

Old Gods 331

Chapter 331: Auspicious Colors in Thousands of Strips

The sky was gradually brightening.

The old town of Rain Alley City appeared even more desolate and bleak.

In the warm large bedroom, a man and a woman lay on the soft bed, soundly asleep.

"Mm..."

Lu Ran slowly woke up, emitting a vague nasal sound.

He rubbed his bleary eyes and turned his head to see the beautiful Ruyi sleeping peacefully beside him.

She lay on her side on the bed, one hand resting beside the pillow.

Her skin as white as snow, and the glossy little red bean on her bracelet, looked particularly well-matched.

The more he looked, the more entranced Lu Ran became.

It was because the world was filled with endless suffering that Lu Ran cherished every bit of beauty even more.

The morning sunlight, the return of people on rainy nights.

The warm dishes in the insulated box, the pretty face sleeping soundly beside the pillow.

Ultimately, Lu Ran couldn't resist the risk of disturbing her beautiful dream and leaned over to kiss her delicate lips.

"Mm..."

Jiang Ruyi pursed her lips as if she might wake up.

Lu Ran immediately stopped his mischief but saw her turn over and fall back into deep sleep.

He breathed a sigh of relief and slowly sat up.

Looking around, the room was a mess with displaced furniture and clothes scattered everywhere.

Lu Ran: "..."

Last night, he indeed had a bit of a temper.

Trying to act aloof!

Ignoring me!

Only sending me a couple of words as if throwing scraps to me!

Thinking back to the absurdity of last night, Lu Ran held his forehead and rubbed his temples.

Moments later, he tiptoed out of bed and quietly left the master bedroom.

However, when Lu Ran had finished freshening up and stood in front of the kitchen fridge, he realized the problem.

Over two months ago, when Lu Ran had left home, he had emptied the fridge.

What ingredients could there be?

Even if there were, they would have gone bad.

There were still some canned foods in the house within their expiry.

If it were up to Lu Ran himself, he wouldn't mind having luncheon meat for breakfast, but Ruyi was still around.

"Let's go out to buy some," Lu Ran said as he closed the empty fridge, returned to the small bedroom, put on his hat and mask, and fully armed, he left the house.

The early autumn morning was slightly chilly.

As soon as Lu Ran stepped out of the apartment building, he felt the chill hitting him.

"Ah~~~"

Lu Ran stretched fiercely, but his movement stiffened.

After a night of wind and rain, the sky was clear.

It was rare for Rain Alley City to have such clear skies, and far in the distance, the clouds were lined up in stripes.

The sun had not risen yet, but the rosy clouds were out first.

The beautiful colors dyed the striped clouds, bizarre yet beautiful.

Lu Ran lowered his arms and gazed transfixed at the distant sky.

On the roadside, an elderly man walking his bird slowly passed by, curiously eyeing the youth.

The more Lu Ran looked, the brighter his eyes became.

For some reason, his expression even bore a hint of reverence.

A flash of inspiration surged into his mind, but it wasn't clear enough, leaving Lu Ran feeling like he couldn't quite grasp or catch it.

"Buzz~"

Inside Lu Ran's small bedroom, the Dawn Blade gently trembled and floated up from the rack.

The Dawn Blade didn't leave through the door but opened the window of the small bedroom and flew directly out.

It circled around the side of the residential building, tracing a beautiful arc, ultimately flying to Lu Ran's side.

"Clap."

Lu Ran grabbed the hilt of the blade: "You take a look too."

"Sigh~"

A shadowy figure spread from the Dawn Blade, bearing the same appearance as Lu Ran, standing shoulder to shoulder with him.

"Eiyo!" Not far away, the slowly meandering bird-walking old man shuddered in fright.

"Eiyo~eiyo~" The myna in the cage mimicked, bouncing back and forth.

The old man blinked hard, realizing this wasn't his hallucination.

People living in this world were naturally prepared for all sorts of magical techniques.

The old man completely stopped walking, curiously observing the two figures, one solid and one ethereal.

Lu Ran furrowed his brows and spoke softly, "I always feel like I've been enlightened, but I'm still confused."

The spirit of the Dawn Blade, looking at the beautiful horizon, didn't speak, but its words clearly imprinted in Lu Ran's mind:

"It has an indescribable charm."

Lu Ran carefully observed the rosy clouds at the horizon, watching the colorful striped clouds:

"Rosy clouds stretch miles, auspicious colors in thousands."

The spirit of the Dawn Blade seemed a bit stunned, pondering his master's words: "Rosy clouds stretch miles, auspicious colors in thousands..."

Man and blade spirit stood together, until the sun gradually rose, and the morning glow quietly faded.

The beautiful scenes of the world always vanish in an instant.

Yet, both master and blade remained motionless in front of the apartment building.

After a long time, Lu Ran turned to look at the blade spirit, his face showing a probing expression.

The blade spirit hung its head a little, seeming somewhat guilty.

"It's okay," Lu Ran weighed the Dawn Blade, "This is the Divine Weapon Domain; it's not so easy to comprehend."

The blade spirit nodded slightly and merged back into the blade.

"Let's go back, and be gentle, don't wake up the lady," Lu Ran released the handle of the Dawn Blade.

The Divine Weapon returned the way it had come, leaving a trail of golden-red rosy clouds, like a soft light silk.

"Ho!" The old man with the walking stick clicked his tongue in amazement.

"Ho~ho~" The myna in the cage opened and closed its beak.

Lu Ran: "..."

We rarely see the old folks, why did one pop up today?

I'm here racking my brain, and you two are being jesters?

Lu Ran lowered his hat brim and quickly walked out of the community.

When he returned home, his bag was filled with millet porridge, steamed buns, tea eggs, and several side dishes.

Everything was quiet inside; was the beautiful Ruyi still asleep?

Perhaps she was too tired from last night.

Thinking this, Lu Ran felt particularly good and hurried to the kitchen.

He placed the porridge and buns in the steamer to keep them warm, then approached the firmly closed door of the master bedroom, listening carefully with his ears.

Using his keen hearing, Lu Ran further confirmed that the person inside was sleeping sweetly, breathing long and rhythmically.

Lu Ran felt even better~

This time, I woke up first!

I even went out to buy breakfast.

We need not say more, I'm way ahead of you...

"Clearing the clouds in the sky, as beautiful as blue velvet~"

Humming a little tune, Lu Ran went to the small bedroom, casually summoning.

On the wall, the Dawn Blade automatically flew down and fell into Lu Ran's hand.

He went to the window, looking up at the blue sky.

Striped clouds still lingered in the sky, Lu Ran slowly closed his eyes, his fingers gently caressing the blade of the Dawn Blade, reminiscing about the scene of the rising sun.

In fact, the scene from this morning had surprised Lu Ran.

Having traveled far and wide for so long, he had seen many extraordinary sights.

Yet this morning's scene had particularly touched him.

Unfortunately, he hadn't caught that fleeting inspiration.

"So, what exactly is your Divine Weapon Domain?"

Lu Ran murmured softly, his fingertips gently brushing the cold blade.

"It must be related to that scene!" Lu Ran was certain, "Otherwise, I wouldn't have that unique psychological feeling."

Lu Ran was desperately eager to possess the Divine Weapon Domain.

As everyone knows, a divine weapon with a domain and one without are two entirely different existences.

His own mother had proven this.

Nowadays, she could wield the Dawn Blade as she pleased just by grasping it.

Divine Weapon sounds pleasant.

But in Qiao Wanjun's hands, it's merely an enslaved tool.

She had also suggested that once the Divine Weapon comprehended its domain, she would probably find it hard to wield the Dawn Blade.

This meant that the Dawn Blade, with its Divine Weapon Domain, would experience a tremendous increase in power, akin to a leap across great boundaries!

Not to mention, how sharp the Dawn Blade would be then, and what terrifying domain effect it would possess!

Lu Ran kept his eyes tightly closed, deeply recalling the painting of "Rosy clouds stretch miles, auspicious colors in thousands."

After an unknown duration...

Suddenly, a pair of hands reached from behind, encircling his front.

Lu Ran's heart startled, his body instinctively tensing up!

Ever since he activated the Evil Dog Evil Sculpture, he had never been sneak-attacked again.

Lu Ran hadn't expected to be so engrossed!

As he came to his senses, his perception instantly came online.

He felt the soft touch from behind and the faint scent of jasmine lingering at his nose...

"Awake?" Lu Ran slowly turned around, looking at the girl.

It was Jiang Ruyi with a look of grievance, her eyes deep, gazing up at him.

Lu Ran was stunned!

For a moment, he was dazed as if he had seen an enchanting Evil Mirror Demon.

Goodness~

Did the beautiful Ruyi have this side to her?

It looked, well... tempting to tease her.

Stabbing her heart with a blade, offering her soul to the lord of evil...

Jiang Ruyi bit her lower lip, staring at Lu Ran for a long time, then said softly, "You're bullying me."

Lu Ran: ???

No!

Do you have mind-reading powers?

"Ah? I... Ah?" Lu Ran flustered, hastily handed off the Dawn Blade, then realizing something, exclaimed, "Ah!"

Immediately, he wrapped his arms around his girlfriend, repeatedly consoling her, "I was wrong."

There's a cause for every effect!

It all started with that cold, formal "congratulations."

After apologizing and coaxing for quite some time, Lu Ran finally took her to breakfast together.

The morning meal was ready on the kitchen table.

They ate silently.

In between, Lu Ran actively picked up a tea egg, peeled it, and handed it over.

Seeing Lu Ran's cautious demeanor, Jiang Ruyi couldn't help but smile and glared at him:

"Don't bully me again in the future."

Lu Ran smirked a little, "Then you should pay more attention to me, don't be so hurtful."

Jiang Ruyi opened her mouth as if to say something, ultimately lowering her head and murmuring softly,

"Okay."

"Shall I contact the city and school later, and we go collect the reward?" Lu Ran probed.

"Mm." Jiang Ruyi gently nodded, picking up the tea egg.

Lu Ran breathed a sigh of relief.

Fortunately, his girlfriend was gentle enough and seemed not really angry but more embarrassed?

Lu Ran continued, "During the day, I'll go to the banks of the Wu Lie River to seek enlightenment, and you can practice at the shrine.

I'm at the River Realm·Fifth Rank; I don't need to train, but it's different for you, don't delay."

"I know." Jiang Ruyi's eyes carried a hint of seriousness.

She desperately longed for strength.

Not only to protect herself but also to keep up with Lu Ran.

Jiang Ruyi was very aware that to stay by Lu Ran's side, she had to continually become stronger!

Before Lu Ran's pilgrimage, she was a rank higher than him.

But now, returning from the pilgrimage, Lu Ran had unbelievably advanced to a rank higher than hers!

Such a terrifying growth rate even made Jiang Ruyi feel a bit panicked.

How hard must she work to always be by his side?

"Eat, stop staring at me."

Lu Ran's voice was gentle as he picked up a small steamed bun and brought it to his girlfriend's mouth.

"Who's looking at you." Jiang Ruyi averted her gaze, speaking softly, nibbling on the bun.

Lu Ran: "..."

Goodness~

Still haven't calmed down?

Just letting me hold this bun up like this forever?

Chapter 332: Give the world a little shock

The sun and the moon took their turns, and it was the middle of August again.

It was another evening.

A young man with two swords on his back stood on the abandoned rooftop of a residential building near the Wu Lie River, his hands propping himself up against the stone railing as he gazed into the roaring Wu Lie River.

The longing in his eyes was like that of a wife looking out to sea for her husband's return.

From the 4th to the 14th of August.

Lu Ran's heart had gone from full of expectation to a complete stillness.

It shouldn't be like this...

The understanding in his heart was supposed to be correct.

Initially, when he had advanced from Stream Realm·Fifth Rank to River Realm, it had already been clear that his insight hadn't strayed from the path.

Moreover, when Deng Yuxiang had advanced from River Realm·Fifth Rank to River Realm, she had used this same understanding.

Why then?

Why wouldn't the gate to the River Realm open for him?

Don't tell me that this thing is a one-time deal.

How could that be possible?

So, was his understanding still not profound enough?

"Ah..." Lu Ran sighed deeply, lifting his head to look at the overcast sky.

After a while, Lu Ran reached into his pocket and took out his phone.

He scrolled through his contacts and his gaze stopped on three characters: Big Nightmare.

Lu Ran hesitated for a moment but eventually made the call.

Unexpectedly, the call connected.

Lu Ran raised his eyebrows slightly and waited patiently; after a moment, a familiar voice came from the other side:

"Little Lu Ran?"

