP!"

It looked exhilarating!

"Stop showing off and get going," Lu Ran patted Si Xianxian's back.

Si Xianxian's eyes widened in surprise.

Kid, you've got guts, huh?

I don't let my anger out on you, so now you're getting cocky, even daring to hit me?

"The mist has dispersed," Jiang Ruyi spoke softly, simultaneously taking Si Xianxian's delicate hand, giving it a squeeze.

It seemed like a reminder for the boisterous lady to hold back a bit.

Lu Ran looked up at the night sky; indeed, the Yan Zhi's remains were shattered, and her energy dissipated into the world in a short span of time.

In a corner of the courtyard, the Li brothers exchanged glances.

After dealing with two demons in succession, the brothers truly felt that these young people didn't need any protection.

Their trio was well-composed: sufficient output, good control, and they had two Divine Weapons for protection.

They also had the unfathomable Heavenly Pride·Lu Ran!

He had completely eliminated the possibility of a sneak attack by the demons, and he firmly held the Fierce Heavenly Believer in his grasp, to serve his purposes.

What need was there for this team to continue training?

They should be pulled into the military, directly sent on missions, to infiltrate and cleanse the Demon Cave!

"This Yan Zhi's condition seems a bit off?" Jiang Ruyi pulled Si Xianxian behind her and looked toward Lu Ran.

Lu Ran was silent for a moment, then nodded.

Jiang Ruyi confirmed, "I didn't hear you use the Voice of Compassion."

Lu Ran nodded, "That's right, I haven't used it."

Jiang Ruyi frowned slightly, pondering for a moment, then suddenly said:

"Is it because you once summoned the Yan Zhi on the Worship God Platform?"

Lu Ran's eyes brightened, it was very likely!

At that time, he had summoned the original evil demon!

And all Yan Zhi minions were derived from the evil demon itself.

Meaning...

Jiang Ruyi looked at Lu Ran with a deep gaze, "So, what happened on the night of June fifteenth last year when the Yan Zhi took you was no accident.

They all want you."

Lu Ran: "..."

Chapter 254: All Gods disapprove?

"You all want me?"

The question is, what are they going to do after they've carried me off?

Lu Ran pondered in the dark, sliding his Silent Night Blade back into its sheath on his back.

The lower-ranked Evil Demons are not the true form; they can't take disciples, so...

Are they really going to take me for a ghost marriage?

Then what?

The wedding night... Uh.

Lu Ran was skeptical!

He believed that the Yan Zhi would still follow their nature, imprisoning their human prey and torturing them slowly.

After all, the true nature of an Evil Demon does not change.

Already last June on the night of the fifteenth, Lu Ran had been kidnapped by a Yan Zhi once.

The reason why this issue had gone unnoticed was precisely because the abduction of humans by Yan Zhi was a common occurrence.

As with the Evil Technique-Tangled Silk Shadow clan.

They would not easily kill humans; instead, they would manipulate people to slaughter each other.

They played with people, and even more with their hearts.

Such Evil Demons are mentally astute, with spiritual needs that take precedence over material needs.

The Yan Zhi clan would smother people with a Red Veil or strangle them, hanging them in the air by their necks.

Or they would use Evil Technique-Paper Hand to cut off human limbs, creating human sticks for their viewing pleasure.

Or they would use Evil Technique-Paper Mache to crush people bit by bit, grinding them into a pulp.

The Yan Zhi Clan's methods of torture were too numerous to mention.

Just thinking about it sent chills down one's spine.

"Phew..." Lu Ran breathed a deep sigh of relief as he realized something.

Others who are captured suffer indescribable torture and torment before they can be set free.

Once the Yan Zhi satisfy their sadistic desires, they will eventually grant death to their victims.

But for himself, it was different!

It was clear that the Yan Zhi Clan had intent with him, meaning that once captured, he might face a fate worse than death, where he could neither live nor die!

"Ts-ts~" Si Xianxian looked at Jiang Ruyi with a teasing smile, "So, you've got lots and lots of rivals in love, huh?"

Jiang Ruyi: "..."

"My Love Rivals are Paper People"

"Every Paper Person in the World"

"Let's go." Lu Ran calmed his mind, "First, let's get to know the environment of Yan Zhi Village better and think about how to set up an ambush."

Above the roof, Chen Jingjing suddenly spoke up, "We need to go back now."

Lu Ran immediately stopped in his tracks.

Jiang and Si both looked up at the roof, gazing at the aloof disciple under the moonlight.

"Right!" Li Ming said with seriousness, "I was just about to bring this up.

Considering the history between Lu Ran and the true form of the Yan Zhi, combined with the performance of the Yan Zhi in the recent battle, your conjecture is likely true.

If that's the case, Lu Ran must leave this Demon Cave immediately!"

Si Xianxian was confused: "Why? Could it be that the true form of the Evil Demon will know that Lu Ran is here?"

"It's possible." Li Ming nodded gravely, causing Jiang and Si's expressions to shift.

Lu Ran frowned slightly, his gaze sweeping over the Li brothers and then turning to Chen Jingjing on the rooftop.

"Phew~"

The woman gracefully descended and came before Lu Ran: "You should know that all beings have souls."

"Of course." Lu Ran nodded his head.

Chen Jingjing patiently explained: "The soul exists in another dimension, one which we do not have the ability to see.

But they objectively exist.

When a Yan Zhi dies, their soul does not perish and will eventually return to the Evil Demon's true form."

"That's the end of it then!" Si Xianxian realized the gravity of the situation.

Once the Yan Zhi's souls flew back, wouldn't the true form of the Evil Demon know everything?

"Let's go, Lu Ran, you can't stay here!" Li Ming strode forward, flipping his hand.

A dark Other Shore Flower bloomed mysteriously.

"Hold on a moment!" Lu Ran suddenly spoke up.

Li Ming looked up at Lu Ran, saying, "Lu Ran, we need to be responsible for your safety.

Even if there is the slightest possibility in the deductions you made earlier, I cannot let you take the risk."

Li Xin also spoke up, his tone even more firm: "Mr. Lu, this is an order, please comply unconditionally!"

The two brothers spoke in turn, creating an extremely serious atmosphere.

Chen Jingjing interjected appropriately, urging, "Let's go, Lu Ran, it's not wise to linger here.

I can arrange for you another Demon Cave to explore."

Lu Ran's expression grew strange, looking at the people in front of him.

I wanted to interact with you all as an ordinary person, and in return, I'm being expelled.

This is what you asked for!

I've really emptied my pockets...

Lu Ran suddenly blurted out, "Who said I can't see Dead Souls?"

Li Ming: "Huh?"

Li Xin: "Huh?"

Chen Jingjing was also stunned.

Being Da Xia's genius, his word was as precious as gold and jade.

Everyone was willing to believe what Lu Ran said was true.

But the question was...

How come you can see them?

Powers involving the soul are guarded secrets among the gods.

Even if Believers are devout and make all kinds of excuses for their gods, this is an undeniable fact!

In the Evil Demon faction, there are some Evil Techniques related to the soul.

However, on the Human Clan side, techniques involving the soul are forbidden by All Gods!

Nearly a hundred gods of Da Xia, count them one by one...

It seems that only God Nuosha in his great mercy created a rudimentary technique that touches on the "soul dimension."

The Nuosha Divine Technique-Sha Blade!

And those two daggers could only inflict minor soul damage on the enemy.

And that's all!

The gods might not say it out loud, but their actions have already spoken:

All Gods do not allow humans to delve too deeply into matters of the soul!

Given this situation, what about Lu Ran?

Li Ming and Li Xin exchanged glances, sharing the same puzzlement in their eyes.

Indeed, within the Immortal Sheep faction, there are techniques related to the soul.

But the Divine Technique-Sheep involves sacrificing one's own soul, and every time it is used, the soul of the Immortal Sheep Believer becomes more fragmented.

Needless to say, this is not considered a profound use of soul techniques by humans; the Immortal Sheep Believers are passively losing their souls.

"I indeed cannot see, but I can feel," Lu Ran spoke up.

Li Ming looked surprised: "Feel?"

Lu Ran nodded, "That's a world in another dimension which you are completely unaware of.

All along this journey, you have no idea what I have been up to.

The souls of those two Yan Zhi, I have brought them into custody.

They cannot fly back; they cannot pass messages to the true form of the Evil Demon."

"This?" Si Xianxian widened her eyes, looking at Lu Ran.

Jiang Ruyi's thoughts fluttered, seemingly understanding what Lu Ran was implying.

She certainly was aware of the existence of that Magic Artifact.

Li Xin's shock was beyond words: "You can feel the soul, and you can also detain... Ah?

You can even... Ah??"

The Li brothers were both in their forties, naturally experienced and well-versed.

But what Lu Ran said completely overthrew the soldiers' understanding!

Lu Ran stretched out his right hand, pulled up his sleeve, revealing the Copper Coin tied with a red string around his wrist.

"This is?" Chen Jingjing slightly raised her eyebrows.

With puzzled looks on their faces, everyone watched as Lu Ran announced, "Magic Artifact, Rebirth Money."

"Magic Artifact?"

"Rebirth Money?" The expressions on their faces were priceless.

Jiang and Lu's possession of Divine Weapons was known to all and a subject of envy.

Who would have thought that Lu Ran was also hiding a Magic Artifact?

The key point being the effectiveness of this Artifact is related to the soul!

The rarity and value were simply unimaginable!

