

Old Gods 341

Chapter 341: Dialogue Beyond Time 310

Lu Ran had once hoped that Rain Alley City would teach him something.

He looked around his small world, but what he found was failure, day after day.

He had also called Big Nightmare, hoping to review the old to understand the new, wanting her to share some insights with him.

Still, it was a fruitless search with no clue.

Never had he expected!

On this desolate street corner at sunset, he found the answer he was looking for.

And the person who had personally opened the door to his promotion, who had guided and taught him...

turned out to be his former self.

A self with aspirations higher than the heavens.

Arrogant yet resolute!

"Let's go, move forward."

Lu Ran gazed at the fading ghostly image of the girl pausing to look back, continuing in a hushed voice, "I will always be with you."

"What?" A voice came to his ears.

Lu Ran slightly lowered his gaze, seeing her in his arms, now mature and enchantingly elegant.

Because Lu Ran was in the process of being promoted, Jiang Ruyi had been very quiet.

She didn't know what Lu Ran was seeing, just had some guesses in her heart, but never asked out loud.

Including now, she quietly accompanied Lu Ran through his promotion.

However, when Lu Ran said those words, she couldn't help but ask.

"I see us," Lu Ran whispered, "just after we started high school, when we hadn't known each other for long."

Jiang Ruyi smiled and replied, looking down, "Focus on your promotion."

What visions could there be? They were just memories.

Like the memories of the people who had left the stores along the way.

They became vague images in the mind...

Lu Ran looked earnest: "I am focusing on the promotion."

The shadowy young man said, to complete that person's unfinished business, to protect this city for that person."

Jiang Ruyi silently reminisced about that after-school walk home they had taken countless times.

But that one time, she clearly remembered.

Because that day, Jiang Ruyi first heard of the death of Lu Ran's father, and also learned that Lu Ran had returned from Beijing.

In the future, he was prepared to live alone in Rain Alley City.

For there were far too many things he could not part with here.

Lu Ran's voice continued,

"The shadowy young girl stood there, watching us from afar."

Hearing this, Jiang Ruyi wrapped her arms around Lu Ran's body, tightening her embrace involuntarily.

So, that was why Lu Ran had just said, "Move forward, I will always be with you."

He was actually talking to the past her.

"Have they gone far?"

Jiang Ruyi knew it was Lu Ran's memory but was very willing to play along.

Lu Ran narrowed his eyes slightly: "Very far, almost at the end of the road."

The setting sun was still blinding, making it difficult for him to clearly see their figures.

Jiang Ruyi rested her chin on Lu Ran's shoulder, closed her eyes, and smiled gently,

"Hurry and tell that boy for me, before he disappears,

don't be afraid, just move forward.

I will always, always be with him."

Her voice was tender and resolute, soothing to the soul.

Lu Ran felt a palpitation and was somewhat at a loss.

Who could withstand this...

Lu Ran took a deep breath, whispered softly, "He heard you."

Jiang Ruyi playfully responded, "Tell him louder; he can't hear you with my soft voice."

Lu Ran raised his hand, placing it on her head, and gently ruffled it:

"He really heard you, I promise."

"Mhm." Jiang Ruyi buried her head in Lu Ran's shoulder, her hand gently picking up the hem of his clothes, gripping it tighter and tighter.

A breeze began to blow, and her long hair fluttered.

Beside the forming whirlpool of Immortal Fog high above, another faint one appeared, intersecting with it.

The energy fluctuations within her grew more intense.

Until she stood on equal footing with the man before her.

"Huh~"

"Thud!" One after another, figures fell down, stargazing in shock at the couple on the street.

Is this...?

Is this Lu Ran and Jiang Ruyi?

With the appearance of an anomaly in the sky, does that mean Lu Ran is being promoted to Jiang Realm?

Lu Ran, eighteen years old, a college freshman... Jiang Realm?

The phrases "eighteen years old" and "Jiang Realm" were understandable on their own.

But linked together, they seemed very foreign.

"Wang Team!" A Moon Gazer looked up at the sky in utter amazement, "It seems like it's not just Lu Ran?"

"Ah?" A group of Moon Gazers all looked up.

Indeed, there were two vortexes in the sky!

Although some were partially overlapping and intersecting, they showed no sign of merging.

Definitely two!

"Holy crap!" A man clasped his head, his eyes filled with disbelief.

Is Jiang Realm something easily attained?

Of course not!

Look at Rain Alley City!

Every night of the fifteenth, there are only two Jiang Realm Great Powers stationed.

But suddenly, two more appear?

Is that right?

This... This damn sure is!

"Xiao Li, report to the bureau immediately, send more people over!"

"The rest of you, follow me to cordon off this area, no one is allowed in!"

"Yes!"

"Yes!"

These two Heavenly Prides, they're the treasures of Rain Alley City!

On the occasion of their promotion, not even the slightest mistake can be tolerated.

Thick Immortal Fog descended from the sky, enveloping them both.

Teams of Moon Gazers rushed to the scene, swiftly cordoning off several blocks around.

Although the people couldn't see those within the fog, their faces were unable to conceal their joy; their hearts filled with blessings.

...

In Wu Lie River City, inside Wu Lie River University's Martial Arts Arena.

Under a big tree, the crisp sound of a phone ringing incessantly.

"Who is it, so annoying!" A woman's voice echoed discontentedly from the arena.

Chang Ying put down her giant axe, striding with long legs swiftly toward the edge of the field.

"You?!" Deng Yutang's face changed drastically.

He quickly retracted his move and leaped to the side, narrowly avoiding stabbing Chang Ying with his spear point.

Deng Yutang was truly angered, too furious to speak, pointing at the black-hooded girl, "You, you, you!"

"Chang Ying! You've got to change that impetuous temper of yours!"

A young woman came forward, her words chiding gently as she lightly patted Deng Yutang's arm.

Her manner was somewhat affectionate.

The young woman was tall and slender, with delicate features, and her uniquely pale skin.

Bai Manni!

"Humph!" Deng Yutang turned to look aside.

"After she's done with her phone call, I'll talk to her," Bai Manni assured with a smile.

In her eyes, the young man's exceptionally heroic face looked rather amusing when annoyed.

To others, the two appeared a striking match in appearance.

"Hehe~" Tian Tian stood on the other half of the field, snickering to herself.

Chang Ying picked up her phone from under the tree, initially somewhat impatient.

But upon seeing the caller ID, she was first delighted, then her heart tightened, and she quickly answered,

"Dad? What's happened at home?"

"Heh, my girl is sharp. You know when there's trouble at home, huh?"

Chang Ying blinked in confusion: "Eh?"

You're so cheerful even when there's trouble at home?

No wonder I'm so carefree, I got it from you~

Her teammates overheard Chang Ying's words and gathered around.

Continuing on the phone, her father said, "We've got another anomaly over here!

There's a huge vortex in the sky covering our auto repair shop!

But the fog that's coming down is going southward, I think it's converging toward that street by Wu Lie River.

Do you think it could be..."

"Ran Bao?!" Chang Ying's eyes shone brightly.

Deng Tian Bai, the trio, were equally hopeful.

They all knew that Lu Ran was River Realm·Fifth Rank and was not attending school because he was working on advancing to Jiang Realm.

Deng Yutang knew even better that the Wu Lie River bank was Lu Ran's secret base!

"It might be, I don't know, they've blocked off several streets nearby, not allowing anyone in," her father said.

Chang Ying hurriedly replied, "You must not go in and look!

It takes several days to advance to Jiang Realm.

With such dense fog over there, what if you get lost and starve to death inside?"

Her father: "..."

I've lived in Rain Alley City my whole life, and now I can't make it out of two streets?

He paused and then said, "Yingying, how is it going at school recently? Are you eating okay?"

It was clear that Chang's father was just looking for a pretext to call, mainly to check on his daughter.

Deng Tian Bai, the trio, each took out their phones, looking for news about Rain Alley City.

What they saw was astonishing!

Although the anomaly over Rain Alley City had not yet reached the news outlets, there were small videos circulating online.

Bai Manni was the first to find a video, and she realized that there were not just one, but two vortexes in the sky!

"Oh?" Bai Manni's expression turned increasingly shocked as she looked at her phone.

Deng Yutang immediately leaned in to look at her phone.

They stood close, but Bai Manni did not move away.

"Two vortexes?" Deng Yutang's face was startled.

Bai Manni speculated, "Could it be Lu Ran and Silent Night Blade?"

Deng Yutang: "One advancing to Jiang Realm, the other unlocking the Divine Weapon Domain?"

To anyone, such talk would sound like nonsense.

The difficulty of reaching Jiang Realm was undeniable.

Unlocking a Divine Weapon Domain was even rarer and harder to come by.

And yet, this was Lu Ran!

And yet, on the night of the fifteenth of August, he had just unlocked the Domain of a Divine Weapon!

With Lu Ran, what couldn't happen?

Tian Tian's small head peeked over, staring at the phone, "It could also be Sister Ruyi, you know?"

Bai Manni's heart stirred, turning to look at Deng Yutang.