"Sister Yuxiang," Lu Ran called out.

There was silence on the other end of the line for a moment before she spoke again, "Why did you suddenly think to call me?"

Lu Ran: "Have you been doing well recently?"

Deng Yuxiang's words were brief: "Cultivating, preparing for battles."

"Hmm..."

"What's wrong?" Big Nightmare's voice carried a hint of concern.

"I've advanced to River Realm·Fifth Rank."

"Oh? So soon?"

Lu Ran spoke softly, "I'm at the Wu Lie River bank, standing right where you once stood."

Deng Yuxiang's eyes shimmered with a trace of reminiscence as she spoke softly, "Trying to advance to Jiang Realm."

"That's right," Lu Ran lowered his head and kicked the stone railing, "I've been watching for ten days with no sign of anything."

"Hehe~" She chuckled lightly, "Seems I was luckier than you.

When I advanced, I had a teacher to guide me, but you don't."

Lu Ran rolled his eyes: "Doesn't your heart ache saying that?"

"Ha ha ha ha~" Deng Yuxiang laughed heartily, utterly uninhibited.

He confirmed it, some people really don't feel guilty.

What Lu Ran didn't know was that it had been a long time since Deng Yuxiang last laughed.

For a good while, Deng Yuxiang finally restrained her laughter and teased, "Do you want me to give you some pointers?"

Lu Ran pursed his lips, correcting her, "It's reviewing!"

Deng Yuxiang spoke as though it was inconvenient for her, "Alright, first call me master and let's hear it."

Lu Ran's face darkened, "Do you have no shame?"

Deng Yuxiang huffed, "At one point, I did call Master Ran, you know."

Lu Ran said gruffly, "So now you've been wronged?"

Deng Yuxiang's laughter was full and warm, "Call."

Lu Ran: "Meh~"

Deng Yuxiang: "..."

After some back and forth, Miss Deng's mini-class finally began.

Lu Ran put a foot up on the railing, looking towards the distant river water, trying to recall past lessons and gain new insights.

It was when Deng Yuxiang said something that Lu Ran suddenly realized a problem.

All this time, his focus had been on the surging Wu Lie River.

But what he really should be paying attention to was the Rain Alley City, the world around him?

After Deng Yuxiang finished explaining, she asked, "What do you think? Any ideas?"

Lu Ran pondered for a moment, then said, "Not sure, I'll give it a try."

"Good luck," Deng Yuxiang said softly.

"Sis."

"Hmm?"

"Remember, when you go to challenge it, you must tell me in advance!" Lu Ran's voice was unusually stern.

Hearing this, warmth filled Deng Yuxiang's heart.

Ever since she came to Beifeng City, she hadn't laughed as freely as just now.

The dark clouds overhead and the uncertain path of life and death had also softened her heart for the first time in a long while.

"Okay, it's a promise!" promised Deng Yuxiang solemnly over the phone.

"Mm." Lu Ran hung up, shifting his gaze from the river water to the surrounding area.

The overcast sky, the old and broken buildings.

The dusky streetlights, the deserted city neighborhoods.

Suddenly, Dawn Silence Night unsheathed all at once, crossing in an "X" shape on the ground as commanded by their master.

Lu Ran took a step forward, his feet on the paired Divine Weapons, and his body began to float slowly.

He flew higher into the sky, rising higher and higher until he was nearly three hundred meters up, overlooking the small city below.

Lu Ran rarely indulged himself like this.

He had flown with swords in hand countless times, skimming through the sky to rush to the battlefield.

But this time, he stood above the city for real, with Rain Alley City beneath his feet.

"Whoo~"

The winds were strong up high, making his raincoat rustle loudly.

Lu Ran looked down, scrutinizing the city.

From up here, he didn't feel above everyone, in control of everything.

Lu Ran felt like a young child with a little power, nowhere near enough to protect her completely.

He could only watch her, as she slowly withered in the wind and rain, day after day.

Her?

For the Rain Alley City that had birthed and raised him, including the Wu Lie River, Lu Ran was willing to refer to them as "her."

"Ah..." Lu Ran closed his eyes and took a deep sigh.

The lights below in the night were a rare sight in this cursed land.

There weren't many people living here.

But every night, when the lights in each household lit, they were enough to create a cozy tableau.

Lu Ran opened his eyes again and saw his past self in the familiar streets.

The road home, and the poplar trees lining that road.

Chapter 333: Give the world a little shock_2

The small restaurant where they ate carried the campus years of their youth.

"Mm..."

Lu Ran suddenly furrowed his eyebrows, faintly feeling as though he grasped something.

But it was as if he hadn't grasped anything at all.

It really was maddening—it was the same again!

Ten days ago, when he captured the inspiration of "rosy clouds shining far and wide," it was like this too.

Since then, Lu Ran rose early every morning, taking the Divine Weapon with him as he went out.

Unfortunately, Rain Alley City seldom had sunny days, so there were few mornings graced by the dawn's rosy clouds.

Lu Ran adjusted his emotions, trying to comprehend again.

Time flowed, and the lights in the city grew sparser.

One by one, households fell asleep, each light that turned off felt like a countdown timer leaping another second.

Lu Ran's heart was in turmoil.

In the end, he took another look at the sky and felt a wave of powerlessness rise within him.

Perhaps it was because the path he had walked previously was too smooth, his expectations too great.

The Vast River was not something one could traverse so easily.

The Divine Weapon flew westward, carrying its master, plummeting directly into Rain Alley's residential complex.

When it was late at night, the Lu household's lights were still on.

Lu Ran stepped down from the Divine Weapon and walked towards the apartment building.

Dawn Silence Night automatically flew up and accurately sheathed itself.

Lu Ran stood in front of his home, listening intently.

In the silence of everything, he heard even breathing, long and rhythmic.

It seemed like she had fallen asleep.

Lu Ran took out his keys and quietly opened the door.

The warm light inside the house faintly carried the scent of food.

On the living room sofa, a graceful figure sat quietly.

She wore a white silk nightgown, her long legs elegantly crossed, leaning against the back of the sofa, already asleep.

Lu Ran took off his raincoat and shoes, walking softly into the room.

He glanced at the wall clock and found it was already past one in the morning.

Lu Ran approached the sofa, looking at the girl's peacefully sleeping face, feeling a trace of guilt.

He had told her so many times not to wait for him.

But on the matter of waiting for Lu Ran to come home, Jiang Rui was particularly stubborn.

Lu Ran bent down, one hand going under her knees and the other supporting her back, lifting her in a princess carry.

"Umm." Jiang Ruyi slowly woke up, instinctively wrapping her arms around Lu Ran.

Her cheek rubbed against Lu Ran's neck as she murmured softly, "You're back."

"Sorry, go back to sleep," Lu Ran whispered, carrying her to the master bedroom, carefully laying her on the bed and covering her with the blanket.

He tiptoed back out, heading straight for the kitchen.

In the clay pot, a soup was being kept warm over a gentle fire.

This special beef and goji berry soup was also telling Lu Ran that "Heavenly Pride" was tomorrow.

Due to the gods making their rounds in the lunar sixth month and the gates of the underworld opening wide in the lunar seventh month, Da Xia officially does not hold "Heavenly Pride" competitions during these two months.

This meant that Lu Ran had not missed any sessions.

Having participated in the previous two "Heavenly Pride" competitions, Lu Ran's ranking was very good. As long as he could maintain his top ten position, he would be able to receive rewards like Divine Weapons and Magic Artifacts.

As the third on the sky list, Lu Ran also had a good chance to compete for the top three.

Of course, he would take it even more seriously!

If he could add another treasure to his collection, it would naturally mean stronger combat power and a higher chance of survival.

Lu Ran thought to himself and drank three bowls of soup in a row.

It warmed his stomach and heart.

The night passed without further words, and the next morning arrived.

Fully armed, after a hearty meal, Lu and Jiang stepped out of their home.

The meeting place this time was still the old one.

On the fifteenth day in Rain Alley City, a light rain began to fall again.

At Hexi Park, in front of a lakeside cabin.

Sun Zhengfang, wearing a raincoat, waved energetically at them from a distance: "Little Lu, Little Jiang!"

Lu Ran couldn't help but smile.

He thought back to when he first met Captain Sun—how composed he was.

As Lu Ran continued to grow and everyone went through life-and-death experiences together, Captain Sun increasingly became like a close old friend.

"Uncle Sun!"

"Uncle Sun." The two hurried forward, greeting him politely.

"Ha ha!" Sun Zhengfang came up beside Lu Ran, slinging an arm around his shoulder, "You rascal! Back from your pilgrimage?

I thought once you went to university, even if you came back, you'd be protecting Wu Lie River City.

When I heard you were rejoining the team a couple of days ago, I was overjoyed!"

Lu Ran shrugged his shoulders: "A big city like Wu Lie River has plenty of protectors."

Though he said this, Lu Ran mentally added: Rain Alley is different; Rain Alley only has us.

Sun Zhengfang asked with concern, "How's university life?"

Lu Ran's expression turned strange: "Not quite sure; since the semester started, I've only been to class for one day.

No, not even a whole day."

He looked at Jiang Ruyi: "What was it, twenty minutes?"

Jiang Ruyi didn't speak, but thought to herself that it was probably only seven or eight minutes.

"Hahahaha!" Sun Zhengfang's laughter was hearty, shaking Lu Ran's shoulder back and forth, "I've seen your glorious deeds!

You stormed back to campus on that day, all for your beauty! Ha ha!"

Lu Ran: "..."

Jiang Ruyi's face turned red, and she looked down slightly.

There were too many onlookers that day, and various videos about Lu Ran's battle spread like wildfire on the Internet.

The degree of discussion was also high, with all sorts of opinions.

Some said Lu Ran's methods were too cruel; after all, the opponent was a compatriot, and there should be limits in a friendly contest.

Others said Lu Ran had already exercised restraint; what he dismantled was the opponent's Golden Body, not the actual body.

Some even said that Lu Ran should use a thunderous hand to deter those with malicious intentions.

As a Heavenly Pride representing the face of Da Xia, could he let people bully him?

Netizens' opinions varied greatly. Some even claimed Lu Ran was bullying the weaker party.

As soon as this was mentioned, it was quickly drowned out by backlash.

A West River Believer fighting a Jiang Realm Great Power, and you're telling me it's the strong bullying the weak?

Do you have no shame?!

With that, Wu Lie River University also become infamous, with various official accounts being bombarded by netizens.

The genius of Da Xia, the top scorer of the national college entrance exam, "marrying down" into your school only to be treated unfairly?

Apparently, Lu Tianjiao was meant to be concentrating on his pilgrimage in Cai Nan.

But on the second day of the term, he specially flew back from Wu Lie River to deal with the problem!

What is your school even doing?

You're holding back Da Xia's genius from deep contemplation?!

Can't you see the influence of "Heavenly Pride"? Are you unaware of the situation between Lu Ran and Jiang Ruyi, who have released sweet moments during the last two seasons?

If you're not capable of providing a stable learning environment for students, then you might as well not enroll any Heavenly Pride!

Beijing University, universities in Shanghai, Qiantang River University...

Every university is eager to have Heavenly Pride enroll!

Didn't your school have a contingency plan before recruiting students? Didn't you make any situational estimates?

During this time, Wu Lie River University kept issuing apologies and handled those responsible.

By now, Lu Ran and Jiang Ruyi had nothing to do with it anymore, and it was up to the university authorities to quell the public fury.

Some things are like that; once they're on the Internet, they can't be contained.

"You, young man, are becoming increasingly inscrutable," Sun Zhengfang exclaimed emotionally, "That was a fight with someone from the River Realm, and you dared to fight."

Not only dared to fight, but you also managed to win?

Without exaggeration, this fight surprised everyone!

Usually, when Lu Ran appeared in the public eye, it was when he was slaying Evil Demons.

The word "direct confrontation" was consistent throughout Lu Ran's demon-slaying journey.

No one would have thought that when facing a Jiang Realm Great Power from the Human Clan, even a disciple of a First-Class God-Monk...

Lu Ran still dared to go for a direct confrontation!

The analysis of this battle became a sensation throughout Da Xia.

Lu Ran started with verbal provocation, luring the Jiang Realm Great Power into a trap, then constantly bleating, provoking a barrage of powerful moves from the Monk sect.

Using the enemy's spear to attack their shield.

With the Body of Substitute granting immunity to damage, the dual blades dismembered the Golden Body.

Each step was linked, forming a perfect chain!

This battle truly showcased Lu Ran's brilliance.

And naturally, Lu Ran's brilliance also represented the brilliance of Da Xia!