"Those Evil Demons who die before me, their souls won't escape either," Lu Ran tapped the Copper Coin on his wrist, "They are all in here now."

A certain little goat kid can sure lie without blushing.

Inside the Rebirth Money, where is the soul of a Yan Zhi?

They are clearly the souls of two Fog Shadow Men, collected by Lu Ran on the night of the fifteenth.

Originally there were three souls, and in the past few days, the Coin had already refined one of them.

Lu Ran's Rebirth Money was only a fragment of a Magic Artifact.

The Copper Coin could at most imprison 3 souls, nourishing itself and its owner Lu Ran.

How could he bear to stuff the precious souls of Yan Zhi into the Copper Coin?

The destiny of the Yan Zhi souls was bound to be in the God Demon Sculpture Garden!

"This Magic Artifact..." Si Xianxian moved closer, inspecting the Copper Coin closely, looking at the characters on it.

Wang Quan?

What does that mean?

"A friend gave it to me." Lu Ran pulled his sleeve back down, covering the Copper Coin, "Don't worry, everyone, we can continue our cultivation."

The Li brothers looked at each other, speechless for a long moment.

Lu Ran continued, "I am a Heavenly Pride after all, I don't speak falsely.

I take responsibility for what I say, and I wouldn't drag you all to your deaths for the sake of a single training session."

Li Ming pondered for a long time and finally nodded, "Okay.

Please make sure that the souls of the Evil Demons cannot escape."

Lu Ran smiled, "Don't worry, the Dead Souls have nowhere to escape; they will only be refined to nourish my own soul."

Li Ming: "..."

Li Xin: "..."

"Don't worry, Sister Jingjing," Lu Ran said to the woman beside him.

Chen Jingjing remained silent, not speaking again.

Had the situation not reached this point, she might never have known, that Lu Ran had been hiding such a secret.

Nor would she ever have known, what Lu Ran had been doing in another dimension without anyone's knowledge.

It really was...

Lu Ran walked towards the mansion door, calling out, "Let's go, we're going to search the village."

Si Xianxian quickly followed, "Your friend is so generous, gifting a Magic Artifact?"

Lu Ran thought for a moment before saying, "I was just giving myself more credit.

I might not even be worthy to be considered a friend."

"What do you mean?" Si Xianxian's confusion deepened.

Lu Ran leaned in close to Si Xianxian's ear, whispering, "She is a god."

Si Xianxian: "You! Said! What?"

Lu Ran shrugged his shoulders.

Lord Wang Quan, of course, was a god, even if she lived secludedly and lingered close to death, she was still a god.

Si Xianxian hurriedly asked, "Which god? The one who is so kind to you, is it Lord Immortal Sheep?"

The more she thought about it, the more Si Xianxian found it incredible.

Everyone is a lowly Believer!

Yet, you can associate and even make friends with your own god?

Lu Ran: "It's not Lord Immortal Sheep, you already know her name."

"Who is it?"

"It's written on the Copper Coin."

"Wang Quan?" Si Xianxian turned her head to look at Jiang Ruyi, somewhat puzzled, "Who is Wang Quan? I've never heard of it?"

"Forget about it," Lu Ran patted Si Xianxian's head, "From now on, you just follow the young master, look after the young mistress well.

The young master will show you more unheard and unseen things."

Si Xianxian: ? ? ?

Jiang Ruyi: "..."

Just as Si Xianxian was about to curse, Lu Ran turned his head around.

He looked serious, staring straight into her eyes, "Your life is going to be especially exciting! I promise."

Si Xianxian opened her mouth but no words came out for a while.

She was willing to believe Lu Ran and was more than happy to follow him, but...

Si Xianxian suddenly raised her hand, pressing it against Lu Ran's face, and pushed outward.

"Uh." Lu Ran stumbled backward, pushed away five or six meters.

Si Xianxian glared at Lu Ran, muttering under her breath, "Who is your maid?"

Lu Ran complained, "Weren't you the one who called me 'young master'!"

Si Xianxian: "I frickin&%￥&!!"

Chapter 255: Eight-bearer Ghost Sedan

Five days later, Yan Zhi Village.

"Screech~"

In front of an imposing ghost mansion, Lu Ran stealthily pushed open the mansion gate and sneaked towards the courtyard.

Jiang Ruyi and Si Xianxian followed closely behind, both tiptoeing.

Both were strong warriors from the River Realm, one a hot-headed and fierce Sister Xian'er, the other a gentle and enchanting Jiang beauty.

As a result, being with Lu Ran, they all deviated from their path, behaving as if they were thieves...

"Truly such infatuation," Lu Ran inwardly sighed.

He stood in front of a window, looking through the punctured paper, at the figure dressed in red sitting in a Taishi Chair inside the house.

Over these days, Lu Ran had witnessed this scene many times.

Just as team leader soldier Li Ming said, when the Yan Zhi found a good house, they would very likely sit beside the Eight Immortals Table and don a veil.

Sadly, they could not wait for their true love.

Hmm...we can only say that the flowers have fallen willingly, but the flowing water is heartless.

In Lu Ran's hand, his Silent Night Blade had already severed many threads of love.

"I'm at my wits' end."

Lu Ran looked at the Yan Zhi people persistently waiting and sighed heavily.

This B-rank marriage,

do you really have to go through with it?

Frustrated at their reluctance to understand, Lu Ran swiftly sidestepped several paces to stand in front of the house door and gently pushed it open.

"Screech~" The sound of the wooden door opening was exceptionally grating in this quiet environment.

The Yan Zhi person seated in the Taishi Chair suddenly trembled delicately, clearly sensing something.

"Zing—"

Mist swirled under Lu Ran's feet as he dashed straight into the house with the Silent Night Blade shining in his hand.

To waste prime time on love and affection?

How shameful.

Come, follow me into the garden!

Let's embark on an endeavor!

"Zing!"

The blade pierced flesh, toppling tables and chairs.

Lu Ran pierced through the Yan Zhi person's throat, a lethal strike with practiced ease.

He gripped the handle tightly, lifting her remains high before cutting across fiercely.

The Evil Demon was decapitated, blood splattering everywhere.

"The Cruel Flower Cutter, getting more adept at it," Si Xianxian stepped into the house, eyeing the yet-to-disperse Evil Demon corpse.

Lu Ran replied right away, "What kind of statement is that!"

This little Believer, I've got a few criticisms for you. How do you feel pity for the Evil Demon now?"

Si Xianxian rolled her eyes, "I even pity you, let alone the Evil Demon."

Lu Ran: ???

Si Xianxian continued irritably, "All day long with your meek protests, I might as well tear out my heart and hand it over to you.

I truly don't know who is the real Evil Demon."

Lu Ran: "..."

This was not a conversation he should engage in.

After all, Si Xianxian had already cracked the case; she just wasn't aware of it yet.

"Puff~"

The Yan Zhi's body disintegrated, along with her foolish infatuation, crumbling to dust.

Lu Ran raised the Divine Power Pearl and, while absorbing the mist, straightened the Taishi Chair and rearranged it.

During these days of practice, as soon as he encountered a Yan Zhi inhabiting a house, waiting for a true love, Lu Ran would launch a surprise attack.

Only when they directly encountered a Yan Zhi would the trio join forces.

"Let's go back to the village center," Lu Ran said after fixing the Eight Immortals Table and beckoned the two back out of the house.

In the courtyard, the Li brothers watched the trio emerge without much surprise.

Initially, the two brothers were anxious and impressed by the trio's top-notch performance.

But now, they've become numb, with this training mission feeling more like a paid vacation.

"I wonder how much longer we have to wait," muttered Lu Ran, glancing at the Li brothers in a pointed manner.

In Yan Zhi Village, the closest to the Human Clan headquarters, it took five days for Lu Ran and the others to slay just over a hundred Yan Zhi people.

Lu Ran longed to venture deeper.

But the Li brothers did not allow it, not even Chen Jingjing stood with the soldiers.

Ever since they realized that the Yan Zhi Clan had a unique affection for Lu Ran, their attitude completely shifted.

What, you still want to explore deep into the Demon Cave?

I should be begging you to leave already!

These days, the Li brothers were extremely worried, staying on high alert every day.

Fortunately, Lu Ran had not deceived them.

The Magic Artifact·Rebirth Coin was indeed powerful, able to incarcerate and purify souls, and as the training drew to a close, no anomalies arose in the Demon Cave.

"We have two days left," whispered Jiang Ruyi, "even if we explore deeper, we wouldn't get very far."

"Alright," Lu Ran thought it a pity but led the team back to the center of the village, standing beneath the crooked tree.

"Zing—"

Mist surged around Lu Ran's feet as he shot up the giant tree.

Divine Technique·Immortal Hoof was truly useful, allowing not just lateral movement on the ground.

Climbing trees to catch birds or diving into rivers to catch fish was no issue...

Jiang Ruyi, meanwhile, took Si Xianxian and soared high into the sky.

This spot was the trio's observation point, where they hid in the lush, leafy tree, waiting for the Yan Zhi to fall into their trap.

Should they be spotted, the trio would join forces to confront the enemy.

Otherwise, Lu Ran would wait a while, watching the Yan Zhi choose a residence and enter before he would strike.

"Rustle~"

The branches stirred, producing a pleasant rustling sound.

Lu Ran crouched on a thick branch, pushing aside the leaves, peering out.

In the night sky, the moon hung high, casting a cold, clear light down on the earth.

The world was silent, the sinister and fearsome atmosphere enveloping Little Desolate Village.