Not Silent Night Blade, but Lu Ran and Jiang Ruyi together advancing to Jiang Realm?

It seemed... possible?!

As they pondered, waves crashed in their hearts.

Jiang Ruyi was only slightly behind Lu Ran.

To others, she was also a figure to be admired!

"Ey, Dad~ I know!" Chang Ying's slightly coquettish voice came from afar, "Two boys are chasing me!

But they're all skinny, even skinnier than Ran Bao... cough cough, anyway, I refused them.

What's the rush! Never mind that, hanging up..."

Chang Ying quickly ended the call, turning to look at the others.

Noticing them all watching and snickering, Chang Ying raised an eyebrow, ignored her female peers, and went straight to confront Deng Yutang:

"Ran Bao is about to be promoted again! And to Jiang Realm Great Power! What about you?"

Deng Yutang's smile instantly froze.

Then, Tian Tian whispered, "Almost, almost~"

Deng Yutang: ???

"Whoops... hehe~" Bai Manni couldn't help but laugh, quickly catching Deng Yutang's wrist and stepping aside.

Tian Tian playfully stuck out her tongue and swiftly ran behind Chang Ying.

She peeked out again, acting frightened and quietly looking at Deng Yutang.

Deng Yutang's face flushed red, ignoring Tian Tian, his spear pointed at Chang Ying:

"Duels! I want a duel with you!"

"Rustle rustle~"

Chang Ying gripped the fortune sticks canister, already shaking it.

One might assume a battle was imminent.

Instead, a wooden stick flew out gently, non-lethal.

It hung in the air, slowly spinning, with two characters inscribed — Excellent!

An excellent fortune?

"Wow!"

"Yingying, what did you calculate?" They all gasped at the wooden stick in surprise.

Was it the elusive excellent fortune?

"Ha ha!" Chang Ying laughed heartily, thrilled, "I just knew!"

This matter with my Ran Bao,

is a success!

Chapter 342: River! Vast River!

October 7th,

Rain Alley City began to experience a light drizzle again.

By the bank of Wu Lie River, two elongated figures hid within the thick fog, standing in the bone-chilling icy rain.

Two members of the Human Clan, a man and a woman, were here to ascend to the River Realm, and naturally, no one dared to disturb them.

There wasn't even a topic of offering an umbrella.

Poor Lu Ran was harshly schooled by the early winter drizzles.

The first step to becoming divine was to suffer and endure!

To say "becoming divine" wasn't an exaggeration.

What is the essence of cultivation?

It is to transcend one's physical mortal body!

From this perspective, ascending through breakthroughs and receiving Divine Blessings had the same effect.

Both nourished and transformed the fleshy bodies of the Human Clan.

Lu Ran, during his time at Luoxian Mountain, had received blessings from Lord Immortal Goat and thus had more authority on this subject.

That beam of light from the sky had tempered his body and marrow, aiding him in his transformation.

At this moment, his breakthrough to the River Realm was another process of "transforming."

Looking back, the breakthroughs through the Stream Realm and River Realm seemed trivial.

At this time, his promotion to the River Realm and the transformation and upgrade of the Human Clan's flesh were unimaginably profound!

No wonder those from the River Realm were called great powers!

Only having experienced it oneself, could one look at worshippers from Mist Realm, Stream Realm, River Realm, and so on...

One would realize, clearly, that you have entirely set yourself apart from the common folk.

It wasn't just an enhancement of physical quality or an increase in bodily strength.

It was a differentiation at the species level, distinguished by nobility!

No wonder the great powers of the River Realm carried a certain demeanor.

This so-called demeanor, was arguably based on this disparity in rank, resulting in a condescending look from on high.

As someone bathed in moonlight, how would you regard the glowing decaying grass?

Lu Ran was late to realize!

He then understood that people like Deng Yuxiang, Liu Yunlan, Ge Bin, Zhao Zhenren, and others looked at him from such a high esteem.

Deng Yuxiang's attitude towards him remained unchanged before and after her promotion because they were extremely close.

Liu Yunlan and Ge Bin, perhaps due to their status or sufficient cultivation, also treated Lu Ran very amiably.

As for Zhao Zhenren...

Being elevated enough, he indeed had the right to display airs.

If any other River Realm·Fifth Rank Believer dared to speak arrogantly in front of Zhao Zhenren, they would truly become a laughing stock!

Poor child,

to encounter anyone but the Evil Sect Master...

"Hmm~" Jiang Ruyi's delicate body trembled slightly, emitting an enticing sound from her nose.

Hearing this, Lu Ran's mind wandered; he quickly focused again.

Ascending together, Lu Ran empathized deeply with everything Jiang Ruyi was experiencing.

When advancing to the River Realm, the comfort brought about by the nourishment inch by inch of the flesh was unimaginable to ordinary people.

At the River Realm,

Divine Power flowed within one's body like tiny streams of water.

Now,

the streams inside their bodies had become raging rivers!

It was a tumultuous, outright qualitative leap!

It gave one a feeling:

This majestic, vast river could easily drown everything around and crush all beings underfoot.

Of course, this was not an illusion; a Jiang Realm Great Power indeed could achieve this.

Interestingly, everything about the River Realm seemed to provoke an imbalance in one's mentality.

This promotion was far more intense and worse than the mental fluctuations experienced by ordinary people when they first successfully revere a god and transform into a Believer!

No choice, this all-rounded qualitative improvement was truly terrifying...

It wasn't that Lu Ran didn't want to remain human,

but rather, the level of power no longer allowed him to be so.

No wonder "Heavenly Pride" scored River Realm students so low.

Being strong like this, of course, demanded a matching performance.

"Whoo!!"

A fierce whirlwind rushed out from Lu Ran's body, spreading in all directions.

Lu Ran was already embracing Jiang Ruyi, and he now held her even tighter,

fearing that his girlfriend might be blown away.

He initially thought that his advancement might affect Jiang Ruyi to some extent.

Unexpectedly, this victorious bugle call instead became a boost to her success.

Well, that made sense.

Jiang Ruyi's insight during promotion was quite special.

Unique enough...to be another person.

"Whoo!!"

In just a short three to five seconds, another fierce wind stirred.

This time, it emanated from Jiang Ruyi.

In the gloomy sky, the two swirls gradually ceased their circulation.

On the desolate, bleak streets of the city, a man and a woman both opened their eyes at the same time.

River Realm First Rank!

Human Clan great power!

Lu Ran saw a pair of eyes like autumn waters, shimmering with light, and a touch of joy in their depths.

However, she was quite a mess.

The cold icy rain was impartially schooling everyone without an umbrella.

Jiang Ruyi was drenched from head to toe, her face adorned with crystal clear raindrops, her jet-black hair wet and sticking to her cheeks.

Well... indeed a mess, but also exceptionally charming.

"Hehe~"

Jiang Ruyi was also observing Lu Ran.

Seeing his drowned-rat appearance, she could not help but laugh out loud, reaching out to brush his short hair.

Lu Ran's hat had already been blown away, and he had taken off his mask early on.

Regarding advancement, he was extremely serious, needing to regulate his breathing without wishing to suffer the slightest interference.

Lu Ran held her wet face in his hands, gazing at those tempting, moist lips, and gently kissed her.

"Mm!" Jiang Ruyi's beautiful eyes widened slightly.

The cheeks, slightly pale from the cold, quickly blushed.

Under the cold curtain of rain,

the two frozen figures kissed passionately.

Their style was always mismatched with the gloomy and desolate Rain Alley City.

As mentioned before,

they seemed to be defying the world.

"Oh~~~"

"Young people indeed, hahaha!"

"Swoosh~!"

"Clap! Clap! Clap!" Applause thundered, cheers arose, amidst which whistles sounded intermittently.

Lu Ran was startled and quickly looked around.

All around, in the streets and alleys, Moon Gazers clad in raincoats were everywhere.

People were watching here with varied expressions.

Some were smiling broadly, either with a teasing look or a maternal grin.

Some were joyous, their emotions stirring, their eyes filled with endless admiration.

Many more were filled with deep respect, looking from afar at the pride of Rain Alley City.

Looking at Da Xia's first genius among the heavenly proud!

"Congratulations, Mr. Lu!"

"Congratulations, congratulations." A few figures came forward.

Lu Ran was somewhat familiar with these people, qualified to offer their congratulations immediately.

Earlier, when he collected his reward for topping the national college entrance examination, he naturally cooperated with the city's key leaders for the publicity.

It was just a photo shoot, not too troublesome.

What surprised Lu Ran more was that Liu Yunlan and Ge Bin, these two seniors, were also present.

Earlier, when Deng Yuxiang advanced to the River Realm by the Wu Lie River, there wasn't such a grand scene!

"Thank you, thank you."

Lu Ran repeatedly thanked them, and since the other party extended a hand, he didn't mind his own wet palms and shook hands with the leaders.

Jiang Ruyi, graceful as ever, did not shake hands with the leaders but simply nodded with a smile.

After some pleasantries, Liu Yunlan took the initiative to step forward and extended her hand to Lu Ran.