"Calm in the face of danger, methodical in approach," "a textbook example of the weak overcoming the strong," and so on.

People gave Lu Ran the highest praise, sparking a frenzy.

Of course, all of this was unknown to Lu Ran.

He was always struggling to comprehend the Divine Weapon Domain and the method of promotion.

This youngster, who had brought a trace of shock to the world, stayed by the Wu Lie River, day in and day out, completely inactive.

He couldn't quite "shake" things up, and was about to wilt...

Chapter 334: Heartbreaker

"Ran Shen is here!"

"Wuu wuu wuu, haven't seen him for four months, and Ran Dog has gotten even more handsome~"

"They all call me Ran General, Ran Mei, Ran Dog...No! Actually, my true identity is a monk."

"I am a poor monk who has come from Cai Nan, going to Wu Lie River to find a place, my monastic name is 'Force It'!"

"Extra! Extra! There's fun to watch! The neighboring live stream's Miss Qifeng has issued a challenge to Lu Ran!"

"What? The first on the Heaven Ranking challenging the third? Is Mars colliding with Earth?"

"He Qifeng has also progressed to the River Realm, hasn't she? How could she do this? Besides, she's already in the River Realm, why is she still clinging to 'Heavenly Pride'?"

"The top two in Heavenly Pride have both ascended to the River Realm, you want to replace them all and put your Ran Dog in first place, right? Shameless!"

"Don't mess up the beat! The martial monk sister said she was looking forward to a spar with Ran Shen, where did she issue a challenge?"

In Lu Ran's live stream room, it was a scene of chaos.

He didn't know that he had already stirred up trouble with a martial monk faction.

Not just He Qifeng?

In the hundred Heavenly Prides, no less than five or six martial monk believers mentioned Lu Ran.

The martial monk faction has always enjoyed sparring and challenging others.

Now, in front of the people of Da Xia, Lu Ran alone picked a fight with a River Realm martial monk believer, even calling him "Flower Monk".

Such contempt must have infuriated the martial monk faction!

Lu Ran was completely unaware of this, nor did he have time to care.

However, regarding the ascension of the Heavenly Prides to the River Realm, he had indeed heard something.

As episodes of "Heavenly Pride" aired, a total of 18 participating Heavenly Prides had ascended to the River Realm.

Truly the best of Da Xia, a meticulously chosen hundred Heavenly Prides!

Look at this rate of success!

Such a rapid ascension was indeed startling.

Before the official matches began, if a participant ascended to the River Realm, they were replaced.

But "Heavenly Pride" was already underway, with rankings set episode by episode, and obviously, no one would be replaced during it.

Correspondingly, once you ascended to the River Realm, the judges' scoring standards for you naturally increased sharply.

From then on, an interesting phenomenon emerged:

I got stronger, killed more enemies, but my score got lower...

After a battle, the scores of the Heavenly Prides who ascended to the River Realm were generally lower than when they were in the River Realm.

If Lu Ran wanted to unseat the top two, this was a rare opportunity!

"Hey Lu!"

Lu Ran, who was patrolling with his teammates, heard a call.

He turned his head and saw a couple of tall figures standing in front of an auto repair shop, waving at him with a smile.

These were Chang Ying's parents, quite distinctive.

After all, to have a daughter as tall and sturdy as Chang Ying, the couple must be of the same type.

"Uncle Chang, Aunt Chang," Lu Ran waved back politely, admonishing, "Same as always, stay inside tonight, don't come out for the excitement."

"Sure, we promise not to cause trouble for the organization."

"Be careful." The couple smiled warmly, both promising and advising.

Chang Ying's parents admired Lu Ran, but above all, they were grateful.

They knew well that their daughter's acceptance to the province's top university wasn't possible without Lu Ran's guidance.

"No need for drinks, better head back," Lu Ran said as he saw the couple approaching with water, quickly waving his hand.

In fact, not just Chang Ying's parents.

On the patrol route, Lu Ran had become familiar with many residents and shop owners.

After all, he walked this route every fifteen days of the month.

During daytime patrols, there were not a few who brought him water and food.

Lu Ran had exceptionally good eyesight.

He always saw people with enthusiastic smiles on their faces, but their eyes hid fear and concern, thankful for the Moon Gazers' protection.

This damned world spared no one.

Suddenly, Lu Ran paused in his steps, watching the backs of Chang Ying's parents, thoughts swirling in his mind.

Beside him, Jiang Ruyi immediately stopped and made a secretive gesture back to their companions.

Sun Zhengfang and Wei Long instantly fell silent.

Back at Hexi Park when they gathered, they knew that Lu Ran was in a critical period of enlightenment, advancing to the River Realm.

And Lu Ran's revelation was about this city.

That is, every moment he existed in Rain Alley City could trigger his upgrade mode.

To think of it, it really tugged at one's heartstrings.

Lu Ran, being at River Realm·Fifth Rank, called it a critical period.

And Sun Zhengfang was also at River Realm·Fifth Rank, but not at all crucial.

Maybe, during the first year or two, it really was critical.

After being stuck for over twenty years, it just wasn't crucial anymore...

"What's Ran Shen doing? Why did he stop?"

"Is this an advertisement?"

"Wuu wuu wuu~ Ran Bao is so good, he must have known I missed my parents and intentionally showed them to me."

Lu Ran stood still, his mind flashing through like a revolving lantern, haunted by the faces of the city's residents.

Those who still endured, living on this cursed land, were they also a part of Rain Alley?

With this,

Was it deep enough?

Lu Ran stood silently for a long time before finally moving forward.

His gaze swept through each shop and residential building, pondering over the faces, both present and those he would never see again.

Behind him, Jiang Ruyi followed quietly, closely.

Sun Zhengfang and Wei Long, judiciously staying at a further distance, followed a couple.

From day to night.

A drizzling rain arrived as scheduled.

Until a piercing roar completely broke the stillness of the night.

The night of the fifteenth had finally begun.

"Hiss!"

Jiang Ruyi furrowed her brows, watching the screaming Fog Shadow Man ahead, seemingly finding it noisy.

She reached forward with one hand, and from her sleeve flew a Cold Night Sword, stabbing straight at the enemy.

The Fog Shadow Man hurriedly dodged, but the Cold Night Sword automatically targeted it.

"Roar!!" The Fog Shadow Man yelled angrily, gathering a mist ball in its hands.

"Whoosh~" The Cold Night Sword was incredibly fast, penetrating the Fog Shadow Man's chest directly.

And at the junction of the hilt and the blade, a piece of White Jade Stone burst forth.

Jade Talisman Divine Skill·Bursting Flame Talisman!

"Bang!!"

The jade token exploded, and waves of fire surged.

The Fog Shadow Man, composed entirely of mist, burned wildly, flames reaching the sky.

The drizzling rain couldn't extinguish the spreading fire.

The poor Fog Shadow Man, having met its nemesis, burned clean.

"Remember the first time we encountered a Fog Shadow Man?" Lu Ran suddenly spoke.

He hadn't said much all day.

Jiang Ruyi spoke softly: "The first was a River Realm Fog Shadow Man, unrelated to you and me; I remember the second one."

"Oh?"

Jiang Ruyi couldn't help but smile: "Back then you were abducted by the Yan Zhi, just rescued and returned in front of the shelter.

I only knew the Electric Shackles Talisman, and I tried over and over to immobilize the Fog Shadow Man, with meager effect."

The girl who once struggled desperately, now merely waved her hand casually, and the Fog Shadow Man was utterly annihilated.

"I was talking about that one too." Lu Ran smiled at Jiang Ruyi, "That rainy night, it seemed to be the first time you hugged me."

Jiang Ruyi's expression was startled, then she slightly glared at Lu Ran and turned her head to the side.

"Wow! Sweet moment alert! Love watching it~"

"She really gets shy easily!"

"@Wu Lie River University, @Wu Lie River University, @Wu Lie River University."

"A girl's first expression of feelings, two people embracing in the rain, how romantic hahaha hahaha mom! I want to shove an umbrella up Ran Dog's ass and open it!"

Lu Ran stepped up the stairs, standing at one end of the narrow, old footbridge, pausing in his stride.

At the other end of the footbridge, a figure in a big red robe appeared.

"Huh?" Lu Ran raised his eyebrows slightly, "The other main character of that night has shown up."

Evil Demon-Yan Paperman!

"Be careful." Sun Zhengfang warned.

After all, judging this kind of Evil Demon's realm from its appearance wasn't possible.

But Lu Ran had a dog's nose and could smell the intensity of the Ghost Energy.

Of course, such a judgment method wasn't very accurate, but Lu Ran was certain the other was absolutely not River Realm.

"Huh?" Yan Paperman had an elegant smile on her face as she sized up her prey on the bridgehead.

However, when Lu Ran pinched the raincoat's hood and lifted it up, she suddenly froze.

Her pale lips parted slightly, and her beautiful eyes filled with intense emotion.

From surprise to ecstasy, then intense heat...

Her expression changed repeatedly, the only constant being the cruel intent hidden in her eyes.

"I got it." Lu Ran patted Jiang Ruyi's shoulder and strode forward.

Wei Long frowned, watching Lu Ran's advancing back, but due to Lu Ran's status, didn't speak up.

But Sun Zhengfang was anxious: "Jiang?"

"Let him go." Jiang Ruyi said softly, her eyes carrying an indistinct emotion.

Thinking back to the day of the university entrance exam, the Yan Zhi Clan's Night of Ghosts occurred.

That night, Lu Ran experienced great ups and downs.

He also became aware of something in the midst of the Yan Zhi Clan's encircling and blocking.

The three of them, their cameras focused on Lu Ran.

As he spread his arms, the faces behind the screens were all baffled...

"No! Dude!!"

"What does this mean? Is he going to hug the Yan Paperman?"

"Ahh??"

"F***! Getting intense, seeing illusions, why isn't the Yan Paperman making a move?"

"Don't say anything, let's just wish this couple a happy marriage!"

Yan Paperman indeed made no move.

She seemed like a bride waiting to be wed, waiting for Lu Ran to come for her.

Compared to slaughtering Lu Ran, the first goal of the Yan Zhi Clan was to possess him.

As for how to imprison, torture, and murder him afterward, that was another matter.

When Lu Ran showed no hostility at all and walked into the net...

His action perfectly matched Yan Paperman's first desire.

That unrivaled charming figure, with eyes like autumn waters, also opened her arms, waiting to embrace tightly.

However, she didn't get her desirable groom.

Those who take the initiative to offer hugs are mostly up to no good.

As the two approached each other, the Silent Night Blade suddenly unsheathed and fell into Lu Ran's hands.

Mist swirled under Lu Ran's feet, and thunder rose from the flat ground.

Ran Sect Blade Technique Second Form·Moon Shock!

"Zi!"

Shadows crossed, blade fell.

A beautiful head soared high, a look of bewilderment on its face.

The world seemed to quiet down, in the patter of light rain, it was as if people were watching a silent drama.

Chapter 335: Rainy Night Paper Phoenix

"Man, Lu Ran really is a dog, a real damn dog!"

"Scumbag! Deceiving the feelings of the Yan Zhi... yeah, deceive more! Deceive them to death! Kill!"

"Strange way of slaying demons added √"

"Everyone definitely shouldn't try this! Maybe the Yan Zhi have feelings for Lu Ran, but they definitely don't have any for you!"

"Ruyi is so humble, with her powerless 'let him go', my heart is almost breaking, sob..."

Lu Ran had no idea that he had already been labeled a "scumbag."

He had left Jiang Ruyi behind, opened his arms, and walked step by step towards the figure of the beautiful bride, and this scene was crazily screenshotted.

It was estimated that for quite a long time in the future, this "heartbreaking image" would flood every corner of the internet.

At this moment, Lu Ran was only focused on his buzzing brain.

Yan Zhi Evil Sculpture, advanced to River Realm!

Could he finally summon the Yan Zhi?

He wondered whether the Evil Sculpture-produced Yan Zhi would also harbor ambitious intentions towards him.

Lu Ran thought secretly, feeling that they probably would not. After all, the Yan Zhi Clan's affection for him stemmed from the original Evil Demon.

And the Yan Zhi Evil Sculpture in the Sculpture Garden was just his servant, after all.

"Pfft~"

The headless corpse shattered into a thick fog.

Lu Ran stepped forward, chest out and head held high, his Divine Power Pearl slightly glowing at his neck, drawing energy.

"Unbelievable, little Lu!" Sun Zhengfang rushed forward, his face full of surprise, sizing Lu Ran up and down.