Beside him came Si Xianxian's whisper, with a coy undertone,

"Ruyi, after we return to Beijing, let's go stroll through the night market, shall we?"

"Sure," Jiang Ruyi's voice was soft, "But first we need to take care of business."

Si Xianxian murmured, "Actually, you guys go accompany Senior Qiao, I can shop on my own."

Jiang Ruyi firmly shook her head, her response seemed so cold and heartless in Si Xianxian's eyes.

Her words were even colder, "I will accompany you, after I'm done with my work.

If you dare to sneak out on your own, next time, we won't take you out with us."

Si Xianxian: "..."

Even though she was the elder sister and highest in strength and realm, yet she lived like the "precious baby", constantly under supervision.

Si Xianxian leaned against the trunk, turned her head away, and didn't make another sound.

Jiang Ruyi shook her head with a smile, looking toward Lu Ran.

She just saw him leaning forward, parting the thick foliage as if observing something.

Then, she heard Lu Ran's voice:

"East side of the village! River Realm Yan Zhi!"

Lu Ran's voice was very low and passed through invisible earpieces into everyone's ears.

Jiang Ruyi's heart tightened immediately.

Inside a rundown mud-brick house, the Li brothers exchanged heavy looks.

Li Ming spoke gravely, "Are you sure it's River Realm?"

Yan Zhi Clan wouldn't undergo any physical changes with higher power levels.

The most apparent way to judge was through Evil Technique.

And at this moment, Lu Ran was concluding through the Evil Technique.

"At least River Realm, I saw the Eight Ghosts Carriage!" Lu Ran suppressed his surging emotions.

What a revelation!

Normally, Yan Zhi flew in from the night sky to arrive at Yan Zhi Village.

This was the first time Lu Ran saw Yan Zhi being carried into the village by a large palanquin!

Beneath the moonlight, at the entrance to the desolate village,

Eight robust Ghost Bearers carried a huge red palanquin, advancing toward the village.

They were massively tall, likely four meters in height!

The low earth walls beside the road were only a bit taller than their knees.

The Ghost Bearers wore black clothes, with red ribbons around their heads and waists.

Even more eerie, their faces were blurred, only their eyes shone with a blood-red luster, and they exuded a thick Ghost Energy.

Wherever they passed, swirls of black mist followed.

Such a sight made Lu Ran's scalp tingle!

Evidently, this was the Jiang Grade Evil Technique suitable for the Yan Zhi at River Realm.

"It should be Jiang Grade Evil Technique, with only eight bearers," Lu Ran tried to calm his nerves and kept reporting back.

If it were a higher grade, instead of being empty before and after, there'd be an entire wedding procession!

It was said that this scene was even more terrifying.

A procession of seventy or eighty people, yet completely silent!

Utterly eerie and chilling!

"Keep your positions, stay hidden," Li Ming ordered softly, "Let the Yan Zhi choose the new house, we avoid if we can."

Chen Jingjing's voice also transmitted through the earpiece: "Stay calm, I'm here.

But, we don't need to confront River Realm Yan Zhi."

Chen Jingjing's brief words steadied Lu Ran and the others, also clarifying her stance.

She didn't want Lu Ran to intervene in this matter, if possible, leaving it to the soldiers to resolve.

"The carriage has stopped," Lu Ran whispered.

The enormous red palanquin halted in front of a large mansion near the village entrance.

Lu Ran's eyes narrowed!

The giant palanquin's covering seemed to be made from red silk, with colorful embroidery, strikingly exquisite.

A pale and slender hand gently lifted the curtain.

The woman inside was inspecting the large mansion.

After several seconds, the woman emerged.

More accurately, she floated out.

In comparison to the Ghost Bearers' stature, the Yan Zhi appeared somewhat petite.

But her presence was anything but small!

She wore a Red Veil over her head, her Big Red Robe fluttering majestically.

Two blurred-faced bearers hurried to the mansion door, opening it for the lady.

The Yan Zhi, however, hovered in mid-air.

"Huh~"

The Red Veil moved as if by its own volition, gently revealing a corner.

The Yan Zhi stood suspended in the air, paused, then floated backward, returning to the huge palanquin.

Apparently, she wasn't taken with this new house?

A moment later, the eight Ghost Bearers lifted the palanquin and proceeded forward.

The village under the moon, all was silent.

Lu Ran felt as if he was trapped in an unreal nightmare, witnessing this eerie scene unfold before his eyes.

Jiang Ruyi placed a hand on Lu Ran's shoulder, her fingers pressing lightly.

Lu Ran came to his senses, pressed a hand to his ear, and whispered, "The Ghost Bearers are heading our way."

Li Ming was taken aback, "Have they discovered you?"

Lu Ran: "No, the Yan Zhi must be choosing a house, she's heading towards the center of the village."

"Huh~"

Just as Lu Ran finished speaking, a snow-white figure in a nearby unimpressive mud-brick house stepped on a sword and flew into the air without hesitation.

Chen Jingjing, who had no intention of getting involved, appeared in an instant, without any delay.

There were many paths in Yan Zhi Village, but the other party had to choose this one, so there was no other option.

Chen Jingjing couldn't gamble, couldn't let the Eight Ghosts Carriage get close to the crooked tree.

"Wu! Wu!!"

"Ss...roar!!" In just a moment, the eight Ghost Bearers came to a halt.

They lifted their blurred faces, and the eyes shone with even more intense blood-red brightness!

Chapter 256: Behead the River!

Evil Technique-Eight Ghosts Carriage is a comprehensive type of technique.

The massively sized red sedan boasts incredible defensive power, and within it, Yan Zhi is shielded from all the external chaos and disturbance.

And the wedding procession, namely the eight Ghost Bearers, are akin to summoned creatures.

Just as in the Spiritual Sign Sect's Divine Technique, where the Summoning Sign conjures Copper Armor Guards, Iron Armor Guards alike.

They serve with unwavering loyalty, exceptional martial skills, and possess devastating destructive force.

The difference lies in that a Believer of the Spiritual Sign Sect can only draw out one guard at a time, whereas Yan Zhi doesn't have to rely on luck to draw signs; she can directly call forth eight Ghost Bearers.

Yet this is still the Jiang Grade Evil Technique-Eight Ghosts Carriage.

Once it advances to the next grade, Yan Zhi will be able to summon an entire wedding procession!

Those who clear the way, those who set off firecrackers, those who beat gongs and drums following the sedan...

A multitude of them, totaling seventy to eighty evil ghosts.

Each one a ghost among ghosts, a fiend among fiends!

If nothing unexpected happens, Lu Ran will eventually learn this technique.

When that time comes, he will no longer be in the situation of "fighting alone."

For instance, if Lu Ran wanted to penetrate deep into the Demon Cave, he could simply cast this technique and then settle himself comfortably inside the sedan.

His wedding procession would naturally charge and slaughter on behalf of their master, bearing him directly into the lair of the Evil Demon!

A wedding procession?

No, this would be delivering a funeral for all living beings.

Wherever the ghost sedan passes, there will inevitably be seas of blood and mountains of corpses!

"Sss..."

"Roar!!" The eight Ghost Bearers look up at the night sky, bellowing angrily.

Chen Jingjing, at the tender age of twenty-five, yet with the aura of a great general.

Her face is cold, her bearing fearless; this composure naturally stems from her own strength!

Chen Jingjing raises a hand, and a rain of swords envelops the area.

Directly above the vast ghost sedan, countless golden swords pour down, falling as finely as rain.

Sword One Divine Technique·Ten Thousand Sword Style!

In an instant, a series of crisp sounds is unceasing to the ears.

The ghost sedan, seemingly made of wood and fabric, actually possesses astonishing defensive power!

Each golden sword that falls onto the sedan is repelled and sent flying.

"Damn." Lu Ran swears inwardly upon witnessing the surprising scene.

The Ghost Bearers truly are loyal!

To protect their master, one of the Ghost Bearers even sprawls on top of the sedan, using its body to shield against the golden sword rain.

The thing is, the Ghost Bear intent doesn't need to do this; those gold swords simply can't harm the big red sedan.

"Sss..."

All of a sudden, Lu Ran faintly hears a woman's moan.

It proves to be not his imagination, but rather Yan Zhi issuing commands.

The Ghost Bearers surrounding the big red sedan immediately scatter, getting clear of the range of the golden sword rain.

Except for one Ghost Bearer, who remains sprawled above the big red sedan, its majestic body of over four meters tall now riddled with holes.

"Pff!"

The Ghost Bearer explodes with a bang, turning into wisps of black fog that dissipate.

Lu Ran nods to himself, in acknowledgment.

He is observing the battle, all the while striving to extract combat experience.

He reads the Ghost Bearers' extreme devotion to their master, willing to protect with their lives.

Moreover, the Ghost Bearers have no defensive techniques to speak of - their large and imposing bodies are easily punctured at every jab.

Chen Jingjing must be aware of the red sedan's defensive power, and still, she deploys the Divine Technique·Ten Thousand Sword Style, evidently targeting the Ghost Bearers!

Her plan indeed succeeds.

Now, with one Ghost Bearer deceased and several injured,

"Roar!"

"Roar!!" The bearers bellow angrily, charging towards Chen Jingjing's direction.

They barrel through recklessly, not concerning themselves the slightest with the buildings in their path, easily crushing mud walls and demolishing earthen houses.

"Ruyi." Lu Ran whispers quietly.

"Hm?" Jiang Ruyi stands behind Lu Ran, hand resting on his shoulder.