Lu Ran naturally took it, and Senior Liu reached out with the other hand, patted Lu Ran's back of the hand, and encouraged:

"I won't say much about congratulations, I hope you maintain your true self and keep a good mindset.

So far, you guys have been doing well."

Being in the River Realm, both Lu Jiang knew what she meant.

Ge Bin stepped forward, looking at the spirited pair of Da Xia's genius, deliberately lowering his voice:

"Treat people as people."

Lu Ran: "..."

Jiang Ruyi: "..."

This statement was indeed simple and straightforward.

Ge Bin was so blunt probably because Lu Jiang were simply too young!

They were only eighteen, just freshmen in college.

They were in their reckless youth, and now they had the capital to be wild and defiant.

Neither Lu nor Jiang were Moon Gazers, unlike Deng Yuxiang, who was strictly disciplined by her organization.

Hence, a proper caution was necessary.

"Hehe." Liu Yunlan smiled, glanced at Ge Bin, then turned to Lu Ran, "Change the perspective.

There are always higher powers.

There will always be those who view you and me as they would ants."

Hearing this, Lu Ran's mind conjured an image of a familiar figure—Qiao Wanjun!

Kinship allowed Lu Ran to face his mother without much pressure, even daring to defy her.

Repeatedly rejecting her arrangements.

But others...

For instance, Miss Chen Jingjing, following beside his mother, probably didn't even dare to breathe heavily, right?

The River Realm truly opened the door to a new world for Lu Ran.

Much like studying,

the more one delves into learning, the less one feels they know.

At this moment, the stronger Lu Ran felt, the more he recognized his insignificance.

So...

The stronger the power, the weaker it becomes?

"Thank you for the advice, seniors." Seeing Lu Ran deep in thought, Jiang Ruyi softly spoke up.

Liu Yunlan's smile was warm as she looked at the celestial-like Jiang Ruyi.

The girl had reached the River Realm and no longer needed flowing robes or swirling Immortal Fog to accentuate her aura.

Jiang Ruyi had changed, a transformation from the inside out.

Even though she was drenched and somewhat in disarray at the moment.

But the elegant immortal grace exuding from her bones was enough to make anyone feel ashamed.

Liu Yunlan secretly admired her and gently advised, "Get used to the new world, the new life.

You can appropriately drink water, eat food.

Though troublesome, these little things help us maintain our sense of identity as members of the Human Clan."

Jiang Ruyi nodded gently.

The change in the River Realm was comprehensive.

At this moment, she indeed didn't need much food.

The horrific physique of the River Realm, drawing energy from the heavens and earth, was sufficient to sustain normal life functions.

The raging river within her was not just for show.

That was a sign of the preliminary transcendence from the mortal flesh!

Thinking of this, Lu Ran snapped back to reality and looked at Jiang Ruyi.

He had reached the River Realm!

He had met the minimum requirement of Lord Immortal Goat, and now he could take little Ruyi to Luoxian Mountain to receive the blessings!

The genuine Divine Blessing, which could enhance one's aptitude!

Improving the limit of cultivation was the main point!

Originally, you could only cultivate up to level 60, and that was your max.

After the blessing, you can cultivate up to level 100!

What did that mean?

Using this opportunity, Lu Ran could also enhance himself for the second time!

With such a thick pillar of light, he could also bathe in it, enjoying the benefits.

Absolutely delightful~...

Chapter 343: Beauty's Knee

Chilly winter rain, pattering down.

Lu Ran expressed his gratitude to all, then took Jiang Ruyi by the hand to bid farewell to the crowd.

Drenched like a pair of drowned rats, the two hurried home as fast as they could, with Lu Ran first insisting Jiang Ruyi take a bath, while he entered the small bedroom.

"Lord Immortal Goat!" Lu Ran stood in front of the shrine, hands pressed together.

Having successfully ascended to the River Realm, even his speech now carried more confidence.

"Disciple has successfully advanced to the River Realm!"

"Mhm, not bad." The telepathic response came, deep and husky.

Lu Ran wiped his dripping face, his smile brilliant.

Though Lord Immortal Goat's reply was brief, satisfaction could be heard.

Seizing the opportunity, Lu Ran whispered:

"Lord Immortal Goat, you said before that once I reached the River Realm, I could employ the Evil Technique, to silently send Jiang Ruyi to the Luo Xian Residence..."

"It was merely to use your ridiculous Human Clan emotions to spur your cultivation."

The Immortal Goat's words were blunt and discourteous.

Lu Ran: "Ah?"

Immortal Sheep Jade Carving: "Before Jiang Ruyi leaves the Jade Talisman Sect, it would be best not to reveal the Evil Technique in her presence."

Lu Ran pondered for a moment before nodding silently.

Two days ago, when Lu Ran inquired about Jiang Ruyi's enlightenment direction, her two-word reply stunned him.

And deeply moved him.

What is affection?

Is it love at first sight, an irrational passion that rises with the wind?

It could be, but it's far from everything.

Affection is the accumulation of life's tiny moments, the companionship through thick and thin.

It's the warmth shared between two people, their perfect fit, their mutual need that is hard to forsake.

It's the day after day, incident after incident, the continual build-up of sunk costs.

Unable to extricate oneself, then why talk of restraint.

Lu Ran never doubted the emotional bond between himself and Jiang Ruyi.

But this wasn't enough to reveal to her his identity as the Evil Sect Master.

However, when Jiang Ruyi summarized her path of growth with the words "Lu Ran"...

She was entitled!

He was her "path," an existence she couldn't bring herself to abandon.

Jiang Ruyi's success in unlocking the gates of advancement also verified her words as true.

The River Realm, unlike mist, creek, river.

It's not something you can reach by merely charging forward without thought.

The Vast River requires an inner enlightenment.

Let us call this enlightenment "the Path" for now!

Your "Path" must not waver.

Otherwise, your strength can't improve even in the slightest, which is just the most superficial punishment.

For those at higher levels, it's quite common to fall back, but even this is not the most terrifying consequence.

The obliteration of one's Heart of the Dao,

The impacts on one's mental state and psyche, are truly the most horrifying.

Setting Lu Ran aside,

Jiang Ruyi, as a person, has needs for survival, self-improvement, and protecting her parents.

As a member of the Human Clan, living under these special circumstances, she also aims to annihilate Evil Demons.

For Jiang Ruyi, all of the above could completely vanish with Lu Ran's disappearance.

Some overly realistic words don't belong in a sincere emotional exchange.

Actually, Lu Ran is quite foolish himself.

Even without all these reasons, he firmly believes that when the time is right, he can share his secrets with Jiang Ruyi, and she will stand firmly by his side.

A pure love warrior, steadfast unto death!

Contemptible schemers are the ones who should damn well drop dead!

Well... regardless, the reality of the situation is already laid out before him.

At this moment, Lu Ran could act utterly uninhibited in front of Jiang Ruyi.

A law unto himself!

Of course, Lu Ran would never do that.

He doesn't even have time to dote on her...

Jiang Ruyi is indeed qualified to touch upon the secrets of Lu Ran.

But for now, she's still with the Jade Talisman Sect, so let's set that aside for the moment.

Another point also gave Lu Ran great confidence in drawing her into the Ran Sect.

He had a divine safety net!

Lord Immortal Goat had clearly stated, once Jiang Ruyi recognized the true nature of this world, everything would fall into place.

"So... Lord Immortal Goat."

Lu Ran composed his words before continuing, "Shall I bring her back to Luoxian Mountain?"

Bother you to bestow a blessing on her... cough, I mean, bless your disciple, as a side bonus let her bask in the benefits.

I'm now in the River Realm and can withstand a mightier blessing."

"Heh." A cold laugh echoed in his mind.

Lu Ran felt a bit awkward and smiled sheepishly.

Immortal Sheep Jade Carving: "This matter is better sooner than later."

Lu Ran was overjoyed, "Thank you, Lord Immortal Goat!"

Receiving blessings earlier means earlier improvement in abilities; cultivation would naturally be twice as effective with half the effort.

Meanwhile, a tall silhouette appeared at the doorway.

Jiang Ruyi, wearing a loose white bathrobe and holding a large bath towel, lazily dried her long hair.

Her fresh post-bath rosiness was enticing.

Yet the powerful aura she emitted due to ascending to the River Realm discouraged any blasphemous thoughts.

In contrast, the other River Realm powerhouse in the room...

Still looked like a drowned rat.

And because he was cheerfully thanking the shrine, he indeed lacked some of the dignity befitting a powerhouse.

Jiang Ruyi hesitated, wanting Lu Ran to hurry and take a bath but not wishing to disturb his communion with the divine.

Fortunately, Lu Ran finished his consultation and turned to look at the door.

One glance,

And Lu Ran's heart skipped a beat.

Her appearances hadn't changed, but why did she seem so different?

Charisma is such a mysterious thing.

Invisible,

Yet it strikes people's senses so tangibly.

"Go take a wash, we've been cold for two days," Jiang Ruyi said softly.

"Understood!" Lu Ran smiled and stepped towards her.