Lu Ran immediately shook his head, emphasizing sternly, "Not suitable for promotion. The only one who can kill Yan Zhi like this is me."

By emphasizing this, he was also cautioning the viewers of "Heavenly Pride" to have a clear understanding of their own identity!

Not everyone is called Lu Ran!

To put it bluntly, even if the Yan Zhi favors another human, that person might not succeed in a sneak attack.

Love alone is far from enough.

You've got to be as quick as Lu Ran, too!

"Oh?" Sun Zhengfang pondered for a moment and then understood the reason.

Everyone knew what kind of divinity Lu Ran had invited at the God Worship Platform.

"Let's go." Lu Ran gathered energy and turned to move.

His mind was still trembling, slightly dizzy; he could only concentrate as much as he could to observe his surroundings.

Fortunately, the Night of Ghosts had just started, and the frequency of Evil Demon invasions was still quite low.

Before encountering the next Evil Demon, the Evil Sculpture in Lu Ran's mind had already fully advanced!

Suppressing the jubilation in his heart, he was scared of being noticed.

When the Yan Zhi Clan was in the River Realm, their compatible technique was called "Ghost Bearer"!

With ghost bearers resembling giants, not only were they extremely loyal, but they also possessed significant combat power. And that big red sedan, classical and luxurious, with astonishing defensive power, made Lu Ran drool! Going out in the future, I'll also have a ride~

"Whoosh..."

The rain started to get heavier.

Even so, the city of Rain Alley tonight still felt calm and serene.

Team 004 hardly received any calls for help.

If it weren't for Sun Zhengfang's remark in the morning about Rain Alley City probably not being stable tonight, Lu Ran really would have thought that heaven had rarely opened its eyes.

Time passed slowly, and Lu Ran's team passed the auto repair shop door again and arrived at the crossroads.

"Shriek~~~"

"Huh?"

"What is that?" Everyone tensed up and suddenly looked up.

From the dark night sky, there came a peculiar call, but no trace of an Evil Demon was seen.

Lu Ran's eyes narrowed!

In the high sky cloud, a massive figure could be seen flying back and forth, now hidden now visible.

"Go." Lu Ran casually threw out, and Dawn Silence Night blades flew towards the night sky.

"This cry, bird-type Evil Demon," Jiang Ruyi frowned slightly, trying to see, but had no night vision capabilities.

"Probably a Paper Kite?" Lu Ran's expression grew solemn.

In this world, there were not many bird-type Evil Demons.

Evil Demon·Paper Kite was a rather strong and quite troublesome type of Evil Demon. This clan was also the sworn enemy of the Second-class God·Tianluan!

"Paper Kite!" Lu Ran's pupils shrank slightly.

This time, he was very certain!

He saw in the distant night sky, a large bird under the siege of Divine Weapons, flew out of the dark clouds.

Its appearance was like a phoenix, with a feathered crest on its head, a slender neck, wide long wings, and a graceful figure. Its entire body of snow-white feathers resembled layers of white paper, and its long tail feathers still visible in tattered parts.

"Shriek~~~"

Under Lu Ran's gaze, the Dawn Blade thrust at the bird's head, and the Silent Night Blade chopped its body.

Just as the Divine Weapons were about to succeed, the giant Paper Kite suddenly shattered!

In an instant, countless white-paper-like feathers scattered everywhere!

Paper Kite Evil Technique·One Kite to Thousand Paper!

Lu Ran's face didn't look very good.

This Evil Demon was at least River Realm·Third Rank because this Evil Technique was adapted by the Paper Kite Clan at River Realm·Third Rank.

"Hum!"

"Whoosh~" Neither Dawn Blade nor Silent Night Blade had missed, but they only damaged pieces of paper feathers.

And under Lu Ran's gaze, countless paper feathers that scattered reassembled in one place, stacking up again.

Paper Kite reassembled, reappearing in the high sky.

With such an Evil Technique, two Divine Weapons really had a hard time killing the Paper Kite Clan.

"Shriek!"

Paper Kite was not vegetarian either, its wide wings fiercely swinging.

Suddenly, countless paper feathers were thrown at the two Divine Weapons.

Evil Technique·Thousand Paper Feathers!

In the paper feather rainstorm, the two Divine Weapons swam upstream, stabbing again at the Paper Kite.

"Shriek~~~"

Seeing the situation turn bad, Paper Kite didn't dare to force a battle and once again shattered its body into a sky full of paper feathers.

Quite beautiful~

After the two Divine Weapons stabbed past, Paper Kite repeated its old trick, and the paper feathers stacked up to reform.

This time, it didn't sprinkle endless paper feathers but blew out a thin wind bundle:

"Shriek~~~"

Evil Technique·Paper Wind Bundle!

Countless paper feathers whirled, outlining the shape of this wind bundle, ensnaring the Silent Night Blade.

The impact of this wind bundle was extremely strong, and it blew the Silent Night Blade clean away.

"This is going to be tough," Sun Zhengfang said with an extremely solemn expression.

Once again, Captain Sun thought of his capable general—Deng Yuxiang!

If she were here, during Paper Kite's moment of shattering, she'd instantly throw a storm at it, and the other side wouldn't even have the chance to reassemble.

Sun Zhengfang sighed inwardly and spoke, "Jiang."

"Captain Sun?"

"Paper Kite is weak to fire, give it a try," commanded Sun Zhengfang. "It's so far away, hard to hit, let your Divine Weapon carry a Jade Token."

"Alright." Jiang Ruyi casually summoned the Cold Night Sword, positioning it slanted in front of her.

She took a White Jade Stone from the Jade Talisman Formation surrounding her, and fitted it between the sword hilt and blade, pointing into the sky, "Go! Signal me when you get close!"

Cold Night Sword took off, stabbing the night sky.

"Shriek~~~"

High up in the sky, the giant Paper Kite was still fighting with the two Divine Weapons.

Although the battle was intense, neither side could overcome the other.

Not until Cold Night Sword arrived did the situation suddenly reverse.

The Paper Kite Clan doesn't have eyes.

But their sensory abilities were quite exceptional, it's unknown how they observe the world.

As soon as Cold Night Sword got close, Paper Kite spat out a thin Paper Wind Bundle.

"Whoosh~"

Cold Night Sword deftly dodged.

"Chop!" Lu Ran silently commanded, covering for Cold Night Sword.

As ordered by its master, Dawn Blade spun rapidly, chopping at the Paper Kite's slender neck.

"Huff!!"

Faced with the spinning Dawn Blade flying at it, Paper Kite once again employed its specialty, breaking up into endless paper feathers.

Almost at the same moment, Jiang Ruyi received the signal from Cold Night Sword.

"Boom boom boom!"

Jiang Ruyi's thoughts moved, and she immediately detonated the Bursting Flame Talisman at the hilt!

The pitch-black night sky, airwaves overflowing, waves of fire rolling!

River Grade-Bursting Flame Talisman was not just a small-scale explosion, it spread flames in all directions.

Instantly, countless paper feathers were engulfed by fire, making a spectacular scene

"Beautiful!" Lu Ran slightly raised his eyebrow, took the girl's icy hand, and gently squeezed her palm.

In the night sky, despite the drizzling rain, it still couldn't stop the paper feathers from burning.

Even above everyone's heads, it seemed like a burst of "fire rain" had fallen.

Like a special fireworks display?

Jiang Ruyi thought she had succeeded, watching the fireworks bloom when she suddenly felt her palm being squeezed tightly.

"Shriek~!"

Another call of Paper Kite came from the night sky!

Earlier, each bird call was melodious and beautiful; now, it had become extremely mournful.

Using the firelight, Jiang Ruyi searched, while Lu Ran had already locked onto a small-sized Paper Kite.

Goodness~

Lu Ran secretly marveled.

This thing doesn't die?

The body size of the Paper Kite had shrunk by half!

Originally snow-white paper feathers were now tattered, showing a mix of gray, black, and white colors.

Little Paper Kite still had sparks on it; it flapped its wings wildly, scattering sparks and ashes.

"One more time!" Lu Ran said in a deep voice as he caught the returning Silent Night Blade.

"Yes." Jiang Ruyi immediately fitted a White Jade Stone into the handle.

Lu Ran's thoughts moved, and Silent Night Blade zoomed towards the night sky.

"Remember to tell me," Jiang Ruyi said softly.

"Sure." Lu Ran followed Silent Night Blade with his eyes, but he stared so intently that his mouth slightly opened.

In the distant high sky, large amounts of paper feathers were spilling down.

Clearly, that was not something one Paper Kite could do!

Lu Ran forced his head back, looking at the clouds.

"Master!" Silent Night Blade sent a mental message.

On instinct, Lu Ran squeezed Jiang Ruyi's palm.

"Boom boom boom!"

Another blast sounded, flames billowing wildly.

"Paper Kite Clan, Night of Ghosts?!" Lu Ran cursed internally.

This was the first time he had sensed something wrong before the city alarms went off.

Lu Ran's attention wasn't on Silent Night Blade but on the layers of rain mist.

One after another giant Paper Kite weaved through the clouds.

Watching them, more large Paper Kites broke through the clouds, spiraling down above the city.

"Shriek~~~"

"Shriek!"

The melodious bird cries cut through the night sky, lingering over the drizzly city.

"This?" Lu Ran's expression was very ugly.

How could one fight this?

Barbaric Woman, Prison Sky Demon, whatever powerful clan invades the city, I can slaughter them all!
But the Paper Kite Clan...

How do you expect me to fight?

Do I have to transform into Night Charm and battle in the sky?

"Woo~~~ Woo!"

The low alarm sound then blared!

The alternating long and short signals, Night of Ghosts!

Chapter 336: rosy clouds! Auspicious colors!

"Whoo~~~"

The deep and distant alarm wailed, cutting through the night sky, echoing within the storm-tossed city of Rain Alley.

Everyone's heart was heavy as they looked up at the night sky, and one by one, the Paper Kite Clan was revealed, emerging from the clouds.

"Everyone on full alert! Everyone on full alert!"

The urgent voice from the command center came through the invisible earpieces.

Lu Ran listened intently, his heart weighed down.

"Units capable of flight, take to the skies and hunt the Paper Kites. Try to move the battlefield into the air, away from the city!"

"Prisoner Demon believers, Thousand Bone believers, Biwu believers, create defensive barriers against aerial attacks immediately and intercept the paper feathers!"

"All other ground units, continue to clear out the Evil Demons, and protect the units in the air..."

Command after command was issued with swift resolution, but the Paper Kite Clan was just as decisively violent.

"Scree~~~"

"Scree!" The melodious bird calls tangled with the low alarm sounds.

Endless paper feathers spilled down, dense as rain.

Lu Ran's heart sank.

The sky full of paper feathers seemed determined to tear the world to shreds.

Lu Ran was confident that he could dodge among the paper feathers and survive, but what about his teammates?

What about the buildings of Rain Alley City?

"Swish~swish~"

"Swish!!"

Accompanied by a series of eerie whooshing sounds, paper feathers landed on buildings, scattered on the streets, and pierced one Moon Gazer after another.

"Be careful!" Wei Long bellowed, already summoning the Divine Technique Blood Evil Clothes.

The Big Red Robe rustled loudly, its hem billowing, covering the heads of the people below.

Next, came the continuous tinkling sounds.

In an instant, the Blood Evil Clothes were covered in cracks.

"Rise!!"

Sun Zhengfang roared with rage, half-kneeling on the wet asphalt, pressing one hand on the ground.

A stout banyan tree rose from the earth, its trunk thick and branches extending in all directions.

The majestic tree stood proudly, using its lush branches to shield a portion of the area.

Underneath the great tree, Lu Ran felt not safety, but rage, his eyes wide with fury!

Looking around, the asphalt was full of white paper feathers, traffic lights had been sliced off, crashing to the ground.

The cables, however, were still connected.

The yellow traffic light lay on the ground, stubbornly flickering on and off.

As a few more paper feathers fell, the electrical wires were completely severed, and the lights dimmed.

Looking further away,

One building after another was scarred, paper feathers etching myriad wounds into their facades.

It was a shocking sight!

Lu Ran was willing to refer to Rain Alley City with the pronoun "she."

And at this moment, this city that had nurtured him was being brutally bullied and abused by the Evil Demon Clan.

Every fifteenth of the month, Rain Alley City suffered destruction at the hands of the Evil Demons.

Buildings would be damaged, the ground would cave in, and the trees would break.

But never had it been so desolate.

After all, the Evil Demons' main targets were the Human Clan; the city's damage was just a byproduct.

It just so happened that the Evil Technique of the Paper Kite Clan could encompass an entire realm...