Yet, the Dawn Blade Lu Ran is carrying on his back quietly slides out of its sheath.

Jiang Ruyi immediately understands Lu Ran's intention; with a thought, the Cold Night Sword at her waist stealthily slips from its scabbard.

"Thud!" A muffled sound!

The very earth seems to tremble.

The Ghost Bearer, like a behemoth, crashes through another earthen house, crumbling the floor beneath it, and leaps up high, rushing towards Chen Jingjing in the night sky.

"Hmph."

Chen Jingjing lets out a cold snort, and a surge of energy swirls around her descending palm, as a series of flying swords shoot out.

One sword, two swords... sixteen swords!

Sword One Divine Technique·Flying Sword Style!

Chen Jingjing grips one of the swords, while the other fifteen long swords link into a chain, like a dragon plunging straight down.

The terrifying sound of the swords cutting through the air makes one's hair stand on end.

"Snap! Snap..."

The Ghost Bearer swings its large hands in quick succession, managing to deflect all the flying swords.

The sight leaves everyone speechless.

Chen Jingjing steps onto a flying sword and zips towards the upper left.

"Roar!" The Ghost Bearer opens its jaws wide, attempting to capture the Human Clan woman, eager to crush and tear her to pieces.

Alas, the Ghost Bearer lacks the ability to fly; it can only pass by Chen Jingjing's side, cutting diagonally through the night sky.

With a light tap of her fingertips, Chen Jingjing sends the swords that were deflected by the Ghost Bearer, drawing beautiful arcs in the sky from every direction, stabbing towards their target.

"Ahhhhh!" The Ghost Bearer turns around, punching and kicking at the swords assaulting it from all sides.

This is just...

Powerful to this extent?

Lu Ran can't help but inwardly sigh.

No wonder, whenever a River Realm Evil Demon descends upon the city, it's labeled as a special event - Demon Lord's Descent.

To put it bluntly, with such powerful summoned creatures at her disposal, Yan Zhi wouldn't need to lift a finger; this wedding procession could slaughter an entire city, right?

"Swoosh~ Swoosh!"

Chen Jingjing, sword in hand, swiftly performs a flourish, her movements exceptionally sharp.

And as she weaves a pattern with a pair of swords, one inside and one outside, two swords' energies pierce through the Ghost Bearer in the night sky.

Chapter 257: Behead the River!_2

Sword One Divine Skill-Frost Sword Qi!

On the blurred face of the Ghost Bearer, red light radiated from his eyes.

He swung his large hands, attempting to repeat his old trick, but...

Dispelling Sword Qi?

You really dare to dream!

With a "swoosh," the Ghost Bearer's hand was cleanly sliced off by the sharp Sword Qi!

A black mist enveloped the area as the Ghost Bearer's cries of pain echoed through the night sky.

His momentary distraction sealed the fate of the Ghost Bearer.

In front of a Sword Cultivator who killed without blinking, you couldn't afford even a moment's relaxation, for the consequences were extremely severe.

The cries of the Ghost Bearer abruptly ceased, as numerous flying swords struck from all directions, piercing through the giant's body.

Each flying sword trailed black misty streaks that crisscrossed with the night sky.

"Thud! Thud! Thud..."

A series of muffled sounds abruptly rang out.

Several Ghost Bearers hurried over, leaping high, lunging towards the Human Clan woman in the night sky.

Chen Jingjing was certain in her heart—her plan had succeeded!

With a sweep of her hand, she released fifteen illusory sword shadows, cascading down everywhere.

The sword shadows moved with astonishing speed, landing on the village roads, the tops of adobe houses, and inside a large estate...

The moment the fifteen sword shadows touched the ground, they transformed into fifteen figures, all of them Chen Jingjing!

Wait, fifteen?

Everyone knew that Jiang Grade Divine Skill·Sword Dance Clear Shadow could summon up to sixteen figures.

But Chen Jingjing had only sent out fifteen shadows, which meant...

Chen Jingjing had a backup plan!

She had already activated another figure, hidden somewhere unknown.

And that figure was probably aimed at guarding against Yan Zhi!

When Divine Technique·Sword Dance Clear Shadow reached the Jiang grade, disciples of Sword One could freely move among the figures!

Why was Divine·Sword One ranked first among the gods of Da Xia?

The effectiveness of her divine skill was outrageously powerful!

Even the formidable Night Charm could at most divide into three.

Look at the followers of Sword One!

She could singlehandedly form a group, waving her hand, and fill the battlefield with her images...

"Swoosh~swoosh!"

The dispersed figures attacked simultaneously, flinging countless sword Qi into the night sky!

The flightless Ghost Bearers became mere lambs to the slaughter.

At that moment, an anomaly occurred!

Chen Jingjing, standing in the night sky, suddenly trembled, unable to move.

A pale, slender hand quietly lifted the curtain of the large ghost palanquin.

And in Yan Zhi's hand, she held a small paper mache man.

These useless bearers made their mistress lose her patience.

River Realm·Yan Zhi finally made her move!

And when she moved, it was to kill!

Yan Zhi didn't crush the paper mache man; her thumb pressed down on its face.

"Hum~"

In the night sky, Chen Jingjing's flesh and blood body abruptly turned into an illusion.

This Sword One Believer's true body appeared on the roof of an adobe house, replacing one of the illusions.

At the same time, the illusion of Chen Jingjing in the night sky had her face crushed in.

Her head was gradually flattened by Yan Zhi.

The scene was terribly horrifying!

If Yan Zhi's target had been Lu Ran and the others instead...

The consequences would have been unimaginable!

"Hiss!!"

Yan Zhi suddenly screamed horrifically, her voice piercingly shrill.

Her scream bewildered Chen Jingjing!

What happened?

The answer was... Lu Jiang had taken action!

The two of them had been covertly controlling their sword and blade with their minds, stealthily slipping down a large tree, skimming the ground, crossing the dirt walls, and circling around half of the Desolate Village.

The chaotic nocturnal battlefield provided perfect cover for a blade and a sword.

Lu Ran understood that the seemingly soft red fabric on the ghost palanquin had astonishing defensive power and was not something that others could easily lift.

He could only wait for the bride inside to lift the curtain herself.

By then, a pair of Divine Weapons were deployed on the road beside the ghost palanquin, closely next to a dirt wall, ready to strike.

And when Yan Zhi lifted the curtain, Lu Ran's eyes narrowed, and the Dawn Blade suddenly burst forth!

The Cold Night Sword picked up on its companion's movement and swiftly followed.

"Zi!"

Blade into flesh!

The Dawn Blade directly pierced through Yan Zhi's hand and aimed for her head.

"Ah!!" Yan Zhi screamed, retracting her hand.

And just before the soft curtain fell, the Cold Night Sword also pierced in.

Lu Ran clenched his fist, staring at the big red palanquin, and uttered a single word: "Kill!"

He indeed had excellent sight, but he couldn't see through the ghost palanquin, so he had to listen with his ears.

Suddenly,

The bride screamed repeatedly, the big red palanquin swayed left and right, shaking continuously.

Lu Ran's initial murderous intent turned to a puzzling expression.

This...?

Why did it feel like something was wrong?

"Hu!!"

Suddenly, an energy surge in the night sky caused the temperature around to plummet.

Lu Ran abruptly lifted his head, only to see a colossal sword shadow appear, spreading endless frost across heaven and earth.

He slightly opened his mouth, looking down to see Chen Jingjing standing on an adobe house, with one hand raised as if inviting the heavens.

Sword One Divine Skill-Frost Cold Nine Provinces!

"Hu!!"

Yan Zhi's face twisted as she was flung from the big red palanquin.

And in the night sky, the incredible sword shadow had already cleaved down.

To cut Yan Zhi?

Not just that!

Together with the big red palanquin and the not-so-wide village dirt road, all were within the range of the sword's slash.

"Hiss!!"

Yan Zhi abruptly looked up, her eyes bulging, and her blood-stained hand raised upwards.

The Big Red Robe was lifted high, creating a massive wave of red.

The majestic sword shadow struck heavily down, Frost Cold Nine Provinces!

"Oh my gosh!" Si Xianxian clung to the thick branches, dumbfoundedly watching.

She had even anticipated what it would be like when the sword touched the wedding dress, a moment of earth-shattering impact.

Yet, someone stole the show...

"Go!!" Lu Ran clenched at the air, pulling hard backward.

Inside the big red palanquin, the brilliance was dazzling!

As the red curtain flew high due to the bride being thrown out, the Dawn Blade and Cold Night Sword lunged rapidly, stabbing directly at Yan Zhi.

"Zi! Zi!"

Before the Frost Giant Sword touched the Red Wedding Dress, the pair of Divine Weapons pierced through Yan Zhi's body under the lifted hem.

Yan Zhi's pupils dilated violently!

"Hu~"

A figure flew out from inside Yan Zhi.

Evil Technique·Paper Substitute!

The overwhelming red wave quietly dissipated, and Frost Cold Nine Provinces fell swiftly.

"Boom!!"

The ground trembled, air waves billowed.

Houses on either side of the street were thoroughly shattered.

The figure that had just switched places with Yan Zhi was brutally obliterated.

Lu Ran opened his Pupil of the Dead World, seeing the rapidly ice-sealed village and also observing Yan Zhi's remaining Dead Soul standing in place.

In an instant, Lu Ran felt greatly relieved!

"Hiss! Hiss!!"

Yan Zhi's features contorted, she screamed piercingly, causing Lu Ran's eardrums to ache.