The cold rainwater dripped from his cheeks, leaving wet footprints where he walked.

Yet Jiang Ruyi seemed unaware.

Her face was adorned with a gentle smile as she quietly gazed into his eyes.

"Why are you staring at me?" Lu Ran joked, "Could it be that after ascending, I can entice with beauty too?"

"Go," Jiang Ruyi laughed and playfully spat at Lu Ran, "Go take a bath."

"I will tell you a piece of tremendous news afterward!" Lu Ran whispered as he passed by her, heading straight for the bathroom.

Jiang Ruyi was quite curious.

What could be better news than ascending to the River Realm?

...

By the time Lu Ran had finished bathing and came out wearing his bathrobe, the house had been tidied up cleanly.

Jiang Ruyi sat on the sofa, talking on the phone.

She crossed her elegant legs, with wisps of Immortal Fog swirling around her, almost ethereally beautiful.

Lu Ran sat next to her, listening in to find that on the other end of the phone was Jiang's mother, Zhuang Jingyi.

It was clear the mother took great pride in her daughter.

The news of Lu Ran and Jiang Ruyi's advancement had already spread through Rain Alley City.

Because of Lu Ran, the media had covered the story extensively; it seemed the whole Da Xia might already know.

This had led to Zhuang Jingyi being congratulated by colleagues every day when she went to work.

A happy nuisance, so to speak.

Zhuang Jingyi, already a competent judge, now saw her prospects greatly broadened by the accomplishments of her daughter and son-in-law.

Without any particular effort on their part, their influence was there to see.

Lu Ran was the real-life "Rain Alley Guardian"!

How much had he given to this city, how many lives had he saved?

And how many more would he help in the future?

Who wouldn't give a three-point courtesy to Lu Ran's in-laws?

To make a jest:

If Zhuang Jingyi could bust open the office door of the court's president, complain of thirst, and tea would need to be brewed immediately...

Actually, without harnessing Lu Ran's influence,

The Jiang Family had become renowned among the leaders at the provincial and municipal levels since Jiang Ruyi's appearance on the "Heavenly Pride" stage.

As for whether the Jiangs were interested in a political career, that was another matter.

Lu Ran wasn't concerned with that.

Though part of the same family living under one sky, they were people from two different worlds.

"Mhm, I'll ask him," Jiang Ruyi quietly responded and hung up the phone.

"What is it?" Lu Ran, lacking the comportment of a great master, shuffled closer and then lay in her lap.

The comfort of his girlfriend's knee pillow!

Such happiness~

Jiang Ruyi looked down at Lu Ran with a warm smile, her elegantly crossed legs coming together to provide him with even more comfort.

One hand reached down, gently stroking his hair:

"The past two months, you were immersed in cultivation, and mom and dad didn't want to disturb you.

Now that we've advanced, mom wants us to come home for dinner and asked if you're free."

"Oh, let's go," Lu Ran replied softly.

Jiang Ruyi, always sensitive, sensed something amiss and asked, "Don't you want to go?"

Lu Ran shook his head repeatedly: "No, not that. It's just, I was thinking about going for a lamb hot pot later."

They were supposed to enjoy lamb hot pot with cheerful hearts.

Instead, they got drenched at Wu Lie River for two days, chilled to the bone, and then... home.

"Hehe~"

Jiang Ruyi couldn't help but chuckle, flicking Lu Ran on the forehead with her finger.

Clearly a little lamb, yet fixating on lamb hot pot...

Lu Ran gazed at Jiang Ruyi, feeling increasingly unworthy.

No!

How come she looks so ethereal?

Why?

Oh... right, she's my girlfriend.

That's fine then.

Suddenly, Jiang Ruyi placed a hand before Lu Ran's eyes, lightly covering them.

With Lu Ran unable to see, Jiang Ruyi's face slightly reddened as she quietly adjusted her breathing.

The River Realm—truly unpredictable.

Like the boundary between mortals and immortals.

Lu Ran's eyes were already like the stars of Galaxy Bay.

Now those dark pupils, set within his increasingly handsome face, stood out even more prominently.

Gradually, Jiang Ruyi's brow furrowed.

Why did other River Realm powerhouses, like Captain Ge Bin, seem so ordinary?

Lost in a crowd, indistinguishable.

Was there a way to contain that edge slightly?

Just now, both Liu Yunlan and Ge Bin had said if she needed anything, she could call them.

She decided to seek their advice when the opportunity arose.

Jiang Ruyi contemplated silently, then said softly, "Accompany me back. I miss mom and dad.

I'll have mom prepare hot pot at home for you, how about that?"

"Okay," Lu Ran readily agreed.

Jiang Ruyi's eyes, still affectionate, continued to shield his gaze as she picked up the phone again.

She suddenly remembered the previous topic and asked, "Right, what were you going to tell me? Some good news?"

Lu Ran tugged gently at her fingers, pulling down.

Jiang Ruyi resisted, keeping his eyes covered, her palm unwilling to budge.

"What's the meaning, not letting me see you?" Lu Ran looked puzzled.

"What's the good news?" Jiang Ruyi pressed.

Lu Ran curled a lip, "I consulted with Lord Immortal Goat. In the next couple of days, I'll take you back to Luoxian Mountain to receive a Divine Blessing."

"Divine Blessing?"

"Yes, a genuine blessing!"

Lu Ran pursed his lips, adding, "Body Tempering and Marrow Cleansing, Transforming kind of blessing!"

Jiang Ruyi's forehead creased in shock, "But, but I'm a believer of..."

Lu Ran cut her off, "It doesn't matter what kind of Believer you are. You are my girlfriend, no, my fiancée.

You are the lady of Luoxian Mountain, the one who will accompany me for life."

Jiang Ruyi fell silent.

From her lightly bitten lip, one could tell her heart was anything but still.

Lu Ran's words were sudden.

Like a confession,

Yet far exceeding one.

Lu Ran grasped her fingers again, pulling down to finally see the light.

He smiled, "When I just got back, didn't you ask about my eyes?"

Now you'll understand.

I'll take you to Galaxy Bay to see the starry river.

Take you to Luoxian Pavilion to see the flowers, the twilight."

Jiang Ruyi did not speak, silently gazing into Lu Ran's eyes.

"Moreover, the mushrooms there are really tasty...uh?"

Lu Ran was stunned!

He watched as a face suddenly leaned forward, her soft lips blocking his words.

Little Ruyi, defying the heavens!

Was it just trying out the knee pillow, and she found her opportunity?

You...um, you could've said sooner!

Had I known, I'd have lain down sooner...

Chapter 344: weddings, he said

Lu Ran finally got to indulge in the much-anticipated lamb hotpot.

In the early winter, the family of four gathered around the steaming copper pot, creating an exceptionally cozy atmosphere.

It's worth mentioning that when Lu Jiang arrived home, they genuinely stunned Jiang's parents.

To say they looked like a pair of golden couple wasn't an overstatement.

The young man was heroic and upright, without a trace of murderous aura, but rather had a gentle demeanor and tranquility in his eyes.

This brought a huge visual shock to the couple!

You could hardly imagine that a warrior from Da Xia's battlefield, with his hands stained in blood, could exude such a sense of peaceful times.

Additionally, the phrase "Jiang Realm Great Power" inherently carried a reverence and upward-looking admiration.

The so-called "equality for all" did not apply to the group of cultivators.

Hierarchy and social status, that was the cruel reality.

However, in front of Lu Ran, Jiang's ordinary parents didn't feel much pressure.

This relieved the couple greatly, and when they looked at Lu Ran again, they felt reassurance along with admiration and gratitude.

They naturally thought that Lu Ran was deliberately toning down his brilliance, being mindful of ordinary people's feelings.

However, it was their daughter Jiang Ruyi, who left the couple somewhat at a loss.

Her ethereal temperament and fairy-like grace were enough to turn heads.

Her appearance hadn't changed, but she seemed like a completely different person all of a sudden.

The little calico cat wasn't much affected though.

Meowing, it quickly ran to its mistress's side, constantly nuzzling against her.

The calico must have been born into the wrong species.

It was nothing but a thankless wretch!

Lu Ran stooped down to pick it up, but it dashed away.

And it even ran away cursing!

This scene nearly amused Lu Ran to laughter!

Have we been apart for so long that you don't miss me at all?

Perhaps, I always give too much fortune to the calico, and it's not very pleased?

Who knows.

That dinner was thoroughly enjoyable.

Father Jiang was especially happy, drinking two glasses of white wine, and Lu Ran also had a little less than half a glass.

Spicy and bitter.

Just like life.

Not tasty.

Buoyed by the alcohol, Jiang Zheng casually brought up the marriage of Lu Ran and Jiang Ruyi.

This caused Jiang Ruyi to blush all over her face.

Her shy demeanor made the couple feel even more affectionate, reminiscing about their daughter's earlier mannerisms.

Lu Ran also took the opportunity to express his intentions.

"If it's not Ruyi, I won't marry," he declared resolutely.

In this world, when two people unite, they typically need to go through three levels of acceptance.