This tragic scene did not instill fear in Lu Ran, but rather filled him with a burning indignation!

"Take care of yourself," suddenly, his girlfriend's voice came from beside him.

Lu Ran turned his head sharply.

Jiang Ruyi was surrounded by the Jade Talisman Formation and the Golden Jade Eight Talismans.

Instead, she gently squeezed his palm.

Without a doubt,

This was a farewell.

Sun Zhengfang's voice grew from low to loud, pulling Lu Ran back to reality:

"Big Dragon, Little Jiang, follow the command center's orders, execute the command, move the battlefield to high altitude!"

The city's buildings cannot withstand more devastation, they will collapse!"

Lu Ran subconsciously tightened his grip on Jiang Ruyi's hand.

She would not be able to stop the dense paper feathers with only eight Jade Tokens.

The water flow armor could fully cover her body, but under an assault like a gale storm, how long could she last?

"Execute the command," Jiang Ruyi said softly, her voice gentle and firm.

As if, what awaited her wasn't a battlefield of imminent death.

The image of the young girl, also presented on screens in countless households through a camera mounted next to Lu Ran's head.

"Miss, don't go, don't leave the big tree's shelter!"

"Paper Kite, Night of Ghosts, damn it! Where are the Gun Corpse Believers? Where are the Fierce Heavenly believers? Get up there, bombard the sky!"

"Brother, Lu Ran's Rain Alley City is very small, Spear Saint is a First-class God, there's no Gun Ruined Disciple over there, right?"

"Sword One, Qiang Xiu... doesn't have even one First-class Divine Disciple?"

"Still talking about First-class Gods... Lu Ran has participated in two 'Heavenly Pride' shows, patrolled for so long, have you ever seen a Second-class Divine Disciple?"

"Can't bear to watch anymore, all the walls of the residential buildings are full of scratches, they're not going to collapse, what about the people inside?"

The channel was a sea of comments, chaotic.

On the battlefield, Jiang Ruyi separated Lu Ran with the Golden Jade Eight Talismans, rapidly leaving the protection of the Biwu tree, soaring into the sky against endless paper feathers.

Gold and Jade Striking, true to its name.

Paper feathers poured on Jiang Ruyi, intercepted by the Jade Tokens, and upon collision, emitted a unique, pleasing sound.

Alas, rain-like paper feathers could not be stopped by a mere eight Jade Tokens.

Inevitably, paper feathers scattered across her body, piercing her water flow armor.

"Humph!!"

Suddenly two Divine Weapons flew in, positioned above Jiang Ruyi's head, joining her in her ascent.

The Dawn Blade and Silent Night spun rapidly, like propellers, shredding endless paper pieces, shielding Jiang Ruyi from the rain.

On the ground, Lu Ran's gaze followed the rapidly ascending Jiang Ruyi, his hand held high, controlling the Divine Weapons to protect her.

"Clatter clatter..."

White bones appeared frequently, piling into a mountain.

The Thousand Bone believers amassed bone upon bone, covering the buildings.

"Rustle rustle..."

Branches surged, tightly woven.

Biwu believers summoned towering trees, using their flexible branches as a blanket to block the downpour of paper feathers.

Believers of all kinds displayed their divine powers.

The Ice Butterfly believers, with butterfly wings sprouting from their backs, flew swiftly through the night sky, shooting ice butterflies at the Evil Demons, scattering frost.

The Prisoner Demon believers clad in Big Red Robes also soared into the air, summoning chains to bind the Paper Kites.

Lotus petals took flight in various parts of the city, with the Lotus Flying Sword shuttling everywhere.

Flocks of crows flapped their wings, screeching harshly at the Paper Kite Clan.

Such a united effort should have been exhilarating.

Yet, the output of the Paper Kite Clan was terrifying.

A massive number of Paper Kites scattered endless paper feathers, destroying everything between heaven and earth.

Additionally, terrifying tornadoes erupted in the sky and on the ground.

The paper feathers mixed with the storm, sharp as blades, turned the trapped Human Clan within into a bloody mess.

At that moment, Lu Ran felt the whole world fall silent.

The paper feathers that ripped through branches, slashed through bones, and deeply stabbed into buildings...

He also felt that the whole world had slowed down.

The paper feathers that shredded the crows' wings, skimmed across an Ice Butterfly believer's neck, and buried into a Moon Gazer's forehead...

Every scene, playing out chaotically on the battlefield, seemed to be captured in Lu Ran's eyes.

He was like a spectator in a surreal world,

A slow-motion, nightmarish world.

"Get moving, Lu Ran! Don't just stand there!"

"Easy for you to say, how is Ran Shen supposed to get up there? He can't fly, are you asking him to go die?"

"Lu Ran is an Immortal Sheep Believer, not a North Wind Believer! Are you confusing him with Ran Mei? Do you really think he can ascend to heaven and delve into the earth?"

"He can't just stand there stupefied, what kind of Divine Technique does the Immortal Sheep clan have? Use something, quick!"

"Fuck, if I were *** in Rain Alley, I'd **** them up! Smash those motherfuckers with a hammer, hurry up, they're killing me!"

"What, what's that? Where did those colors come from?"

"Ah?? What's this??"

At the same time, on the battlefield.

Sun Zheng Fang suddenly turned his gaze toward the front right.

At that moment, Sun Zhengfang was merged with the tree, only his face visible on the bark, his face full of shock.

For not far from him, Lu Ran's body was faintly glowing with golden red light?!

Almost simultaneously, in the sky where Jiang Ruyi was fighting, she was suddenly dazzled by a bright light.

Three Divine Weapons surrounded her, spinning continuously, shredding the incoming paper feathers.

Among them, the Dawn Blade suddenly lit up!

As the blade spun, it drew a golden red disc.

Like the rising sun!

"Humph!!"

The energy of the Dawn Blade surged, carrying Jiang Ruyi along with Silent Night, both being blown away.

Jiang Ruyi clenched a Bursting Flame Talisman in one hand, tumbling as she was blown backward, the other hand shielding her face.

Peering through her delicate fingers, she squinted and her pupils shrank slightly!

What, what was this?

"Humph!"

The Dawn Blade then took off, flying toward the city below.

The rosy glow was bright and radiant, tracing a supple veil in the night sky.

On the ground, Lu Ran was similarly radiant, his glow increasingly brilliant.

"Snap!"

The Dawn Blade descended from the sky, shattered the barrier of lush branches, and struck directly at Lu Ran, who grasped it in his hand.

"It's you, rosy clouds, it's you."

Lu Ran gripped the handle tightly, poised in front of him, his forehead pressed against the blade.

"Buzz!!"

The Dawn Blade trembled continuously.

In the mind of its master, a familiar scene emerged.

Rosy clouds and auspicious tranquility.

Suddenly, the scene changed.

Night descended, a cacophony with the rain.

Endless Paper Kites swirled over the city, their calls resounding, feathers falling by the thousands.

Paper feathers stained with blood, people falling in the night sky, Rain Alley riddled with holes.

The two scenes alternated frantically.

Until that golden red cloud marked the Paper Kites swirling in the sky.

"Buzz!!!"

The Dawn Blade trembled violently.

Man and blade, their radiance reaching the heavens!

A golden red light burst through the tree's barrier, shooting into the sky!

In the sky, dense clouds gathered, and layers of mist began to rotate on their own, forming a massive vortex.

The dense clouds, colored with golden red light, became the Blessed Cloud.

The Blessed Cloud slowly circulated, spreading across the sky, staining the heavens.

"Flutter flutter!"

"Scree~~~" Countless Paper Kites flapped their wings wildly, flying in disarray, screeching in panic.

Even the relentless release of paper feathers paused at this moment.

Above and below,

The inhabitants of Rain Alley were shocked, their eyes wide open!

They followed the connecting light between heaven and earth, through the shattered banyan branches, to see the figure beneath the tree.

He held the blade in both hands, his forehead firmly against it.

He was dazzling with radiance, his Divine Power nearly boiling over.

Suddenly, Lu Ran opened his eyes.

His pupils shone brightly, his Huang Yuyi billowing freely.

Before my shaping,

The night was long, and gloom enveloped all.

After me,

Rosy clouds stretch far, auspiciousness threads through!

Chapter 337: Divine Weapon Domain!

"What the fuck? What am I seeing?"

"Go check Captain Sun's perspective; you can see the full picture!"

"What kind of Divine Technique is this? How come I've never seen it before?"

"This is the Divine Weapon Domain! My god! The Divine Weapon Domain!"

"I'm so damn honored! In my lifetime, can I actually witness the birth of the Divine Weapon Domain?"

Indeed, this was a great honor for everyone!

Who could have imagined that on the stage of "Heavenly Pride," they would witness the comprehension of the Divine Weapon Domain?

And for the people in Rain Alley City, their hearts swelled and tears welled up in their eyes!

Even for those outside, separated by a mere screen, they felt as if death was imminent, their fear overwhelming; not to mention these people who were truly in the hellish Rain Alley City.

Endless Paper Kites seemed determined to completely destroy this small city.

In the despairing long night, a young man clad in a yellow raincoat emitted a dazzling and brilliant rosy light!

Rain Alley East City, atop a building roof.

Ge Bin, with a Sha Blade in hand, kept thrusting into the sky repeatedly, his movement abruptly stopping.

His expression changed as he realized that the night sky was alight!

Heavenly phenomena descended, with celestial vortexes swirling.

This cursed land surprisingly saw auspicious clouds gradually unfolding across the sky.

"Good lad, it must be you."

A hint of color reflected in Ge Bin's gloomy eyes, his perpetually rigid expression showing a trace of happiness.

Atop the Wu Lie Building, on the highest rooftop.

A tremendously huge ginkgo tree shot up into the sky, its thousands of branches spreading wildly, striking at the Paper Kites in the night.

A woman's face appeared on the tree bark, her eyes slightly unfocused, gazing into the West River night sky.

"Lu..."

Liu Yunlan murmured quietly, watching the connection between heaven and earth, looking at the panic-stricken Paper Kites flying in the night sky.

In her mind, the image of a youth appeared.

Youth?

At eighteen, he should be considered a young man.

But in Liu Yunlan's memory, Lu Ran was that young man full of youth and vigor!

For so many years, this part of the world had always been dark.

Until that thunderous rainy night.

A young man wielding twin blades, dressed in a bright yellow raincoat, entered her sight.

"Hahahaha!"

Rain Alley residential area, atop an apartment building.

Chen Jing, covered in wounds, held up a large red flag and used a red cover to protect an area.

"Little devil, it has to be you!"

Chen Jing laughed heartily, even as his body was covered in wounds and blood flowed, he firmly held the flag.

His consciousness was blurry, but his voice echoed through the sky:

"Kill! Kill! Kill!!!"

"Phew!"

A rainbow light soared into the night sky, bursting with beautiful colors.

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

It resembled a gentle ribbon and seemed like Nezha's Chaos Sky Silk.

Carrying its unique arc, it swiftly flew toward the night sky.

"Screech!"

Beneath the vortex of auspicious clouds, Paper Kites flapped their wings in panic, crying out in fear.

Feather by feather, they scattered, seemingly trying to shred the ribbon.

Yet, when the feather touched the rainbow light, they instantly vanished into smoke!

Some other feathers, as they sped past the edge of the rainbow light, were likewise incinerated.

Under the astonished gaze of the crowd, the rainbow light spiraled upward and charged directly at a Paper Kite.

"Screech!"

The Paper Kite unleashed winds of paper, stirring up a paper storm, but it couldn't stop the advancement of the rainbow light in any way.

It was terrified!

The Paper Kite Clan, without eyes to reveal emotions, betrayed its feelings through its body movements.

The Paper Kite tried its best to flee but it was too late.

The rainbow light, nimble and swift, bound the Paper Kite like Chaos Sky Silk.

"Screech~~~"

The Paper Kite let out a piteous cry; its body composed of paper feathers was particularly flammable.

Its already tattered long tail feathers immediately turned to ash.

The Paper Kite, desperate, demonstrated its most powerful ability, its body exploding in a burst, scattering endless paper feathers.

Evil Technique·One Kite to Thousand Paper!

This time, it miscalculated.

Golden-red ribbons danced in the sky!

Twirling and cleansing the human world.

At the street intersection, Lu Ran still held his swords, gazing into the night sky.

The thin, long Dawn Blade vibrated, and from within the blade, another streak of rainbow light flew out.

Or perhaps, it should be called rosy light!

One, two...seven, eight...eighteen!

Eighteen streaks of rosy light flew from the blade into the night sky.