She seemed yet to realize that she was already dead.

Or perhaps, Yan Zhi did not want to accept such an outcome.

She flailed about, still trying to swing her Big Red Robe.

"Hiss!"

Suddenly, she turned around, only then realizing a force was pulling her towards the center of the Desolate Village.

Yan Zhi's Dead Soul, dead set on the crooked-necked tree.

Then, she saw a Human Clan youth part the dense branches, revealing his true face.

Yan Zhi's expression froze!

The previously frantic struggle, now calmly subsided.

Closer, even closer...

Yan Zhi's eyes gleamed with endless craving, her hands stretched out as if to embrace Lu Ran tightly.

However, those ethereal palms kept retracting, continuously merging into Lu Ran's pupils.

"Hiss! Hiss!!"

Yan Zhi's Dead Soul became frantic, screaming vehemently before finally vanishing.

Lu Ran felt the Dead Soul entering the God Demon Sculpture Garden, and he couldn't help but purse his lips.

A River Realm Dead Soul was definitely a great nourishment!

"Hu~"

On the village dirt road, the majestic sword shadow disappeared without a trace, leaving only frost spreading across the land.

As the frost and snow hit his face, Lu Ran subconsciously closed his eyes, one hand shielding his face.

Yet a figure wielding a sword came forth, standing in front of Lu Ran.

Chen Jingjing swept her gaze over the few people in the tree, her eyes finally resting on Lu Ran, asking, "Are you alright?"

Lu Ran sincerely exclaimed, "Jingjing, you're amazing!"

Chen Jingjing gently shook her head: "Not even one ten-thousandth of your mother."

Lu Ran: "..."

Chapter 258: Return After Half a Year

Over the next two days, Lu Ran and his companions carried out their cultivation experiences methodically.

Jiang and Si absorbed the experience of battling the Vermilion Paper Evil Sculptures, while Lu Ran secretly consumed the Dead Souls of the Vermilion Paper people.

It must be said, this cultivation journey truly broadened Lu Ran's horizons.

Especially after encountering the River Realm Vermilion Paper person, Lu Ran's thoughts became even more active.

The Vermilion Paper sect's Evil Technique was simply too explosive.

Whether it was the carriage with its amazing defensive power or the competent Ghost Bearer, both greatly stirred Lu Ran's interest.

Once he mastered this technique, his presence would be impressive whenever he went out...

Moreover, the Vermilion Paper people who had advanced to the River Realm were transformed!

She remained the infatuated bride, but also became an empress with an imposing aura!

The thought of one day having such a Vermilion Paper person made Lu Ran secretly jubilant.

And his delighted expression scared Si Xianxian quite a bit, who thought Lu Ran was possessed by something...

Lu Ran dearly wished to double his efforts and collect more Dead Souls of the Vermilion Paper people.

However, the number of Vermilion Paper people drawn to this Little Desolate Village was indeed limited.

Even more regrettable was that the military had only given Lu Ran seven days for his experience.

As soon as the allotted time arrived, the Li brothers teleported the group directly back to Stone City, personally escorting them out of the Demon Cave.

They didn't give Lu Ran a second to spare!

Lu Ran was distressed.

After all, he was Da Xia's genius, to be so shunned...

On the afternoon they were driven out, Lu Ran and his company followed Chen Jingjing, catching a flight back to Beijing.

The moment they landed, Lu Ran immediately dialed Mother Dearest's phone number.

Perhaps Lu Ran's prayers were effective, for the call actually connected.

"Ranran?" came the gentle voice.

Qiao Wanjun's state was as usual—no sign of melancholy at all.

"Mom, I'm back in Beijing, just got off the plane," Lu Ran reported.

"Did you get what you wanted?" Qiao Wanjun asked softly.

Lu Ran was momentarily stunned.

That question...

After a moment, he replied, "Yeah, I gained a lot of experience. Now, I have more confidence when facing Vermilion Paper people."

We even encountered a River Realm Vermilion Paper person.

Sister Jingjing is so amazing, she took down the Evil Demon in one strike!"

"Hehe," Qiao Wanju chuckled, choosing not to respond further.

Lu Ran: "By the way, Mom, are you at home? Or at work?"

"Mom is quite busy and won't be able to accompany you these days," Qiao Wanju's voice held a hint of apology.

Lu Ran immediately said, "Are you at Jinghong Peak, Mom? Can I come to visit?"

"No need," came the unexpected and clear-cut response from Qiao Wanju.

As Lu Ran registered surprise, Qiao Wanju's tone softened, soothingly saying, "Ranran, Mom is quite busy right now. You and your teammates should relax a bit.

Or if you want to visit another Demon Cave, you can talk directly to Chen Jingjing, she'll arrange it for you."

Lu Ran: "Mom, I want to..."

"Hehe," Qiao Wanju chuckled dryly, teasingly saying, "Why, after visiting Yan Zhi Village, have you changed your tune?"

Becoming clingy?"

Lu Ran: "..."

Qiao Wanju's smile faded as she inquired, "Something happened?"

"Nothing, everything's good," Lu Ran immediately assured her, explaining, "I just wanted to see you."

"That's good. Another time, Ranran."

"Beep...beep...beep..." Lu Ran wished to say more, but the phone was already giving off a busy tone.

"What did the auntie say?" Jiang Ruyi asked.

Lu Ran shook his head, resigned: "She's too busy to let me visit."

Witnessing this, Chen Jingjing sighed internally.

After thinking it over, Lu Ran looked to Jiang Ruyi: "Would she be angry if I went to Jinghong Peak directly?"

Jiang Ruyi: "..."

You're asking me?

"It's best to get permission first," Chen Jingjing suddenly intervened, advising, "Don't act against Peak Master Qiao's wishes."

The use of the term "act against" was quite evocative.

It also reflected the status Qiao Wanju held in Chen Jingjing's eyes.

Lu Ran nodded and sighed, "Let's go home... wait a minute."

Lu Ran's face turned awkward, suddenly remembering something: "I don't have the house key."

Everyone: "..."

He wasn't having an easy time being a son.

Chen Jingjing timely offered, "Shall I arrange a hotel for you?"

"Yes, please!" Si Xianxian finally uttered eagerly, "Staying at a hotel is good, Lu Ran's house has deities, let's not disturb them."

"Mhm, that's true," Lu Ran agreed.

The group of four headed to the parking lot, retrieved the car they had left there, and quickly drove away from the airport.

Without accompanying their mother, Jiang and Lu benefited Si Xianxian the most.

Jiang Ruyi fulfilled her promise, accompanying Si Xianxian around Beijing for three days, also visiting the night market that Sister Xian'er longed for.

Lu Ran was cooperative, trying not to let his troubles dampen Si Xianxian's spirits.

On the twenty-ninth day of the lunar calendar, Lu Ran tried to call his mother again.

Qiao Wanju once again refused her son's visit, only reminding him to balance work with rest.

Lu Ran could only seek comfort in second best, offering solace to his mother over the phone, attempting some comfort.

To his mother's slight surprise, yet with a note of contentment, Lu Ran could sense her voice becoming even gentler.

Even so, she did not chat with Lu Ran for long, quickly ending the call.

It was clear she was truly busy.

Perhaps she was occupied with prayers and offerings, not daring to delay?

Who knew.

Holding his phone, Lu Ran silently bowed his head, a rebellious thought rising in his mind.

If only he possessed enough strength to confront Divine-Sword One face-to-face.

At least to understand the specific reason.

To spare his mother such distress and spared from public criticism.

Sigh...

Strength, oh strength...

While musing, Lu Ran found humor in his own thoughts.

The strength of Sword One's disciple Chen Jingjing, Lu Ran had seen for himself.

If even the disciple was so formidable, how powerful would Divine-Sword One be?

When would he himself be qualified to stand before the divine?

It was but a grand delusion.

The stronger Lu Ran's power became, and the more he encountered, the more insignificant he felt.

With a complex heart, Lu Ran led his two teammates onto the return train on the first day of the third lunar month.

After a short hour's journey, Jiang and Lu arrived home.

They lingered at the train station, seeing off the reluctant Si Xianxian, and only then left the station.

And so, the streets of Rain Alley City gained a mysterious couple.

Wearing hats and masks, concealed and snug as if shunning people, yet paradoxically strolling the streets.

"Did you call Aunt Si?" Jiang Ruyi asked quietly.

"Yeah, I called. Auntie's going to the station to pick up Sister Xian'er," Lu Ran said offhandedly, gazing at the horizon.

Today, Rain Alley City was blessed with rare sunshine.

Blue skies and white clouds, a warm spring breeze.

It was just a pity that Lu Ran was not in the mood to appreciate it.

Jiang Ruyi followed Lu Ran silently, eyes cast downward.

Lu Ran didn't know how to comfort his own mother, and Jiang Ruyi didn't know how to comfort him.

Until they arrived at the gate of Rain Alley Home Community, Jiang Ruyi halted her steps: "Go back, get some good rest."

"Come on, I'll walk you home and then come back," Lu Ran had no intention of going inside.

Jiang Ruyi, however, shook her head: "Go back.

Maybe meditating in front of the shrine will calm and steady your heart."

Lu Ran fell silent.

He said he didn't want his troubles to disturb others.

But how could Jiang Ruyi not notice Lu Ran's unusual demeanor these past few days?

Including the reluctant Si Xianxian, she probably didn't dare to throw a fit and refuse to leave, all because of Lu Ran's mood.