The first is familial acceptance.

Both Lu and Jiang had met each other's parents and received blessings from their elders.

However, due to Qiao Wanjun's cultivation retreat, the parents had not yet met.

The second is legal acceptance.

That is, registration, inspection, and obtaining a marriage certificate.

The third is social acceptance.

That means holding a wedding, informing friends and relatives, and declaring the union to society.

Especially the third point.

In Da Xia's cultural philosophy, it was considered more important than the first two points.

Nobody cared whether you were legally married or protected under the law.

Whether families were harmonious, or even whether the couple was harmonious, those were just gossip for others.

After the wedding, in the common view, you are spouses.

Lu Ran took this very seriously!

He told the couple that he hoped to hold a wedding once his mother, Qiao Wanjun, finished her retreat.

In those significant moments of life, Lu Ran hoped his mother could witness everything personally.

Jiang's parents happily agreed.

To date, the couple is unaware of exactly how powerful Qiao Wanjun, the other mother-in-law, is.

They only know from their daughter that Qiao Wanjun's status is exceptionally prominent and her authority unimaginably high; she is one of the Peak Masters under Sword One Sect of the nine Spirit Mountains in Beijing.

Interestingly,

Mother holds a high position, and the son follows closely behind.

Lu Ran is under the Immortal Sheep Sect of Yeyu City, the master of Luoxian Mountain.

This is a prestigious position!

Lord Immortal Sheep himself resides within Luoxian Mountain.

Of course, in the eyes of the public, a small sect's esteemed mountain might not compare to Sword One's Spirit Mountain.

Regarding this identity, Lu Ran didn't mention it.

Jiang Ruyi also found out later.

From Lu Ran's earlier statement, "You are the mistress of Luoxian Mountain," she realized Lu Ran's status within the Immortal Sheep Sect.

Jiang Ruyi was truly surprised.

The extent of Lord Immortal Goat's affection for Lu Ran is well-known to the world.

But... the master of Luoxian Mountain?

That's on the same level as the lords of Jiantianque City, Beifeng City, and others!

And when Lu Ran ascended to this position, he was just a mere cultivator from the River Realm.

This...

Previously in Beijing, Si Xianxian jokingly referred to Lu Ran as "young master."

After all, Qiao Wanjun had sent her maid over to take care of everything and protect Lu Ran.

But in Yeyu City, Lu Ran wasn't just a young master, he was more like a prince.

Just how much does Lord Immortal Sheep love Lu Ran, to have elevated him directly?

What exactly are divine beings thinking?

What do they want Lu Ran to do...

But as soon as Jiang Ruyi began to ponder these questions, she immediately suppressed them.

The education she had received since childhood and various societal influences did not allow her to disrespect divine beings.

She could only think positively: perhaps it's because Lu Ran is extraordinarily talented and shone brilliantly above "Heavenly Pride," hence Lord Immortal Sheep's special affection.

...

October 8, Yeyu City.

The city enjoys spring-like weather all year round, and although it's early winter, the temperature is still 15 degrees Celsius.

Jiang Ruyi is dressed in a white high-neck sweater, a coffee-colored knee-length coat, slim-fit jeans, knee-high boots, and a knitted scarf.

From any angle, she looks every bit the goddess.

Her towering figure stood out at the airport exit, naturally drawing a lot of attention.

A goddess, indeed a true goddess.

Though she seemed a bit hot?

"Beautiful, isn't it?" Lu Ran stood beside her, also looking at the sky.

The fluffy clouds like cotton candy floated in the blue sky.

Unfortunately, they could no longer find "Cloud Girl."

"Beautiful," Jiang Ruyi answered softly.

Looking at the blue sky different from that of Rain Alley City, she said, "So that's why your heart is so at peace."

Lu Ran shook his head, "This is just the beginning.

Wait until I take you to Luoxian Pavilion!

To see Cang Mountain, Erhai, and the sunset glow."

"Mm, okay," Jiang Ruyi gently clasped Lu Ran's arm.

The smile that peeked from behind the knitted scarf was gentle and warm.

Since last night, when Lu Ran told Jiang's parents he wanted to hold a grand wedding and take her as his wife, Jiang Ruyi's heart had been tumultuous.

After dinner, she sat quietly at the coffee table, pouring tea for her father and Lu Ran, remaining very silent.

Even when Lu Ran said goodbye and left, she held the little calico cat and ignored her parents' glances, returning to her bedroom.

Jiang Ruyi felt lucky.

In her youth's confusion, she had found the person by her side.

Today, even though Lu Ran is renowned throughout Da Xia, his feelings for her remain the same.

If Lu Ran wished, he could indeed lead a life surrounded by glamour and beauty.

But he focused all his efforts on cultivation, not paying attention to other women.

Even during his growth, when he met stunning individuals like Si Xianxian, he made it clear early on that he had someone in his heart.

Si Xianxian called Lu Ran sick, but that's one thing.

Lu Ran making his stance clear is another.

So, how do you become a general's wife?

It's when the general is still a foot soldier.

No.

Jiang Ruyi thought more than that.

She reached out to him when he was being pointed at and doubted by the world.

Looking back, Jiang Ruyi was full of emotions.

Back then, all she knew was that the young man had lost his father and had run away from his already divorced mother, returning alone to Rain Alley.

She had no idea that Lu's mother was so powerful, caring so much for her son, not neglecting him at all.

Thinking she had seen the difficulties ahead, Jiang Ruyi had given up on her future achievements.

She just wanted to take this despised Immortal Sheep Believer, and get him a high school diploma.

By her side,

Even if he occasionally fled from battle or often shirked, at least he wouldn't be completely abandoned.

Her teammates, in consideration of her, wouldn't excessively curse or mock him.

In Jiang Ruyi's mind, it was already good enough if Lu Ran could graduate smoothly.

He was such a proud person.

Bearing ideals and hatred, proclaiming to change the world.

If he couldn't even graduate from high school, how could he cope?

In this very special era, a diploma was not a symbol of academic achievement.

But it indicated whether a believer was qualified.

With it, at least he had more chances to live, allowing the world to look at him with a bit of kindness.

At least...

He wouldn't completely fall into desolation under the disdainful gaze of the world.

If she tried harder, maybe she could help him get into an ordinary university;

Or maybe get her parents to pull some strings, securing him a stable job somewhere.

In any case, the first step is to survive.

Then to reconcile with his younger self.

The thoughts of the young girl were always kept deep inside.

Hidden deep, deeper, and deeper...

Hidden till his every exam scored first place, becoming a common praiseworthy figure at school.

Hidden till he became the genius of Da Xia, radiating brilliantly on the highest stage.

Hidden till he topped the college entrance examination.

Hidden till he became the master of Luoxian Mountain.

Hidden till he said he wanted to give her a grand wedding.

He said everyone from Rain Alley City would surely come to bless them.

So,

How did you become a general's wife?

Actually,

I never thought about being a general's wife.

The best fantasy,

Was merely coming home every night to see him cooking in the kitchen.

At the very least,

Even after we graduated and went our separate ways...

After many years, I'd occasionally hear someone say he's doing well somewhere in Rain Alley City.

That's all.

"It's this mountain!"

The taxi slowly came to a stop, Lu Ran scanned to pay the fare, and pulled Jiang Ruyi out of the car, gazing up at Luoxian Mountain.

He introduced it excitedly, as if he was returning to his own home.

"We still have to climb for a while, first go to the outer view of Luoxian, to offer a stick of incense to Lord Immortal Sheep... huh?"

Lu Ran felt a tightness in his chest as he saw the girl beside him bowing her head in silence.

He scrutinized her carefully, and saw her eyes slightly reddened.

"Why are you crying?"

Lu Ran was a bit panicked.

Since last night, he had noticed Jiang Ruyi was emotionally off.

But he misinterpreted it, thinking that mentioning the wedding had made her very shy, and with Jiang's father and mother's teasing, she became even quieter.

Now it seemed that was not the case.

Looking at her moist, red eyes, Lu Ran's heart ached terribly, mulling over his words.

He held her face through the knitted scarf, softly saying, "Could it be, Yeyu City is really that beautiful?

Did it move you to tears?"

"Hehe~"

Jiang Ruyi broke into laughter and gently embraced Lu Ran.

But her arms tightened around him, as if affirming he was real.

Not just a long, fragile dream.

If it's a dream, that's fine.

Just hope when the dream ends, he's at home.

Not gone, each chasing a different direction.

Chapter 345: Luoxian Temple, immortals in the temple

Luoxian Mountain, Luoxian Temple.

A pair of men and women respectfully offered incense.

Though Jiang Ruyi was not an Immortal Sheep Believer, she still worshipped devoutly.

After all, the fact that Lu Ran was not living in destitution in some rainy alley was all due to Lord Immortal Goat's grace.

Thus Jiang Ruyi was genuinely grateful and worshipped wholeheartedly.

"She is very devout."

Suddenly, a hoarse voice echoed in Lu Ran's mind.

At that moment, Lu Ran had his hands clasped together, looking up at the towering Divine Sculpture.