This incredibly spectacular scene dazzled the onlookers and stirred their hearts.

The once all-powerful Paper Kite Clan, no longer trying to destroy the city, turned to flee.

Streak after streak of rosy light flew rapidly, relentlessly pursuing, igniting the entire sky with their corrupted bodies.

Even more Paper Kites that had just appeared high above were completely obliterated by the swirling vortex of auspicious clouds above the city.

This was a remarkably special night of the fifteenth.

It was clearly a dark night, yet the sky was brightly lit.

It was supposed to be enshrouded in rain and fog, yet auspicious clouds and heavenly omens filled the air.

In every home in Rain Alley City, many overcame their fears and followed the light to their windows.

People stood or knelt, astonished, devout, or with tears in their eyes, gazing upward at a miracle they had never seen before.

Actually, most people knew what was happening.

On the night of "Heavenly Pride," especially when Lu Ran was on a mission, every person in Rain Alley kept track of him.

In their hearts, they had long regarded this young man as the guardian deity of their home.

Ordinary people felt this way, and so did the Moon Gazers.

What was originally a battle for life suddenly changed its nature.

The Moon Gazers, who were on the brink of death, protected by Lu Ran, thus became witnesses of a miracle.

Streaks of rosy light floated in all directions.

Flying over big rivers, sweeping past Wu Lie Building, chasing after the Paper Kites, and moving across the city.

From some unknown time, the city's alarm sounds disappeared.

People suddenly realized that there also seemed to be no bird songs in the night sky.

While other Evil Demons still haunted the city, the sightings of the Paper Kite Clan were much less frequent.

"What's the situation with Ran Shen? Has the Night of Ghosts ended?"

"Ah, it looks like the Paper Kites were burned up."

"No way! Do I feel like the special event just began, and it's over so soon?"

"Yeah, based on past records, the Night of Ghosts should last at least an hour, right? How long has it been? Ten minutes? Fifteen?"

"Holy shit! Night of Ghosts, can it even be repelled?"

"Ah???"

"You mean, the major invasion by the Paper Kite Clan was forcefully repelled by Ran Shen?"

"Lu! Ran! You! Are! My! God!"

Lu Ran didn't realize what was happening in his own channel.

At this moment, he no longer showed his usual spirited demeanor.

His face was pale, seemingly exhausted in body and spirit.

"Whoosh~"

Suddenly, the light dissipated.

The vortex of auspicious clouds faded from its brilliant colors to a dark, rainy fog.

"Lu Ran!" Jiang Ruyi called out softly.

Unnoticed, she had come to stand behind Lu Ran, and seeing his shaky form, she quickly stepped forward to support his back.

Lu Ran was indeed exhausted in body and spirit, even pushing his body beyond its limits.

The Divine Weapon Domain was activated by both the master and the Divine Weapon, consuming energy and Qi together.

And Lu Ran, who was at the River Realm·Fifth Rank, was clearly holding it back!

Eighteen streaks of rosy light were far from the limit of the Dawn Blade.

Yet, Lu Ran gave everything he had and could do no more.

Moreover, Lu Ran's performance was aided by the celestial phenomenon!

The "vortex of auspicious clouds" in the night sky was not yet an effect of the Domain.

Instead, it was a celestial event triggered by the advancement of the Divine Weapon (comprehension of the Domain), and that connection of brilliant light between heaven and earth truly infused Lu Ran with a substantial amount of energy.

"Lu Ran, are you okay?"

"How are you, Lu Tianjiao?"

"Lu Tianjiao?" Concerned voices rose.

Lu Ran set down the Dawn Blade, looking into the concerned faces around him.

The people floating in the air and standing on the ground surrounded him.

In their eyes was not only concern but also a deep sense of gratitude for having survived a catastrophe.

At this moment, everything around became completely quiet, even the messages in the channel lessened.

Under the watchful eyes of countless people, Lu Ran said softly:

"The night is not yet over; let's continue the mission."

Hearing his somewhat weak voice, Jiang Ruyi held Lu Ran tightly from behind.

"Attention everyone! Attention everyone!"

Suddenly, a voice from the command center came through the invisible earphones:

"After repeated confirmations, the Night of Ghosts has ended! I repeat, the Night of Ghosts has ended!"

"Ah~~~"

"Thank goodness, thank goodness..."

"Hahahahaha!"

While Lu Ran's side remained quiet, with people looking at him gratefully, cheers and laughter erupted elsewhere in the city.

Although the night of the fifteenth was not yet over and Evil Demons were still invading the city,

the retreat of the Paper Kite Clan was enough to make anyone ecstatic!

The sword hanging over everyone's heads had been withdrawn, and the Moon Gazers felt much better about the usual Evil Demons they saw.

"Everyone return to your posts immediately, continue to defend the city!"

The voice from the command center was serious, issuing orders, but the man's tone softened slightly:

"Mr. Lu, congratulations on the great success of your Divine Weapon.

On behalf of this city and all the Moon Gazers, thank you for your help.

If you need anything, please contact us at any time."

These words, not sent in a private message but spoken on a public channel, were also heard by all members of the Wangyue Army.

Those Moon Gazers who were in other areas and likewise protected, fully understood their suspicions!

The summoner of the auspicious rosy clouds, the reason for the retreat of the Paper Kite Clan...

Da Xia's genius, Lu Ran!

The student who had helped them time and again was no longer just patrolling the streets and putting out fires.

This time, he painted the sky with auspicious clouds and omens and protected the entire Rain Alley!

"Go on, get back to your posts, continue defending the city!" Sun Zhengfang shouted loudly, dispersing the crowd around him.

Since Lu Ran had saved their lives, it wasn't easy to disperse them.

Fortunately, as they were all Moon Gazers, disciplined by the organization, they each backed away.

"Lu Ran." Jiang Ruyi finally found a chance to speak quietly, "Do you want to go to the shelter?"

Lu Ran shook his head gently, leaning back against the girl, and slowly raised the Dawn Blade, his mind stirring slightly:

"It's my fault for holding you back, not letting you display more strength."

But the Dawn Blade said, "It's the master who trained me to become a Divine Weapon, leading me to comprehend the Domain."

Lu Ran looked up slightly, his eyes on the Divine Weapon washed by rainwater:

"I will become stronger. In the future, I'll let you dye the skies with your brilliant colors!"

"Buzz!!"

The Dawn Blade trembled lightly, a flash of golden light twinkling.

That brilliant light reflected on Lu Ran's pale face and in his dark eyes.

Why need the sun's gift when rosy clouds abound, for the human world has my old friend's blade.

Through the long and stormy paths, the young lad's old blade alone washes the heavens.

Chapter 338: Bright Flowers

Although Lu Ran wanted to continue fighting, after Sun Zhengfang examined him, he ultimately sent him to the nearest shelter.

Sun Zhengfang was undoubtedly a very excellent primary care physician.

He could heal wounds, soothe the mind, and even help patients recover their strength more quickly.

But all this was predicated on the patient's body functions being within the range of "normal wear and tear."

For someone like Lu Ran, who had unleashed powerful moves and overdrawn his body, Divine Technique·Biwu Holy Light couldn't cure him—he needed rest!

And when Lu Ran was supported into the West River Gymnasium, a huge cheer erupted from inside the venue!

Thousands of citizens sought refuge there, and on every Night of Ghosts, the atmosphere inside was heavy and filled with dread.

Only this night!

The people were incredibly excited, as if they wanted to flip the roof of the gymnasium, and the commotion lasted for a very long time.

Most of the citizens had been watching "Heavenly Pride," and, of course, they knew that Lu Ran had fought with all his might to repel the Paper Kite Clan·Night of Ghosts!

Without that special event, the danger level of the night plummeted, and many, many lives would be spared.

Who knows how many families, through Lu Ran's desperate fight, would be able to reunite the next day.

The people in the gymnasium cheered and applauded thunderously, their faces filled with respect, gratitude, and tears welling up.

It was a cheer for Lu Ran.

It was also the people releasing repressed emotions, expressing their attitude towards this world filled with hardship.

Such a scene was naturally broadcasted into thousands of homes through cameras.

Countless people of Da Xia watched with tears welling up in their eyes.

The majority of viewers at the scene were themselves inside shelters in their own cities, listening to the roar and cries of battle outside, spending the night in terror.

What a profound empathy it was!

Lu Ran,

had already become a symbolic figure of Rain Alley City, as well as the spiritual anchor for very many people.

There was no need for "Heavenly Pride" to rate him.

The people, with their hoarse voices from shouting and their hands red from clapping, had already rated Lu Ran.

"Let's go." Lu Ran lowered his head and gently tugged at Jiang Ruyi's clothes.

Many people were using their phones, filming the two from various angles.

Lu Ran's subtle action naturally couldn't escape so many cameras.

The brave and unparalleled Lu Tianjiao, showing such a docile gesture, was full of contrast; he would likely be turned into a gif again...

"Okay," Jiang Ruyi whispered in response.

She, led by several Moon Gazers, supported Lu Ran past the sidelines and towards a separate resting room.

It was all thanks to the Moon Gazers maintaining order; otherwise, the path to the resting room wouldn't have been so easy to navigate.

They finally arrived at an office where the Moon Gazers politely bid farewell and left, leaving only the two of them inside. Only then did Lu Ran heave a sigh of relief.

Lu Ran took off the hidden camera with one swift move and said, "You take yours off too."

Jiang Ruyi gently removed his gear and raincoat for him, her movements tender, "Leaving the scene is due to circumstances, at most they'll dock your points.

But turning off the camera, that's against the rules, and they'll cancel your score."

Lu Ran: "Didn't turn it off, just took it off."

He didn't want people to see his weak side.

Lu Ran always believed that Heavenly Pride should display a strong demeanor and an uplifting spirit.

Not a pale face and a picture of illness.

Jiang Ruyi helped Lu Ran onto the small bed, then grabbed a plastic stool and sat by the bed, quietly saying, "Sleep."

Lu Ran was silent for a moment, then said, "Took it off."

"Okay, good," this time, Jiang Ruyi did not refuse Lu Ran.

She took off the camera attached to the side of her head, placed it on the office desk not far away, and after turning off the lights in the office, she sat back down by the bed.

In the somewhat dim room, Jiang Ruyi's soft voice could be heard again:

"Sleep."

The camera placed on the office desk captured the two figures.

One was lying on the bed resting, the other sitting by the bed, quietly keeping guard.

This office was located inside the building, without any windows, but above the door, there was a pane of glass.

The light from outside shone through the glass and into the room, dividing the bed area at the edge.

Lu Ran slept in the dark, while Jiang Ruyi's silhouette was blurred against the light.

She still wore her oversized raincoat, not showing off her impressive curves.

Faintly visible was one of her hands, gently picking up Lu Ran's palm.

Thus, a unique live broadcast session emerged.

The other 49 Heavenly Pride channels were all deeply immersed in fierce battles.

Only Lu Ran's channel was tranquil, with light and shadow intermingled.

"Sister Ruyi is so tender~"

"@Wu Lie River University, @Wu Lie River University!!!!"

"Fine, my lady, I'll listen to you, going to sleep right away, turning off the device!"

"Eh? Is this pioneering a new track, live broadcasting sleep? Others are fighting until the sky darkens, and you're coming on Heavenly Pride to sleep?"

"Are you new here? If you don't understand the situation, don't blabber! Ran Shen just pushed back the Night of Ghosts, so what's wrong with sleeping for a bit?"

"Night of Ghosts? Pushed back? Are you crazy or am I crazy? Do you want to look at what you're saying?"

"Is that true?"

"When did it happen?"

"Just before going to sleep, duh! Hey, don't make a huge fuss over it, it was nothing."

"Ran Shen! Dawn Blade! Divine Weapon Domain is so freaking awesomeeeeeee!!!"

"The young man is really extraordinary, our Human Clan has added another brave warrior..."

"Eye-witnessing it makes us proud!"

"+1!"

Across the water, within the Jiang Mansion.

The Jiang Family couple sat on the sofa, watching the television.

Jiang Zheng, a grown man, watched the image of his daughter on the screen, his eyes surprisingly moist.

The recent battle had unfolded with his daughter soaring high into the night sky, surrounded by danger.

Now that Lu Ran had handled the crisis, rescuing his daughter and everyone living in Rain Alley City like the couple, taking care of Lu Ran was a given.

But the daughter too had gone through a perilous experience; she too needed comforting...

Beside him, his wife Zhuang Jingyi slightly tilted her head, resting it on her husband's shoulder, gently sighing.

The couple would not appear in front of the balcony window, fearing that they might disturb the children on their mission.