Jiang Ruyi levitated, surrounded by four White Jade Stones:

"Tomorrow, I'll come and cook you soup, how about that?"

"Sure!" Lu Ran agreed immediately.

Jiang Ruyi wore a mask, covering her face, but not the shining laughter in her eyes:

"Keep dreaming."

Lu Ran: ?

He watched the girl drift away, shaking his head with laughter, and turned to enter the complex.

"Meow?"

When Lu Ran opened the front door, a confused calico cat tilted its head atop the living room coffee table.

Lu Ran's departures usually lasted over twenty days, and this return was indeed quite early.

"Did you miss me?" Lu Ran gestured to the calico cat as he headed towards the small bedroom.

As he'd spent a few days in Beijing, naturally, there was no aggression emanating from Lu Ran.

The calico cat uncommonly approached, magnanimously deigning to allow someone to stroke it.

Yet, Lu Ran betrayed the calico cat's trust, scooping it up and beelining for the restroom.

The poor little creature was washed until it shook its head disorientedly.

It wasn't until Lu Ran wrapped it in a large towel and emerged from the bathroom that the calico cat still had curses mumbling from its mouth...

"Lord Immortal Goat."

Lu Ran rolled the big towel and, wrapping the cat in it, threw it on the small bed.

As he talked, he approached the shrine, hands pressed together, "Disciple can now activate the Vermilion Paper person sculpture.

But I wonder, to what realm can this Evil Sculpture be cultivated?"

"Buzz!"

Lu Ran's brain numbed, and he staggered.

All he felt was darkness before his eyes, and he found himself in the spirit world, standing before a colossal sculpture.

Evil Sculpture·Vermilion Paper person!

Even as a sculpture, the Vermilion Paper person lost none of its elegance—it was, in fact, even more stunning without the deathly pale paper complexion.

"Buzz~"

The Evil Sculpture was activated immediately, trembling with a hum.

Lu Ran looked up, watching the Vermilion Paper person statue grow larger, evidently advancing in realm.

Mist Realm... Stream Realm... River Realm!

Lu Ran felt much better, could this Evil Sculpture really reach the River Realm?

Could it continue? Could it reach Second Rank River Realm?... Well, alright, I'm overthinking.

"Still not enough," a deep, hoarse voice came from behind Lu Ran.

He turned around to see the flickering Black Fire Goat Head and those dead, horizontal pupils.

He understood what the divine being meant.

Vermilion Paper Evil Technique·Paper Mache was a technique equipped at the Third Rank of the River Realm.

With the current strength of the Evil Sculpture, naturally, Lu Ran couldn't learn it.

"The military only gave me seven day's cultivation time and wouldn't allow me to visit another village," Lu Ran justified himself.

"More effort is needed, nurture this lineage's Evil Sculpture to form as soon as possible," the Black Fire Goat Head left these words as its figure gradually faded.

Lu Ran pouted: "What if, on the fifteenth of this month, we have an all-ghosts' night..."

His words cut off abruptly as he slapped his own mouth.

Ptui, ptui, ptui, what a jinx!

Lu Ran turned back, looking up at the Vermilion Paper person Evil Sculpture.

Focus on learning all the Evil Techniques that should be learned.

For now, this will do. Next month, let Sister Jingjing contact the three Vermilion Paper people Demon Caves directly.

Kill off this side in seven days, move on to the next one, and on to the next!

I refuse to believe...

This bride, I must summon her!

Chapter 259: Beauties Ruyi

On the small bed in the bedroom, something seemed to be wriggling inside a rolled-up white bath towel.

After a while, a fuzzy little head finally poked out.

"Meow?" The little tabby cat blinked its eyes, seemingly puzzled.

Lu Ran stood silently in front of the Divine Shrine, motionless.

That wasn't particularly unusual, but what was key was the piece of red fabric over his head?

Vermilion Paper Evil Technique·Red Veil!

The little tabby cat naturally didn't understand anything about Chinese-style horror, but if it were a human seeing this bizarre scene, they would definitely have doubts swirling in their mind.

What kind of seventeen or eighteen-year-old lad would dress in a bride's veil and stand motionless in a room?

Was he possessed?

Suddenly, the Red Veil moved!

It fluttered without any wind, quietly lifting a corner to reveal Lu Ran's face underneath.

"Tsks tsk~" Lu Ran clicked his tongue in wonder as he controlled the Red Veil to slowly float up.

Kind of a feeling of doing whatever he wanted, huh?

With a thought, Lu Ran made the Red Veil roll up and fold into a strip of red fabric, which then blindfolded his eyes.

His right hand hung naturally at his side, his fingers gently waving.

What was eerie was that behind Lu Ran's head, the two ends of the red fabric automatically twisted together, forming a bow slowly.

It was as if an invisible figure was standing behind Lu Ran, helping him tie the red cloth.

"Perfect!"

Lu Ran nodded repeatedly, his mood getting better and better.

Could he use this Red Veil for blindfolding in the future?

Hmm... best not to be too presumptuous.

Indeed, the Evil Technique·Red Veil did have some defensive properties, but at its core, it was an offensive technique.

In other words, this piece of red fabric wasn't that sturdy, certainly not as reliable as the legitimate defensive techniques like the Night Charm Robe or the Red Wedding Dress.

If during his adventures, the Red Veil accidentally ripped, Lu Ran wouldn't know how to explain it to anyone.

Speaking of the Red Wedding Dress, Lu Ran felt a surge of excitement within him!

"Huh~"

As a surge of energy whirled, a Big Red Robe appeared on Lu Ran's body.

The base was red, embroidered with clouds and phoenixes.

Ancient charm and elegance, it can be described as exceptionally beautiful!

"Meow~" The little tabby cat blinked its eyes.

The ability of its master to "change outfits with one button" left the little guy absolutely stunned.

"You're right!" Lu Ran raised both hands, looking at the finely embroidered cloud patterns on the sleeves, "Brilliant!"

Brilliant indeed~"

"Meow?" Tabby cat was even more confused.

You can actually talk?

Lu Ran flicked the hem of his garment, and a gentle breeze brushed by as he strode towards the living room.

The little tabby cat wanted to follow and see.

However, it only had its little head poking out of the towel wrap while its petite body was still rolled up inside, unable to climb out.

Lu Ran, on the other hand, approached the floor-to-ceiling window and looked at the person in the mirror.

It must be said, the Evil Demon techniques of the Night Charm Clan and the Yan Zhi Clan were quite amenable to Lu Ran.

Whether it was the Night Charm Robe or the Red Wedding Dress, they were nominally for women, but Lu Ran wore them without any sense of inappropriateness.

Evil Technique-Night Charm Robe was a type of Night Clothes suitable for both men and women, with a bamboo hat and black veil to conceal, easier to wear without any pressure.

As for the Big Red Robe in front of him, although not unisex, it was a hit with both men and women!

"Good fellow~" Lu Ran sighed inwardly, admiring the person in the mirror.

He had never felt himself to be so impressive, so radiant and attractive!

But, it felt like something was missing?

Right, a phoenix crown!

Well... it doesn't matter, it can conceal.

Lu Ran raised a hand and with a whirling of energy in his palm, as his hand swept over the top of his head, a Red Veil draped over his head.

Is this even possible?

Wearing this outfit, sitting at the doorstep in the dead of night...

I could literally scare a passerby to death!

"On the eighteenth of the first lunar month, an auspicious day for the Gao Liang calendars~"

Lu Ran hummed a tune, feeling great as he took off the Red Veil.

The next moment, a surge of energy appeared at his fingertips.

Vermilion Paper Evil Technique·Paper Hand!

This technique allowed the Yan Zhi's fingertips to be extremely sharp, capable of cutting and tearing apart the target.

The Yan Zhi Clan didn't often use this technique in battle.

But when the Yan Zhi people captured humans and tortured them, the turnout rate of this technique was extremely high!

Yan Zhi often used these sharp "Paper Hands" to cruelly rip apart human bodies and sever human limbs, turning them into human sticks.

Looking back, these Evil Techniques in the world are naturally named by the Human Clan.

Lu Ran felt that the name of this technique was not quite accurate; calling it "Paper Armor" or "Paper Point" might be a closer fit?

"Zzzt!"

Lu Ran pinched the corner of the Red Veil in one hand, holding it in front of his eyes, and his fingertips slid across the top of the Red Veil.

The Red Veil was instantly cut open, and the lower half fluttered towards the ground.

"Put on the red attire, an inch of longing with each cut, hastily tailor~"

Lu Ran sang softly, watching the Red Veil silently turn into mist.

Indeed, it's not a defensive technique, therefore it's not up to par.

Or perhaps the perspective should change, is Evil Technique·Paper Hand too sharp?

Lu Ran looked at his own fingers.

He didn't have the habit of keeping fingernails long.

Including the energy surging at his fingertips, it wasn't shaped like fingernails, just covering them.

But this technique was so magical, so sharp!

Lu Ran admired it for a good while before canceling Paper Hand.

"Hu~"

Once again, he lifted his sleeves, and the cuff suddenly expanded a little.

Vermilion Paper Evil Technique-Yan Zhi Sleeve!

As is well known, all the Divine Techniques and Evil Techniques in the world, no matter in what form they appear, are essentially composed of energy.

This Yan Zhi Sleeve is capable of storing Divine/Evil Techniques within the sleeve, converting them into energy.

It's another form of defensive technique.

So here's the question: A fair number of Evil Demons are also made of energy, can they be absorbed with a Yan Zhi Sleeve?