Hearing this, he instinctively turned his head to look at the enormous incense burner in front of which Jiang Ruyi was kneeling and praying.

Lu Ran thought for a moment and whispered, "I am immensely grateful that you acknowledge her."

Immortal Goat: "Her path to divinity is all because of you, how could I not acknowledge her?"

Lu Ran's mind stirred, catching onto a phrase.

Path to divinity?

Was it that straightforward?

Traditionally, people used terms like "enlightenment" or "the way of the heart" to express the state of mind one must maintain on the path of cultivation.

But here with Lord Immortal Goat, it was utterly unmasked!

Other deities would likely never speak this way.

The gods cultivate followers ultimately to expand their influence, consolidate their rule, and strengthen themselves.

The gods certainly weren't raising competitors or breeding troubles!

And the followers of each sect could never express it like this.

It was undeniably the greatest disrespect to the deities!

Besides, worshipping the gods itself involved giving one's own faith and loyalty.

Under subtle influences, none harbored evil thoughts.

The deep voice came again:

"I give you three months."

Lu Ran's expression turned serious, listening intently.

Immortal Goat: "I had no suitable Divine Techniques when my sect was in the River Realm.

However, you have many Evil Sculptures, cultivate your Evil Sculptures up to the River Realm, integrating various Evil Techniques of the River Realm.

Make up for your own weaknesses.

Then I will send you to explore the essence of this world."

Lu Ran pondered for a long while and whispered, "Weaknesses?"

"What, have you achieved great mastery in Divine Techniques?"

"Purification?" Lu Ran immediately spoke, "Should I master a Purification Skill?"

Immortal Goat coldly spoke: "Think for yourself.

I won't impose my standards on your path.

I only want results!"

Immortal Goat paused, his voice growing even colder: "Starting today, I will begin preparations, and in three months, I will open a Divine Ruins here.

Don't expect other Immortal Sheep Believers to help you.

Success or failure, it all depends on you!

If you can't take down the Divine Ruins, don't come to me crying!"

Lu Ran: "..."

You're always so nice to me,

why always speak with such a cold tone?

It's quite scary.

"Yes!" Lu Ran saluted the towering Divine Sculpture formally.

It seemed the deity indeed intended to open the Divine Ruins and send him to another realm.

Thinking of this, Yan Shuangzi, who had charged into the Beifeng Divine Ruins in Beifeng City back then, must be there, right?

It had already been a year.

Yan Shuangzi had been there for so long, she must have become very powerful by now, right?

Or perhaps, had she already perished?

Who knows.

And who could tell what differences there might be between the Beifeng Divine Ruins and the Immortal Sheep Divine Ruins.

Lu Ran suddenly thought of something and looked up once more at the deity:

"Lord Immortal Goat, can I return? Is there a limit on..."

He was sharply cut off before he could finish: "If you die, you naturally can't return."

Lu Ran remained silent for a long while, nodding gently: "Yes."

He turned his head again and noticed the young girl still kneeling beside the incense burner.

She had her eyes closed, hands clasped, murmuring something under her breath.

Her words were so soft, almost soundless, even Lu Ran couldn't hear what she was saying.

Lu Ran surveyed his surroundings, noticing several scattered worshippers and many Immortal Sheep Believers dressed in white Tai Chi attire surrounding the vast area, watching the two of them.

It seemed that his return to Luoxian Mountain had already spread to the back mountain.

Senior citizens, uncles, and aunts stood quite far away, their faces mostly bearing kindly smiles, continually scanning the two.

Especially Jiang Ruyi, who drew the attention of many Immortal Sheep Believers.

People naturally understood that she was the wife of the master of Luoxian Mountain.

After all, Lu Ran and Jiang Ruyi had always been seen together in "Heavenly Pride", inseparable.

"Hi, junior brother."

Cheng Rou saw Lu Ran's gaze sweeping over and couldn't help but wave her hand and call out softly.

She still sported a bun, her eyes gentle, holding a three- or four-year-old little girl.

The girl also had a bun, dressed in a miniature white training outfit.

Cute as a button.

She must be Cheng Rou, Senior Sister Cheng's little daughter, Gugu.

Initially, when Lu Ran heard his teacher mention her daughter, he was puzzled.

Aunt?

Who calls their daughter aunt? Isn't that a mistake in generational terms?

Then Senior Sister Cheng explained it was Mushroom in short.

Well... don't understand, but respect it.

Jiang Ruyi knelt in front of the incense burner for a long time.

To be precise, she worshipped the majestic Immortal Sheep Stone Sculpture for a long while.

Lu Ran stood quietly by her side.

As the true disciple of Immortal Sheep, he seemed quite ungrateful.

However, the longer Jiang Ruyi worshipped, the softer the Immortal Sheep Believers' gazes towards her became.

Jiang Ruyi was, after all, Da Xia's genius!

Unknown yet real!

The past few days, the Da Xia media crazily spread news that the Lu Jiang pair might both advance to River Realm!

At this moment, though people couldn't see Jiang Ruyi's whole face, they could feel the aura faintly emanating from her.

The rumors were probably becoming a reality.

Such a Jiang Realm Great Power from another sect, respectfully offering incense and devoutly worshipping inside the Luoxian Temple...

How could it not endear her to the Immortal Sheep Believers?

It seemed she truly cared deeply about Lu Ran.

"Ruyi." Lu Ran waited for a long while, but still bent down and gently patted her back.

"Mhm." Jiang Ruyi quietly responded, and after a few more seconds, she grasped his arm and stood up.

The Immortal Sheep Believers all crowded forward.

An enthusiastic auntie even grabbed Lu Ran's hand, constantly patting the back of his hand and kindly looking him over.

"You're back, young Lu."

"Why have you lost weight again, wait a moment and auntie will make you some fried meat."

"Sister Liu, make it with mushrooms, young Lu likes mushrooms."

"This girl is your girlfriend, right? She's so pretty..."

"Not the same person as on TV, like a fairy!"

"A perfect match, truly a good match."

For a moment, the quiet Luoxian Temple turned into a bustling marketplace.

Though the rules of the Immortal Sheep faction were not strict, causing a commotion inside the temple was ultimately not proper.

Cheng Rou immediately spoke up, maintaining order.

Jiang Ruyi also appeared confused, surrounded by several enthusiastic aunties, who kept talking nonsense.

The Immortal Sheep faction was indeed different from others.

She had been to Jade Gate Pass once and had cultivated under Divine Jade Talisman.

The rules there were quite strict, and the atmosphere was extremely solemn.

But these Immortal Sheep Believers...

Each one was more enthusiastic than the last, their faces all bearing kind smiles.

"Alright, alright." Cheng Rou put in some effort and finally made the believers disperse.

Lu Ran finally managed to disengage and hurriedly greeted an elder standing slightly behind Cheng Rou:

"Grandpa Cheng, why have you come? We should have visited you."

Cheng Yi, this Jiang Realm-Fifth Rank power, usually stayed in the back mountain and seldom appeared.

Cheng Yi smiled a return greeting: "My friend, bringing your wife back to the mountain, it is appropriate for me to come to meet you."

Jiang Ruyi tugged down her knitted scarf, revealing the lower half of her face.

Following Lu Ran's title, she softly said, "Hello, Grandpa Cheng."

Before Mr. Cheng could speak, Cheng Rou's eyes already widened.

She looked up at Jiang Ruyi, blurting out:

"You're so beautiful! How can someone be this pretty..."

Lu Ran introduced: "This is Senior Sister Cheng Rou, she took care of me during my stay here."

Jiang Ruyi smiled and said: "Thank you, sister, for taking care of Lu Ran."

Facing outsiders, Jiang Ruyi was always graceful and composed.

"Ahem." Cheng Yi coughed lightly.

Cheng Rou then came back to her senses, hugging her daughter: "No thanks, no thanks.

Gugu, quickly call them brother and sister."

A four-year-old child, of course, could speak.

But the daughter followed her mother, staring at Jiang Ruyi with big eyes, seemingly mesmerized.

Jiang Ruyi: "Auntie?"

Lu Ran chuckled: "It's Mushroom."

"Hello, Gugu." Jiang Ruyi extended her hand, her slender fingers slightly curled before lightly flicking the little girl's nose.

"Hmm." The little girl's tender face flushed with a hint of red.

She turned her head and hugged her mother tight, the little bun on her head bobbing.

Lu Ran leaned close to Jiang Ruyi's ear and whispered: "In the future, let's also have such an adorable daughter."

Jiang Ruyi's cheeks immediately flushed red, and she slightly bowed her head.

The dignified and elegant fairy suddenly became a shy young girl.

In front of others, she was always confident and composed, but in front of Lu Ran, she was often emotionally stirred.

Cheng Yi spoke up with a smile: "Let's go, back to the back mountain."

Cheng Rou patted her daughter's back, apologetically smiling at Lu Jiang pair before leading the way ahead.

Cheng Yi walked with his hands behind his back, pacing slowly: "I observe, young friend, that you have already advanced to the River Realm."