But how could the two of them truly be at ease?

Every "Heavenly Pride," they would stay up all night by the television, their hearts undulating with it.

"Meow~" In Zhuang Jingyi's arms, the tabby cat casually licked its paws, oblivious to the state of its owners.

Jiang Zheng whispered softly, "Let's invite them to have a meal at home more often."

Zhuang Jingyi said, "Xiao Ran is in a critical period of advancement; we should disturb him less."

As a mother, Zhuang Jingyi seemed calmer, perhaps because she was a judge.

Jiang Zheng fell silent, no longer speaking.

He actually felt that the stronger the two children, the more danger they faced.

If they, like other Moon Gazers, had always been hovering around the River Realm·Third Rank, then their battlefield would likely have been limited to the Night of Ghosts in Rain Alley City.

Once Lu Ran advanced to the River Realm, of course, he would bear greater responsibility.

Jiang Zheng indeed hoped for a strong son-in-law, but being too outstanding could become a burden.

"Meow~"

Jiang Zheng glanced at the cat in his wife's arms, then back at the television.

His daughter on the screen was still immobile, quietly sitting by the bed.

In fact, from the moment Jiang Ruyi had successfully Worshiped God, she was in a different world from her parents.

Fortunately, in that other world, she had found someone who truly cared for her.

Only that person...

It was uncertain where he would lead her.

Jiang Zheng felt powerless, only able to watch from a distance as his daughter drifted further away.

The Jiang Family couple sat on the sofa all night, and Jiang Ruyi also remained by the bed all night.

Strangely, the viewership for Lu Ran's live broadcast remained high!

As the news of Lu Ran activating the Divine Weapon Domain and repelling Night of Ghosts spread, the channel's heat didn't wane but instead surged, staying at the top of the list.

That night, she guarded him.

But also countless others were guarding the two of them.

The affection Lu Ran and Jiang Ruyi had for each other was evident to everyone.

In a world suffering, flowers that bloom are all the more radiant.

This radiant flower was now the object of the world's admiration and blessings.

It was just unknown how long it could bloom in these ruins.

The third installment of "Heavenly Pride" finally drew to a close after daybreak.

With the live broadcast disconnected, millions of viewers were left without a home, instead rushing to various forums, stirring up a storm.

People discussed Lu Ran's relationship with the Yan Zhi Clan, the retreat of the Paper Kite Clan, the Dawn Blade, and the effects of the Divine Weapon Domain.

People had even given the Divine Weapon Domain various names.

Rosy clouds soaring, Dawn Array, Rainbow Clouds...

Until a post appeared that left everyone feeling hollow.

"Heavenly Pride" had already reached its third installment!

According to the program's plan, there were only five installments of "Heavenly Pride."

The hundred Heavenly Prides accompanying the world would be determined on the fifteenth day of the twelfth month, and then they would leave everyone.

The next edition would still feature flowers competing in beauty, but it would no longer be these people.

Lu Ran was unaware of the world's hustle and bustle, but he and the people shared the same feeling.

Empty!

Not a feeling in the heart, but a physical one.

Too damn empty...

Lu Ran was brought back home by Jiang Ruyi, bathed, and changed clothes; then he collapsed onto the bed once more.

"Really beat," Lu Ran grimaced.

This after-effect of overexerting the body was significant.

While showering earlier, he had to sit on the ground to wash, nearly unable to stand up with his limbs feeling weak.

He held back and held back, still not calling for Jiang Ruyi to come in and help him out.

Well... pride mattered.

Once his body recovered, he'd have to properly test out the Dawn Blade and see where the limit lay.

Lu Ran grabbed the blanket with one hand, trying several times to pull it over himself.

Suddenly, a delicate hand reached over, grabbing the blanket and helping him cover up, gently tucking in the corners.

Lu Ran: "..."

"Hehe~" Jiang Ruyi let out a light laugh.

Looking at Lu Ran, who was helpless in life, she found it amusing and also pitied him.

Jiang Ruyi placed her hands on either side of Lu Ran's body, leaning over to look at him: "Now, is it my turn to bully you?"

Lu Ran: ???

Jiang Ruyi slightly raised her eyebrows, the corners of her mouth curling up.

With an embarrassed expression, Lu Ran hastily said, "No, no, no, I was wrong, so wrong."

Heroine, please spare this poor dog's life..."

Jiang Ruyi laughed silently, only lightly tapping Lu Ran's forehead with her finger.

Then, she turned and left, lazily straightening her hair with one hand, leaving behind an unruffled and graceful silhouette for Lu Ran.

Lu Ran felt anxious in his heart!

"Click."

The door closed.

Jiang Ruyi, leaning against the door, suddenly changed her expression, with drooping eyelids and cheeks as if on fire.

That jerk, scared to death.

Let's see if you dare to bully me again.

...

Chapter 339: to surpass Da Xia?!

Lu Ran rested for a full two days before his overexerted body recovered.

That morning happened to be the day when "Heavenly Pride" announced its results.

A high score of 149 points allowed Lu Ran to look down on all his peers, leaping directly from third to first on the overall leaderboard!

First place on the Heavenly Pride List!

As for where that missing 1 point went...

No idea!

Maybe it was because his sleep was too enviable?

In any case, this honor filled Lu Ran with surprise and joy.

It also sent his supporters into a frenzy of delight, creating an atmosphere in the major forums similar to the festive cheer of the New Year.

That youth who surpassed all in Rain Alley City had finally become the "Supreme of Da Xia" in name and in fact!

The 10 judges participating in the scoring had all left comments for Lu Ran, among which the simplest one stood out the most.

Just a mere five words:

"First-class among mortals!"

Such an evaluation sent people's blood racing, and filled his numerous followers with pride.

Regardless of whether or not he could hold onto this ranking after the next two issues of "Heavenly Pride", at least for now, Lu Ran was the top of the Heavenly List!

For a time, Lu Ran was so popular that his fame turned from purple to black...

The officials from "Heavenly Pride" also approached Lu Ran, hoping he would cooperate in an interview program, and afterward visit some remote schools with the crew to bring warmth to the people there and to cheer on the Believer students.

The former Lu Ran, as a senior high school student, had been exempted from many events.

But now that he was in college, naturally, the officials came looking for him.

Lu Ran thought the activity was quite meaningful and really wanted to participate.

The problem was, he was in a crucial period of promotion to the River Realm and needed to contemplate in stillness.

Helplessly, Lu Ran explained the situation to the leaders of the program crew.

They didn't make things difficult for him and simply agreed to wait until after his promotion to the River Realm to participate in the activities.

No one believed that Lu Ran would be stuck at River Realm·Fifth Rank for a lifetime like other Believers.

As the number one Heavenly Pride of Da Xia, he was naturally expected to advance at any time!

Nobody wanted to be the sinner of Da Xia.

Nevertheless, the "Heavenly Pride" side still hoped that Lu Ran could spare 2 hours for a simple interview.

Lu Ran felt it was bad to refuse again, so he agreed.

As a result, on the nineteenth of the lunar calendar, the day the nation lifted its restrictions, the people from "Heavenly Pride" rushed to Rain Alley.

This time, the interview involved Lu Ran and Jiang Ruyi together, lasting just the right amount of 2 hours, after which the large group of people directly left for the return trip to the capital, leaving in a decisive and swift manner.

Lu Ran was left dumbfounded!

If it weren't for the fact that he had signed over a hundred autographs, Lu Ran might have thought these people had no interest in dealing with him.

However, Lu Ran's good days seemed to last only a few days.

When everything returned to normal, Lu Ran fell back into the old rut of daily failures.

He had grasped the rosy clouds of the Dawn Domain, but couldn't capture his own.

Sometimes, Lu Ran reflected, maybe he was too anxious.

Even for the most talented second-class God Believers, spending three to five months at River Realm Fifth Stage was pretty normal.

He had been home since August 4th; how many days had he truly spent in contemplation?

With this mindset, Lu Ran calmed his emotions and continued to painstakingly contemplate, spending another fifteenth day in Rain Alley City.

On the night of September 15th, Lu Ran was still patrolling together with Sun Zhengfang and others.

That night, the heavens seemed to look favorably on the long-suffering Rain Alley City.

Heaven finally let Rain Alley be, but not Lu Ran.

He still hadn't found the path to advancement.

Jiang Ruyi watched with open eyes as Lu Ran became more silent day by day, growing increasingly worried.

Lu Ran's path to advancement had always been smooth until now.

At the age of 18, he ranked first on the Heavenly List of Da Xia, and even if Lu Ran was mature for his age, his spirit was undeniable.

Now, day after day of fruitless efforts.

To say he was unaffected would undoubtedly be a lie.

On the fourth day of the tenth lunar month, there seemed to be a slight change in the seemingly plain days.

That day, Lu Ran stayed on the abandoned rooftop by the Wu Lie River until two in the morning before heading home.

When he returned to the house, he stood still in front of the master bedroom door for a long time.

The bedroom was empty.

There were only traces of her faint scent, but no sight of her.

For two months, Lu Ran had grown accustomed to finding warm meals in the kitchen and a sleeping figure in the master bedroom whenever he came home.

But on this particular day,

The meal was ready, but the lady was gone.

"Heh..."

Lu Ran took a deep breath and leaned weakly against the door frame.

Had he been neglecting her?

It seemed... he had.

For quite some time now.

He had been returning later and later each day.

In the mornings when he woke up, she had already prepared breakfast and left for the Jiang family to offer her respects to the divine.

Every day, they hardly exchanged a few words.

And there were even days when he had become fixated on his problems and didn't return home the whole night.

Perhaps she had been discontent for some time.

Lu Ran silently looked at the empty bed, and after a while, he picked up his phone and scrolled through WeChat.

The last time they chatted on the phone goes back a long while.

Seeing the time, past two in the morning...

Lu Ran hesitated for a moment, then put away the phone.

After eating a late-night snack in the kitchen, Lu Ran returned to the master bedroom and crashed into bed.

Normally, he only slept for four to five hours, sometimes sneaking out before Ruyi even woke up.

Advancing to the River Realm had become an obsession for Lu Ran.

But today, Lu Ran slept deeply, undisturbed until...

Dusk.

Jiang Ruyi opened the front door, stepped inside, and casually closed it behind her, but noticed the shoes under the shoe rack.

She paused for a moment.

"Thud." The door closed with a sound that wasn't too loud or too soft.

Jiang Ruyi snapped out of it and tightened slightly.

She removed her boots, didn't put on slippers, and made her way quietly into the house.

Sure enough, on the large master bed, she saw Lu Ran's figure.

"I'm back," said Lu Ran softly.

"Did I wake you?" Jiang Ruyi spoke gently, stepping forward.

Lu Ran, still bleary-eyed, looked at Jiang Ruyi approaching the bed, and momentarily lost his words.

She wore a dark long coat and a dark red knitted scarf, elegant and beautiful.

Compared to the day they parted last autumn, her face had lost much of its youthfulness.

Even with the warm-colored scarf as a contrast, it couldn't hide her increasingly refined and aloof air.

"Why didn't you cultivate today?" Jiang Ruyi knelt by the bed, leaning slightly, observing Lu Ran who remained silent.

Gazing into her still gentle eyes, Lu Ran became unsure.

She didn't seem angry, did she?

"Lu Ran?" Jiang Ruyi called softly.

"Tired," Lu Ran averted his gaze, simply answering.

It was an unassailable excuse.

For two whole months, save for the days around the fifteenth, Lu Ran left early and returned late every day.

The tiredness of his body was one thing, his soul another.

"Are you sick?" Jiang Ruyi reached out and touched Lu Ran's forehead.

Cold but soft.

Jiang Ruyi frowned slightly: "Why are you so hot?"

Lu Ran looked helplessly at his girlfriend: "Your hand is cold."

Jiang Ruyi: "..."

Lu Ran: "..."

Early October of the lunar calendar marks the transition from autumn to winter; it was indeed somewhat cold outside.

"It's good that you're not sick." Jiang Ruyi gave Lu Ran a light glance, stood up, and while taking off her scarf, she walked out of the bedroom.

In a short while, the tall silhouette reappeared at the master bedroom's threshold, hand on the doorknob, about to close it:

"Do you want to sleep some more?"

Suddenly, Lu Ran said, "Last night, you weren't home."

Jiang Ruyi paused in her movements.

Lu Ran: "Was there something at Uncle and Auntie's place? Or?"

Jiang Ruyi bit her lip, hesitating with a conflicted expression: "I..."

"What happened?"