The answer is... no!

Unlike techniques, Evil Demons are creatures with life and souls that cannot be converted into energy.

"I'll wait for the day when you can embrace all rivers." Lu Ran rolled up his sleeves, filled with anticipation.

The potential of Evil Technique-Yan Zhi Sleeve was immense!

Lu Ran had heard that those Yan Zhi of the greatest power were able to not only revert all the techniques in the world back to their original form and turn them into energy when employing the Yan Zhi Sleeve, but they could also directly digest and absorb them!

Four words described it: incredibly powerful!

However, Lu Ran's Yan Zhi Sleeve was still just River Grade, and he could not achieve such profound and exquisite use.

"Meow! Meow meow meow! Meow!"

Suddenly, the room filled with the grouchy meowing of the little tabby cat, a random cacophony.

Lu Ran came back to his senses, only then realizing that he had wrapped up the kitty into a roll and left it on the bed.

He immediately canceled all Evil Techniques and quickly returned to the small bedroom.

Interestingly, the tabby cat that had been shouting and yelling just a moment ago, upon seeing Lu Ran, started to sound much more pleasant.

Suddenly it began to "yelp yelp yelp" and whimper.

Just... got twisted up?

Lu Ran sat down on the bed with a plop and unraveled the bath towel.

The little tabby cat "whooshed" out, not looking back.

Lu Ran just "mehed" and did it straightforwardly.

Poor little tabby cat~

To be played with by a certain evil little lamb, right in the palm of their hand.

"Meow~" Tabby immediately turned its head and scampered back.

"Don't say another word, sis cat, attend to me in bed!"

Lu Ran hugged the freshly washed, sweet-smelling little fellow, using it as a pillow.

He flopped down on the bed, letting the little tabby cat lick his cheek, and heaved a deep sigh of relief.

Lu Ran had tried and got a rough idea of each of the Yan Zhi Clan's Evil Techniques.

Paper Hand, Red Veil, Red Wedding Dress, Yan Zhi Sleeve.

Actually, there was one Evil Technique Lu Ran had not yet tested, which was suitable for the River Realm·First Rank - Paper Substitute.

This technique was ineffective for Lu Ran.

All substitute techniques, at their core, trade energy for injuries.

The problem was, Lu Ran was not a being transformed from energy; he was a flesh and blood human.

If Lu Ran got slashed by a blade, using Paper Substitute afterward would still leave a wound on his real body.

However, this technique wasn't entirely useless for Lu Ran.

He could preemptively take action!

He could choose to leave a substitute beforehand, to confuse the enemy and draw enemy fire.

"Hmm, right..."

Lu Ran pondered in his mind, petting the little tabby in his arms, and gradually drifted to sleep.

This sleep was deep and oblivious.

When Lu Ran opened his eyes again, night had fallen.

Actually, he was awakened by the aroma of food.

Lu Ran sat up in a haze, took a while to react, and suddenly felt a chill!

Was there someone in the house?

In the silent darkness of the small bedroom, the little tabby cat had vanished too!

You couldn't blame Lu Ran for reacting like this.

Just a few days ago, he was slaying demons and exorcising evil in Yan Zhi Village, with all sorts of elements of Chinese horror freshly imprinted in his mind.

And during the day, he had tested a series of Yan Zhi Evil Techniques.

Now at night, was the bride coming to knock on his door?

And made me a meal?

Lu Ran quickly got up and walked towards the doorway.

It was only after he opened the door that he reacted.

Wait! Wasn't this the smell of beef and goji berry soup?

Lu Ran: "..."

He looked at the lit living room and immediately breathed a sigh of relief.

If it were truly the Yan Zhi coming to the door, they supposedly wouldn't have turned on the lights.

Besides, there's a Divine Shrine Divine Sculpture at home, how could an Evil Demon possibly enter?

"Slap." Lu Ran smacked his forehead, chastising himself for being so muddle-headed.

Arriving at the kitchen, he indeed saw a tall figure.

She had long hair draped over her shoulders, wearing jeans and a light-colored shirt.

Simple attire, yet it did not hide her youthful beauty, and those jeans highlighted her slender figure.

One hand stirred the soup in the casserole gently, and in her other arm must be the little tabby cat.

Because a cat's tail protruded from her side, twitching back and forth.

The warm scene captivated Lu Ran.

"Hmm?" Jiang Ruyi sensed something and turned her head towards the door, "You woke up?"

"Ah." Lu Ran took a step forward, leaning against the door frame, "How did you get in?"

Jiang Ruyi smiled playfully, a mischievous light in her eyes: "Guess?"

Lu Ran thought about it and figured it must be the Divine Technique·Jade Talisman Formation.

When Jiang Ruyi activated this technique, the Jade Tokens surrounding her could naturally appear inside the house through the security door.

Then pushing down on the doorknob using the Jade Token was a piece of cake.

Hmm... it seemed Jade Talisman Sect had much in common with Prisoner Demon Sect.

Both expert at window-picking and lock-breaking~

Lu Ran: "I thought you'd come tomorrow... no, didn't you say I was wishful thinking?"

Jiang Ruyi glanced at Lu Ran with a light, teasing flare: "You haven't eaten all day, have you?"

Lu Ran smiled: "Clearly, as beautiful as you are kind-hearted."

"Go." Jiang Ruyi spat lightly at Lu Ran, "Go wash your hands."

Lu Ran, however, didn't move from his spot.

He had just showered before sleeping, perfectly clean.

"Meow~ Meow!" The kitten in the girl's embrace kept struggling, as if it wanted to dive head-first into the casserole.

Jiang Ruyi continued to cradle the mischievous little fellow with one hand, turning back to attentively watch over the steaming casserole.

Lu Ran watched this warm scene, looking at the wonderful figure.

Gradually, he stepped forward.

Jiang Ruyi was aware of the approaching footsteps; her tone filled with reproach: "I told you to go..."

Jiang Ruyi froze in her tracks, and her words came to an abrupt stop.

Because Lu Ran had wrapped his arms around her from behind.

He gently inhaled her hair's fragrance, the faint scent of jasmine temporarily masking the aroma of food, giving Lu Ran an incomparable sense of tranquility.

Jiang Ruyi's cheeks flushed, her eyelids drooping, she softly said, "Time... time to eat."

But Lu Ran turned her around to face him.

This time, he did not intend to sneak up on her.

He was going to be straightforward!

Jiang Ruyi's face was red like a tempting peach, her eyes darting away in panic.

"Meow?" In the beauty's arms, the little tabby cat raised its head curiously, watching its master.

Lu Ran stretched out his hands, cradling her flushed cheeks.

"Meow~" Suddenly, the tabby cat stretched out one paw, pressing it against Lu Ran's cheek, stopping his next move.

Lu Ran: "..."

You little thing,

You really are an interruption!

Chapter 260: Those Flowers

The kitchen was warmly lit.

At the dining table, a young man and woman were seated.

Lu Ran was devouring his meal, occasionally shooting disgruntled glances at the Li Hua cat comfortably nestled in the girl's lap across the table.

Jiang Ruyi had a slight smile on her face as she played with the cat's paws.

It was precisely these paws!

Lu Ran was very uncomfortable.

It was these very paws that had landed on his face, disrupting his spellcasting.

What's worse was that Ruyi had snapped out of it and fled, claiming she needed to wash her hands.

And then... there was no "then."

"Focus on your food, and stop scaring it," Jiang Ruyi suddenly spoke, her tone carrying a hint of reproach.

Lu Ran: "..."

"Meow~" The Li Hua mewed as it nibbled on beef, cooing contently.

It was comfortably nestled in the arms of the girl, earning its meal simply by letting its paws be played with.

Such royal treatment it was receiving.

Lu Ran grew more vexed.

"Hehe~" Jiang Ruyi finally lifted her eyes, unable to stop herself from chuckling as she glanced at Lu Ran, "Eat up, stop staring at Li Hua."

Lu Ran pouted and dug back into his meal without a word.

Jiang Ruyi gently pinched the meat pad under the cat's paw and inquired, "What are your plans for the next half-month?"

Lu Ran shrugged, "Cultivate, I suppose. Won't be going down to the Demon Cave for a while."

Month after month, Lu Ran had been non-stop.

He wanted to cultivate at home for a few solid days.

Besides, this was a golden opportunity!

Deng Tianchang's trio had gone down to the Demon Cave to train, and Sister Xian'er, that tag-along, had been sent back home, too.

Lu Ran planned to take this chance to spend some alone time with Jiang Ruyi.

Watch movies, stroll around the streets—just like ordinary people, these were things Lu Ran wanted too.

"That's fine," Jiang Ruyi nodded lightly, "I'll go back to cultivate as well."

Suddenly, Lu Ran said, "It's late, don't go home. Stay here tonight."

"Ah?" Jiang Ruyi's heart raced, and she looked up at Lu Ran.

Visibly, her fair cheeks flushed again.

Lu Ran, of course, was more than happy to see her blush.

She was so easily embarrassed.

Hmm...quite fun~

Delightful to watch, absolutely delightful!

"No, I can't," Jiang Ruyi lowered her head and whispered softly, "My parents will worry."

Lu Ran laughed, "But you're a River Realm powerhouse, what's there for uncle and auntie to worry about?"

Jiang Ruyi hesitated for a moment, then added, "I need to go back. I have to offer my respects to the deities early in the morning."

Lu Ran thought for a moment, then decided not to press her.