"Yes, Grandpa Cheng," Lu Ran immediately nodded, "This time returning to the mountain, I plan to stay for about a week."

"Why are you in such a rush to leave, junior brother?" Cheng Rou's voice came from up ahead.

Lu Ran apologetically said: "On the fifteenth of the lunar month, there's another 'Heavenly Pride' competition."

Since Lord Immortal Goat set the date in three months, it just so happened that Lu Ran could participate in the remaining two sessions of Heavenly Pride.

If he could maintain his ranking, then there would be rewards like Divine Weapons and Magic Artifacts.

Lu Ran very much hoped to obtain a powerful Divine Weapon or Magic Artifact!

That way, he could greatly enhance his combat power, better suited to venture into another realm.

Cheng Yi seemed puzzled: "So, young friend, this visit..."

Lu Ran pondered for a moment, then said: "I had an agreement with Lord Immortal Goat, to present incense immediately upon advancing to the River Realm."

"Good, good!" Cheng Yi appeared quite relieved and gently stroked his beard.

The mountain path was serene, with no one else around.

Lu Ran thought for a moment, then inquired: "Grandpa Cheng, have you ever received a Divine Blessing?"

Cheng Yi sighed: "I have.

Without Lord Immortal Goat's blessing, I wouldn't have reached where I am today."

Ahead, Cheng Rou's heart stirred.

For so many years, Cheng Yi had never directly addressed this matter.

Now, with just a question from Lu Ran, Grandpa openly clarified it.

Indeed... well, that's right.

The junior brother's words should be listened to and responded to.

Lu Ran: "Grandpa Cheng, at what rank did you receive the blessing?"

Cheng Yi, looking slightly puzzled at Lu Ran, still answered: "River Realm."

"Uh-huh." Lu Ran nodded slightly, not saying anything further.

Some matters still required the deity's approval, Lu Ran wasn't the decision maker.

But that blessing beam of light was really thick, wide enough to stand several more people.

Cheng Yi was a treasure that Lord Immortal Goat had left for Lu Ran.

He was a strong support for Lu Ran!

If he could bring him along, whether from the perspective of beneficence or from strengthening his own forces, it would be beneficial for Lu Ran.

"By the way!" Seeing that no one spoke for a while, Cheng Rou spoke up, "Junior brother, weren't you planning to visit Grandpa Cheng three days ago?"

A few days ago, he came out of closed-door cultivation!"

Lu Ran looked at Cheng Yi: "Grandpa Cheng Li?"

Cheng Yi nodded with a smile: "Rest for a couple of days, young friend. I'll speak to my younger brother and arrange for you two to meet."

Lu Ran probed: "This time coming out of cultivation, Grandpa Cheng Li must have made a breakthrough, right?"

Cheng Yi laughed heartily, stroking his beard, full of pride: "My younger brother is much stronger than me."

Lu Ran's eyes instantly sharpened!

Stronger than you?

You are a Jiang Realm-Fifth Rank, and he's even stronger?

Lu Ran couldn't help but be excited!

The elders of the Cheng Family were sure to be the elite troops under Lu Ran's command!

Chapter 346: Grace

Cang Mountain loomed like a screen, and Erhai Lake mirrored the heavens.

Inside the Luoxian Pavilion, Jiang Ruyi stood next to a column, gazing at the beautiful tapestry beneath the blue sky and white clouds.

Lu Ran sat on a bench nearby, heedless of the scenic view.

He simply tilted his head and quietly admired the enchanting silhouette of his fiancée.

Fiancée.

Lu Ran liked this title.

He had already discussed the matter of the wedding with the Jiang Family and had received their approval and blessings. It was fitting to change his address accordingly.

However, as he watched, a thread of frustration rose in his heart.

In three months, the Divine Ruins would open.

He had also tried to ask Lord Immortal Goat when he could return, but the deity had brusquely dismissed him.

As for the date of return,

It seems infinitely distant.

What he said to her would make her sad.

Lu Ran silently turned his head and looked westward.

The sun had yet to set; the sunset would still take a while longer.

"Lord Immortal Goat," Lu Ran whispered meekly, "I have a presumptuous thought I wish to discuss with you."

All around was serene silence.

Lu Ran organized his thoughts and slowly began, "I see that the light column you bestow is quite thick and large..."

A snicker echoed in his mind, "Heh, trying to offer a favor?"

Lu Ran's expression became solemn and he nodded immediately: "Several elders from the Cheng Family have fought under your banner.

They have been unswervingly loyal to you, and such mighty figures will undoubtedly become my support in the future.

I was thinking, if during my blessing I could let the two elders share a bit of your grace..."

"Shasha~"

The wind swept through the forest, bringing with it the pleasant sound of rustling leaves.

A deep voice echoed in his mind:

"Walk your own path."

"Thank you, Lord Immortal Goat, for your generosity!" Lu Ran said gratefully, his voice low.

No sooner had he finished speaking did he hear something faint.

Turning, he saw Jiang Ruyi looking back at him, her long hair gently waving in the breeze, a sight of incomparable beauty.

"Did I disturb you?" Jiang Ruyi's face showed an apologetic look.

"Not at all," Lu Ran smiled, in high spirits.

"Are you communicating with the deity?"

"Uh-huh," Lu Ran nodded lightly and reached out his hand to his fiancée.

Jiang Ruyi hesitated noticeably, unsure whether she should engage in intimate gestures with Lu Ran.

After all, the Immortal Sheep God Sculpture stood imposingly in the distance.

Towering into the sky, the atmosphere was grand.

The whole of Luoxian Mountain seemed like an Immortal Realm, sacred indeed.

"What's wrong?" Lu Ran looked inquiringly.

Jiang Ruyi cast an almost imperceptible glance in the distance.

However, Lu Ran simply smiled and beckoned, "Come over."

Moments later, Jiang Ruyi walked over and sat beside Lu Ran.

Lu Ran's smile grew brighter.

Whether out of any consideration,

The beauty, Ruyi, inclined more towards "Lu Ran's request" against the "respect for the deity" mindset.

"This place has a beautiful view, doesn't it?"

Lu Ran didn't want to make her uncomfortable and just sat properly, gazing into the west.

The sun set so slowly...

"Yeah." Jiang Ruyi whispered in agreement and, noticing Lu Ran's propriety, felt a sigh of relief.

But there was also a hint of disappointment.

After a brief exchange, silence fell upon the pavilion.

After a while, Jiang Ruyi seemed to realize something and turned to look at Lu Ran.

As the day waned, the fading sun cast strange glimmers in his dark pupils.

Jiang Ruyi's heart sank gradually.

She realized that Lu Ran had something difficult to say, hence his silence.

"I have something to tell you," Lu Ran suddenly spoke after a long while.

Jiang Ruyi elegantly crossed her legs and folded her arms in front of her.

Her body language subtly expressed resistance.

In the recent days, she was overjoyed at her advancement to "Jang Realm Great Power".

She thought she had caught up to Lu Ran's pace and could face the chaotic world with him.

But he was leaving once again.

"If I pass the test, I might have to leave for a while," Lu Ran said softly.

Jiang Ruyi lowered her head and gently played with her slender fingers.

Resistance was futile now.

With the will of a deity involved, Lu Ran lacked the power and even more so the right to refuse.

Everyone could only accept it and silently endure.

Lu Ran reached out and gently picked up her delicate hand, giving it a squeeze: "I'll be back."

He wanted to say, "I'll be back soon," but that would be deceiving himself.

Even he didn't know when he would return.

"Yeah." Jiang Ruyi nodded lightly, suppressing her surging emotions.

In a few brief seconds, her face lit up with a gentle smile, her voice tender and firm:

"I'll wait for you."

Lu Ran's heart ached.

Jiang Ruyi obviously wasn't one to throw tantrums, but at this moment, Lu Ran would rather have her vent her feelings.

Instead...

Her face carried a smile, her voice still tender.

Jiang Ruyi played with Lu Ran's fingers, softly saying: "You will surely pass the test, I believe in you."

Lu Ran turned to look at the sunset and sighed softly.

After some reflection, he also smiled and said:

"There are still three months. Are you trying to send me off already?"

This time, Jiang Ruyi was silent.

The sun dipped lower,

The afterglow spreading across the sky.

The subtle twilight, like tender silk dancing at the horizon,

Briefly offered a consoling waltz for this world full of separation and reunion.

Lu Jiang sat in silence contemplating their wishes.

Silence.

Silence befell the Luoxian Pavilion in the gloaming.

"Do you remember the first time we participated in 'Heavenly Pride'?" Jiang Ruyi suddenly spoke up, breaking the quietude.

Lu Ran nodded: "I remember, that night we encountered the Tangled Silk Shadow – Night of Ghosts."

Jiang Ruyi: "Every time we walked by the bridge outside Hexi Park, you would act strangely, and I would ask what was wrong."

You mentioned that your former teammate's saber used to clank as he crossed the bridge.

Now that it's silent, you're not used to it.

Uncle Sun said that people who become Jiang Realm Great Powers go to guard the Wu Lie Building.