After a long hesitation, Jiang Ruyi spoke softly, "I've advanced. I've been cultivating in front of the divine shrine all this time and didn't come over."

"Huh?"

"River Realm Fifth Stage."

"That's great news!" Lu Ran's heart leaped with joy, then he became puzzled, "What's there to be reluctant to tell me?"

Jiang Ruyi cautiously glanced at Lu Ran, shook her head gently: "Nothing."

Remember that Lu Ran had been at River Realm-Fifth Rank two months ago already.

Returning from Luoxian Mountain, he seemed like a being from the heavens, with stars hidden in his eyes.

Day after day, Jiang Ruyi had watched those lights in his eyes dim.

She couldn't do anything but try her best to take care of his routine, restraining herself from disturbing his contemplation.

Now, two months later, they were once again at an equal level.

Jiang Ruyi knew how much Lu Ran had sacrificed and the struggles in his heart.

She was indeed worried that Lu Ran might take a hit.

"You..." After some contemplation, Lu Ran understood her state of mind.

He looked at his girlfriend with mixed irritation and amusement, beckoning her: "Come here."

Jiang Ruyi slightly bowed her head and approached.

As she got close to the bed, a warm hand caught her cold wrist.

"Uhm." Jiang Ruyi let out a gentle cry and was pulled down onto the bed.

Lu Ran pinned her underneath, propping himself on either side of her and gazing down into her eyes:

"You advancing makes me really happy! Do you think I'm so petty?"

Jiang Ruyi lifted her eyes, carefully examining Lu Ran's.

After a while, she averted her gaze and whispered, "I was afraid you might take it poorly."

"Heh." Lu Ran actually found this amusing.

When he saw a hint of a smile on Jiang Ruyi's face, he was itching with frustration!

What kind of person did she think I am?

Is it terrifying that I failed, but my girlfriend's success gnaws at my heart?

"I'm going to cook dinner," Jiang Ruyi said softly, starting to scoot away.

Lu Ran stopped her again: "Let's eat out, to celebrate for you!"

When he emphasized the word "celebrate", Lu Ran did so with particular emphasis.

"Oh." Jiang Ruyi looked away, "What shall we eat?"

Lu Ran snorted: "Let's have hotpot lamb, fitting for your grand achievement."

"Pff... Hehe~" Jiang Ruyi couldn't help but laugh, then hurriedly stifled it.

Lamb, that kind of food, would never appear on the Lu family's dining table.

Even though Lord Immortal Goat had nothing in common with the sheep of the world and didn't care about it at all...

Still, the word "lamb" did carry the "sheep" character...

"Let's go." Lu Ran urged, having not eaten hotpot lamb for a long time, he did have some cravings.

They dressed up, donned hats and scarves, fully armed, and quickly stepped out the door.

At that moment, the two of them did not realize what this outing would bring them...

...

Chapter 340: Years with Us

In the depths of late autumn, Rain Alley City was blanketed with withered yellow grass and trees.

Leaves wafted in the wind, making the already deserted street appear even more desolate.

As the sun set in the west, the shadows of a couple stretched long.

The pair strolled leisurely, chatting and laughing, standing out starkly against the bleak backdrop.

It was as if they were defying the world around them.

"Now, you could advance to the River Realm anytime," Lu Ran said to his girlfriend beside him.

"Mm-hmm," Jiang Ruyi replied joyfully, unable to resist a smile.

Before, she had been nervous about exciting Lu Ran, so she felt awkward and unsure whether to share the good news.

Now, she had no worries at all.

Jiang Ruyi could feel that Lu Ran was sincerely happy for her.

Click

The black ladies' boots made a strange noise as they stepped on the dry, yellow leaves.

She walked on the curb that separated the road from the sidewalk.

Her hands spread out in the air, occasionally tiptoeing, trying to walk in a straight line.

The beautiful Ruyi was usually a quiet person.

This slightly mischievous behavior revealed the joy in her heart.

"Tell me about your main focus," Lu Ran smiled at his girlfriend, "What are you planning to comprehend?"

"Guess?" Jiang Ruyi suddenly took a big step forward to avoid stepping and crushing another dry leaf under her feet.

Lu Ran: ??

Guess, like a child?

"Lu Ran," Jiang Ruyi suddenly turned around and started walking backward.

With a slight smile on her face, she gently looked at Lu Ran.

"What's up?" Lu Ran, however, was looking at her boots.

This little game of walking in a straight line had, unknowingly, affected him too.

Her sense of balance was very good; even walking backward step by step, she did not miss a beat.

Lu Ran secretly thought it was a pity when he looked up at her face again, only to find Jiang Ruyi had turned back around and was walking normally once more.

Lu Ran: "..."

What does that mean?

She called out to me all of a sudden, and then there was no follow-up?

"I say, we may have taken the wrong turn; we were going to the school for hotpot, but this way leads to your home," Lu Ran suddenly spoke.

"Are you very hungry?"

"Not really."

"Then let's take this familiar road to the school," Jiang Ruyi hopped off the curb, crossed the street, and walked towards the desolate area.

This was the route the couple often took home during high school and also led to the banks of Wu Lie River.

Lu Ran suddenly stopped.

With a somewhat astonished look, in the middle of the road.

Suddenly, for a moment, he realized.

Just now, Jiang Ruyi wasn't calling his name, but she was giving an answer.

What her comprehension for advancing to the River Realm was all about.

"Shall we go?" Jiang Ruyi stood across the street, looking back at Lu Ran.

He looked silly, just like the first time she took him home to meet her parents.

"What, you don't want to treat me to hotpot anymore?"

Jiang Ruyi turned to face Lu Ran, her hands behind her back, her eyebrows slightly raised.

A dark trench coat, jeans, black boots, a dark red knitted scarf.

And the shiny black hair fluttering in the wind.

The once tender girl had now grown into such graceful beauty.

The only thing unchanged was that answer, right?

"Oh," Lu Ran lowered his head and quickly walked towards her.

Can one's comprehension for advancement, the support for their climb...

be another person?

Right after Jiang Ruyi spoke out, she regretted it a bit.

Seeing that Lu Ran was at a crucial stage of advancement, she shouldn't have rushed him.

Jiang Ruyi cautiously looked at Lu Ran and softly asked, "What were you thinking just now?"

"Ah," Lu Ran smirked and made up an excuse, "I was thinking that standing in the middle of the road for a while might bring some short-sighted drivers.

With a bang, you wouldn't have to go to a restaurant for lamb..."

Jiang Ruyi playfully slapped his shoulder, both irritated and amused.

So not eating in the restaurant, would they just pick it up from the street?

As she thought, it wasn't satisfying enough, so she lifted one long leg.

I'll dodge~

"See, that's rushed!" Lu Ran decisively quickened his step and whispered, "Be more ladylike."

Jiang Ruyi glared at Lu Ran, annoyed but followed him.

The street leading to Wu Lie River wasn't completely desolate.

At least, before reaching the abandoned residential area, there were stores, pharmacies, small restaurants along the side.

In the past two months, Lu Ran had almost wandered through the entire West River district.

He continually sought comprehension for advancement, dispirited, returning to the place that raised him.

"The Rain Season Flower Shop is closed," Jiang Ruyi spoke softly, looking at a worn-out sign by the road.

Flowers are not a necessity in life.

But they're like music that heals the soul, cross-talk to accompany sleep, inspiring "Heavenly Pride," and more.

People need these to help them through dark and difficult times.

So, the flower shop had always done alright.

But now...

The wooden fence in front of the shop was dismantled, the decorative flowers were gone, leaving only a few rusty iron frames and some flower pots piled in a corner.

"It's been closed for a very, very long time," Lu Ran said softly.

He remembered the shop owner, a gentle women who liked to wear dresses.

However, Lu Ran didn't know her name.

"Look on the bright side," Jiang Ruyi hooked Lu Ran's arm, "Maybe she moved away from this city."

Indeed, it's better to think positively.

It would be too sad to imagine her tragically dead in the street, her dress stained with blood.

"Old Zhang's family hasn't moved away, though." Lu Ran slightly raised his head, gesturing toward the small 'Wedding Photography' sign beside the flower shop.

Jiang Ruyi fell silent.

The shop was still running, but it was now managed by his son because Old Zhang had passed away.

During high school, when they needed various-sized photos, she often came here to get them taken.

Now, everything has changed.

On this street filled with memories, some familiar faces can only resurface in their recollections.CenterScreen.

Lu Jiang walked silently, observing the storefronts they had passed countless times on their way home.

Old friends are like trees in a courtyard;

With each passing breeze, they grow more distant.

As they approached the Wu Lie River residential area, the shops vanished.

Lu Ran inwardly sighed in relief.

In recent days, he had retraced this route many times.

Through each shop, he saw and thought of many people.

Those who were still alive, those who had died, those forever remaining in Rain Alley.

Suddenly, Lu Ran slowed his pace.

Jiang Ruyi, holding onto his arm, immediately sensed his abnormality and slowed her steps as well.

Since she had felt guilty after crossing the road earlier.

This time, she didn't speak up right away but quietly observed Lu Ran's profile.

She noticed that Lu Ran was staring blankly ahead.

Following his gaze, Jiang Ruyi turned to see a desolate view in front of Wu Lie River residential area.

The street ahead was empty.

Only dry leaves were being blown about by the wind.

No one was there.

Really... was no one there?

In Lu Ran's vision, there appeared a pair of ghostly figures.

The ghostly boy was dressed in a blue and white school uniform, with a school bag slung over one shoulder, and a wooden sword in his hand, practicing against the setting sun.

The ghostly girl, also in a school uniform, carried a backpack and walked with a shy look on her face.

"Jade Talisman," the ghostly boy said with a smile, his eyes firm.

"Why?" the ghostly girl looked at the boy, a trace of curiosity in her eyes.

"My dad is a Jade Talisman Believer. Every fifteenth night, he goes out to slay evil spirits. He's very impressive!"

The boy raised his wooden sword, blocking the sunlight in front of his eyes.

"Oh, I see. Is your uncle one of the Moon Gazers?" the girl asked with a hint of respect in her eyes.

"No, he's a soldier," the boy's voice lowered slightly, his mood seeming to falter, "He moved here to take care of me, working with the Wangyue Army on missions."

"What rank was your uncle?"

"He died, sacrificed," the boy looked up towards the abandoned building not far away.

"Oh, sorry, I didn't know..." the girl's face showed a flash of panic.

"It's okay," the boy continued walking, suddenly lowering the wooden sword from his face.

Lu Ran's heart trembled slightly!

He wasn't sure if the boy walking towards him was making eye contact or looking at the setting sun behind him.

The two sets of figures, both young and old, walked towards each other.

He wore a school uniform, holding a somewhat tattered wooden sword, his face youthful yet resolute.

She wore a school uniform, her hair tied in a neat ponytail, her eyes filled with naive affection.

The young boy and girl walked side by side, a small distance between them.

He wore a hat and a mask, his posture more upright, his eyes calm and serene.

She wore a long coat, graceful and elegant, her long black hair over her shoulders, her eyes full of gentleness.

The young man and woman walked arm in arm, with no distance between them.

The two pairs of figures moved forward step by step.

Their figures passed through each other...

"So I will join the Jade Talisman Sect to complete his unfinished business!" the boy's voice came from behind.

Lu Ran stopped in his tracks and turned to look.

Jiang Ruyi also stopped, sensing something, and looked towards the empty street behind.

"I will protect this city for him!"

"I will fight through every fifteenth night, to avenge him."

"One day, I will eradicate all the evil spirits in this world!"

The boastful words echoed in their ears.

Carrying the unique vigor of youth and great ambitions.

Under the remaining light of the sunset, the ghostly figures of the boy and girl, facing the setting sun, gradually moved further away.

Sigh~

A faint wind stirred.

In the clear sky, clouds suddenly gathered.

Jiang Ruyi's eyes widened slightly, a flash of joy in her expression.

She released her hand, gesturing to step aside.

Lu Ran, however, wrapped his arms around her shoulders, drawing her into his embrace.

Jiang Ruyi hesitated for a moment, but ultimately didn't say anything, gently hugging him, burying her face in his shoulder.

In Lu Ran's eyes, the ghostly figures of the boy and girl gradually faded into the distance.

But suddenly, for a moment, the ghostly boy turned his head and looked towards Lu Ran from afar.

"Thank you," Lu Ran murmured softly, the energy fluctuation around him growing more intense.

The ghostly girl also turned her head, as if curious about what the boy was looking at.

Or perhaps...

Her naive eyes, crossing through the years, glancing through time, saw the couple embracing by the roadside.

Saw herself in his arms.