Respecting the deities was a top-priority!

If believers were to train in the Demon Cave, it would be fine.

But when resting at home, which believer wouldn't kneel before the shrine and offer prayers?

Probably, Lu Ran was the only one who slept whenever he wanted, meditated whenever he chose to.

"Ah..." Lu Ran sighed inwardly.

Cats causing delays, even the gods were causing delays!

Quite annoying.

Jiang Ruyi noticed Lu Ran silently devouring his meal and softly broke the silence, "Is it tasty?"

"Uhuh!" Lu Ran nodded vigorously, "Tasty."

Rice, stir-fried vegetables, and beef with goji soup.

The girl's cooking skills were quite impressive, far surpassing canned food.

Jiang Ruyi carefully observed Lu Ran, and seeing that he wasn't angry, felt slightly relieved.

She picked up her chopsticks and tasted the vegetables.

She'd just learned this simple dish from her mother at noon.

Hmm...it tasted pretty good.

Jiang Ruyi placed her chopsticks down and nodded quietly to herself.

She'd learn a few more dishes at home and cook for him.

"Meow~"

Li Hua meowed, its tiny belly rounded from eating, and as drowsiness took over, it found a comfortable position in the girl's arms.

Half an hour later, after Lu Ran had finished his meal and cleaned up the kitchen, he took the keys and escorted Jiang Ruyi home.

Her place wasn't far from his—just a fifteen-minute walk.

Her residential area had a poetic name—Beside the Water.

Together, they walked side by side.

Rain Alley City had a small population, and during the night, the streets were eerily quiet.

This actually suited Lu Ran, who didn't have to worry about being recognized.

His arms hanging naturally by his sides, he stealthily reached out and gently gripped the girl's delicate hand.

Jiang Ruyi allowed him to lead her in silent tandem.

In the spring night, a gentle breeze caressed her long, black hair.

Stars twinkled in the night sky, with a crescent moon hanging.

The dim streetlights cast long shadows of them on the ground.

Jiang Ruyi hadn't realized how swiftly fifteen minutes could pass.

When she came back to her senses, she had already entered her residential area and was standing in front of her own building.

"Best head back," Lu Ran gently squeezed her palm.

"Mm," Jiang Ruyi finally withdrew her hand and whispered, "Goodnight."

Lu Ran watched as she entered the building and then suddenly remembered something: "By the way, Ruyi."

"Hmm?" Jiang Ruyi halted and turned around.

"Here." Lu Ran fished out a key from his pocket.

"What is this?" Jiang Ruyi asked, puzzled.

Lu Ran grinned, "My house keys, to spare you having to use 'Divine Technique' to sneakily pick locks anymore."

"Go away," Jiang Ruyi spat at Lu Ran before turning to leave.

Lu Ran quickly followed up, stuffing the key into her jeans pocket just before the elevator doors closed:

"My mistake, my mistake, don't be mad."

Jiang Ruyi "hmmphed" once but didn't pull out the key, stepping into the elevator instead.

Lu Ran stood outside the elevator, and just before the doors closed, he asked, "Will there be dinner for me tomorrow?"

Jiang Ruyi rolled her eyes at him, "Dream on."

Lu Ran awkwardly scratched his head, "Oh."

As the elevator doors closed firmly and it began to ascend, Jiang Ruyi took out the key and held it in her soft palm, examining it.

She slowly closed her hand around the key, her pretty face slightly blushing, whispered to herself,

"There could be lunch."

Meanwhile, just outside the residential complex.

Lu Ran, looking at the crescent moon, walked through the quiet streets of Rain Alley.

The spring breeze was soothing, and the night was serene.

Listening to the sound of insects, he felt almost as if he had stolen a day's reprieve from a busy life.

Unconsciously, he reached a desolate place.

Looking at the dark abandoned housing complex, Lu Ran felt no fear and walked in.

It had been a long time since he had visited his father.

Tonight, there seemed to be a lot to talk about.

Lu Ran confidently made his way into a building and headed for the rooftop.

However, as he reached the seventh floor, he suddenly stopped.

Sniff~

Lu Ran sniffed the air.

Was that... the scent of camellias?

Lu Ran was slightly taken aback and hurriedly made his way to the rooftop.

Not far from a stone railing, a figure clad in a windbreaker stood quietly.

"Sister?" Lu Ran called out softly.

The woman turned her head, her sharp eyes softening slightly.

"What a coincidence, huh?" Lu Ran was pleasantly surprised.

Seeing Lu Ran's delighted expression, Deng Yuxiang's lips curled slightly.

Under the moonlight, her stunning features were breathtakingly beautiful.

"It's been a while!" Lu Ran approached quickly.

Deng Yuxiang turned her head to gaze southward, towards the bustling Wu Lie River, "Yes, it's been a while.

You haven't been here in a long time."

Lu Ran was surprised and moved closer to her, "Do you come often?"

Deng Yuxiang nodded slightly, "This is where I advanced to Jiang Realm.

I've also been to the bridgehead, riverside, or other building rooftops, but the views of Wu Lie River from those spots just don't feel right."

"I see," Lu Ran said thoughtfully, "After advancing to Jiang Realm, do you need to regularly consolidate your mental state?"

Deng Yuxiang shook her head, "No, it's just that I like the view."

Lu Ran: "..."

"Hehe~" Deng Yuxiang chuckled.

Seeing Lu Ran's deflated appearance, she couldn't help but stretch out her hand to lightly ruffle his hair.

Lu Ran quickly brushed away the Jiang Realm Great Power's invasive hand, "Haven't we not met for nearly three months?"

"I've seen your performance on Heavenly Pride, very impressive," Deng Yuxiang shifted the topic instead of responding.

Right away, Lu Ran said, "Uncle Sun said that you were watching from the top of Wu Lie Building!

I had to perform well!"

Deng Yuxiang shook her head, "You're too small, I couldn't see clearly."

Lu Ran: ? ? ?

What kind of statement was that!

Deng Yuxiang smiled as she watched Lu Ran, not hiding the admiration in her heart: "But I watched your channel, it was marvelous."

"That's more like it," Lu Ran muttered before asking, "So, sis, what've you been busy with lately?"

Deng Yuxiang paused for a moment before slowly saying, "Cultivating."

Lu Ran looked intently at Deng Yuxiang, a hint of concern shadowing his features, "Is there something bothering you?"

"Hehe." Deng Yuxiang chuckled, void of mirth.

It had been several months since their last meeting, and the time had stretched long.

But within just a few exchanges, Lu Ran had made her recall many past events.

With him, she felt like she couldn't hide anything.

Including the very critical matter of her advancement.

Even she had been lost in prolonged confusion, uncertain of how she should advance.

Instead, it was Lu Ran who helped her unearth her inner tenacity, clarified her thoughts, and escorted her into Jiang Realm.

"Sis?"

Looking at Lu Ran's concerned face, Deng Yuxiang softly said, "What, planning to solve my troubles?"

Lu Ran turned around, leaning back against the railing of the rooftop, "Might as well try, right?"

Deng Yuxiang pondered for a moment before speaking softly, "North Wind City wants to call me over."

"The deity?" Lu Ran raised an eyebrow slightly.

Deng Yuxiang shook her head, "No, North Wind City.

At my age, achieving such accomplishments has caught the attention of some seniors who wish to call me over."

Lu Ran nodded, "To guide your cultivation, right? Isn't that a good thing?"

Deng Yuxiang lifted a leg and rested it on the railing, pointing toward the rushing waters of Wu Lie River,

"But my roots are here."

"You don't need a flash of inspiration for minor rank advancements, just keep your heart here."

Before she could reply, Lu Ran added, "Going out to receive guidance from a master, and with access to abundant cultivation resources in North Wind City, you could power through the levels! It'd be fantastic!"

Deng Yuxiang gazed at the river, a trace of doubt clouding her eyes, "But once I go, I don't know when I'll be able to return. This place..."

"Don't you have me?"

"You?"

"Yes," Lu Ran grinned, "I'm here too, this is also my home."

Deng Yuxiang quietly viewed Lu Ran, her gaze flickering slightly.

"What's the matter, you don't trust me?" Lu Ran pretended to be upset, "Hey, I am the celebrated Heavenly Pride of Da Xia, ranked seventh!"

"That is true," Deng Yuxiang finally responded, nodding slightly and uttered a word, "Ran Mei."

Lu Ran shrugged, "Then take a look~"

Suddenly, Deng Yuxiang reached out her hand.

Lu Ran didn't understand, but within moments, he felt a gust of wind rush toward him.

He quickly dodged to the side, hearing a sharp 'snap' as Deng Yuxiang grasped the Night-slaying Great Saber that flew toward them!

She turned to Lu Ran, a slight smile on her lips: "Come on, Ran Mei!

Let me witness your prowess, the seventh of Da Xia."

"No, no, no!" Lu Ran waved his hands frantically, "I didn't bring a saber today."

Deng Yuxiang's eyes narrowed slightly: "You are the saber."

Lu Ran was dumbfounded!

It's got to be you, Big Nightmare!

Just seeing me once to hit me once, huh?

He hurriedly retreated, "Sis! No... not like this, you're about to travel far, let's talk some more!"

"Shh..." Deng Yuxiang closed her eyes and tilted her head slightly, "Listen."

Lu Ran was almost in tears.

No! I don't want to listen!

"Whoosh~"

Deng Yuxiang suddenly lunged at Lu Ran, a faint smile playing around her lips:

"The sound of the wind."