Later, you would gaze towards the topmost floor of Wu Lie Building."

Memories surfaced in Lu Ran's mind.

He didn't understand and looked back at Jiang Ruyi.

Jiang Ruyi relaxed with a smile: "When you gazed at the tallest building, I always looked at you."

Lu Ran: "..."

Jiang Ruyi then looked towards the sunset: "After that episode of 'Heavenly Pride,' I went home, and my mother told me many things."

Lu Ran: "Oh?"

Jiang Ruyi murmured: "I remember one thing she said.

My mother told me: Love is not just about gazing at each other but looking together in the same direction."

Lu Ran opened his mouth, watching Jiang Ruyi talk with a smile.

Was this a smile of letting go?

Had she adjusted her state of mind so well?

Lu Ran felt slightly at ease.

Jiang Ruyi still gazed towards the horizon, her eyes misty: "So, go with confidence.

Strive for your goal, do not be hampered by ties.

I, too, will work hard cultivating here.

You've said that we would change this world together, and I'm part of that too."

"Uh-huh!" Lu Ran nodded firmly, once more looking at the evening sky.

After a long thought, he couldn't help but shake his head with a smile, quietly lamenting, "Auntie makes a lot of sense."

Jiang Ruyi nodded with a smile, agreeing with Lu Ran's words.

Twilight is fleeting, stars rise after the sunset.

The pair, having admired the view in the pavilion, finally got up to leave. Alas, the mountain path was narrow, only wide enough for one.

Lu Ran walked ahead, holding Jiang Ruyi's hand, heading toward the Luo Xian Residence.

Under the dim night sky, Jiang Ruyi quietly lowered her head, her somber emotions concealed in her eyes.

Does it make sense?

I don't think so.

...

With no more words for the night, the next morning at dawn.

The two, Lu Jiang, had finished washing up early and sat in the courtyard of the mountain residence, waiting for their senior sister Cheng Rou.

Lu Ran, now a Jiang Realm Great Power, no longer needed to eat.

But the mushroom and pork stir-fry was really delicious!

Taking advantage of the food, Lu Ran ate two floral steamed buns.

Rose-filled, well... rounded up, it's like eating flowers~

"Take it easy, little junior brother." Cheng Rou was constantly smiling, glancing at Lu Ran now and then, and more at Jiang Ruyi.

Most of her attention, however, was directed at Jiang Ruyi.

Compared to the ravenous Lu Ran, Jiang Ruyi was truly elegant.

Her ethereal temperament matched the vibe of Luoxian Mountain.

Perhaps she was the true mistress of the Luo Xian Residence?

"Rou Sister." Jiang Ruyi looked at her precious mother, her gaze slightly reproachful.

"Hehe~" Cheng Rou smiled apologetically, knowing it was impolite to keep staring at someone.

But she couldn't help it.

Cheng Rou shifted her gaze: "By the way, last night Grandpa and Third Grandpa discussed it.

Third Grandpa would also like to meet you, little junior brother. He'll be at the Immortal Worship Hall today.

You may visit him at any time."

Lu Ran immediately said: "I'll go after eating. It so happens I have something to discuss with the two Grandpas Cheng."

"Oh?" Cheng Rou was very curious, "What's that about?"

As soon as she finished speaking, Cheng Rou realized her bluntness and hurriedly said: "Let's eat, I'll take you there later."

"It's no secret." Lu Ran smiled and looked at his senior sister, "I asked the deity for a blessing."

"A blessing?" Cheng Rou was stunned.

Such a thing was obtainable by asking?

Of course, believers could shamelessly beg the deity if they weren't afraid of angering them.

But the thing was,

The little junior brother asked, and the deity agreed?

No!

We, the Immortal Sheep Believers, have never heard a word from the deity in our lifetime.

And it came to you...

Lu Ran: "The two respected elders have made significant contributions to our sect.

Lord Immortal Goat has bestowed upon them his grace."

Cheng Rou stared blankly at Lu Ran, her mind in turmoil.

Indeed, the two elders had dedicated their lives to the sect of Immortal Sheep.

If the deity wished to bestow grace, it would have been given long ago, so why wait until now?

So,

Is this blessing for the two grandfathers from the deity?

This... This is all thanks to the little junior brother!

Chapter 347: Hidden Powerhouse

Under the guidance of Senior Sister Cheng Rou, Lu Jiang and his companion arrived at Luoxian Village.

As expected, in the dwellings of the Immortal Sheep Believers, Lu Ran and Jiang Ruyi were once again surrounded.

The kind and enthusiastic aunties were incessantly concerned about how well the two were resting, whether they were accustomed to the food, and what else they could do for them.

Their strong concern deeply moved Jiang Ruyi.

The Immortal Sheep Believers were a distinctive group.

They were not just passive, they even had a bit of an "altruist" connotation.

In such a clan, if a selfish individual were to intrude, they would enjoy all resources and take advantage of everything!

Fortunately, the founding Believers—the Cheng siblings—guarded the mountain.

There were also military forces stationed here, with strict discipline.

Otherwise, there would be no need for an Evil Demon to invade; the scheming among the Human Clan would have been enough to consume the Jade Talisman Sect completely.

With the help of Cheng Rou, the two were smoothly extricated and entered a large estate.

The sprawling grounds were empty, and to the right, the grand hall had its doors wide open.

"Immortal Worship Hall."

Jiang Ruyi raised her eyes to the plaque, then her gaze shifted downward to see two elderly men kneeling deeply within the hall.

"Grandpa, Great-Uncle, our junior brother has arrived."

Cheng Rou quickly walked into the hall, came alongside the elders, and whispered.

The two men did not react but continued their worship.

Only after a good ten seconds did they simultaneously open their eyes and stood up.

This tacit cooperation left Lu Ran secretly admiring them.

When the two turned around, Lu Ran blinked.

Identical?

Both elders were clad in white Taoist robes, with white hair and flowing beards.

They were not tall, around 165cm, with buns atop their heads fastened by wooden pins.

They exuded vitality, with an air of immortality and sageliness.

"Young friend."

"Young friend," both Cheng brothers promptly greeted with clasped fists.

Lu Ran returned the greeting in kind and addressed the elder on the left, "Grandpa Cheng Yi."

Then he turned to the other elder and called, "Grandpa Cheng Li."

The two men exchanged glances and then burst into hearty laughter, "Hahaha!"

"Eh?" Cheng Rou blinked her beautiful eyes, "Junior brother is really skilled; sometimes even I can't tell them apart!"

Can't tell apart?

Then feel with your heart.

Cheng Yi was innately resolute, even exuding a hint of domineering character.

In Lu Ran's eyes, he was not an old man with white hair, but a halberd.

Cheng Li was graceful, calm, and carefree, seemingly detached from the mundane world.

In Lu Ran's view, he was an elegant and lively sword.

Inside the Immortal Worship Hall, where were the meek Immortal Sheep Believers?

One was a domineering halberd wielder!

The other was a carefree swordsman.

The commonality was that, although of advanced age, both were energetic in their old age.

They both seemed quite capable in a fight~

"Second brother, I lost, haha!" Cheng Li turned to Cheng Yi, chuckling.

Cheng Yi stroked his beard, nodding repeatedly, "Very well, you lead the morning exercises tomorrow.

I will take Gugu into the mountains to play."

Cheng Li's eyes crinkled with a smile, "Understood, understood."

Lu Ran: "..."

He always felt that beneath Senior Sister Cheng's gentle exterior, there lurked a hint of mischief.

Who would call their daughter Gugu?

Mr. Cheng also went along with it—even with his own great-granddaughter, he still said it out loud...

"That might not work, Grandpa," Cheng Rou promptly said.

"What's the matter?" Cheng Yi frowned displeased, "Is that unworthy husband of yours planning to take the child back again?"

Cheng Rou immediately shook her head, "No, no, it's the junior brother!

He's brought Grandpa and Great-Uncle some good news! It's, it's..."

Cheng Rou wanted to burst out with it, to share the joy, but she forced herself to stop and looked at Lu Ran.

Yet Lu Ran simply smiled, his gaze capturing Senior Sister Cheng's frustrated expression, "Please, you say it."

"Sure!" Cheng Rou's face lit up with a happy smile as she recounted the tale.

Her exhilarated and barely concealed excitement hardly matched that of a mother of two children.

Rather, she seemed more like a clear-sighted college girl.

Luoxian Mountain had kept Cheng Rou too well protected; life must have been carefree for her.

As his granddaughter relayed her tale, Cheng Yi's expression grew increasingly astonished.

"This... this..." It took him a while to come back to his senses.

Cheng Yi faced Lu Ran with clasped fists, his expression one of excitement: "I truly don't know how to thank you, young friend."

Cheng Yi was a man accustomed to turbulent events and should have maintained a stable state of mind.

But his situation was quite special!

Cheng Yi had been stagnant in the Jiang Realm·Fifth Rank for countless years.

Even he was unclear whether it was due to a lack of insight, insufficient resolve, or perhaps that his talent had reached its limit and could progress no further.

If it were the latter, then the blessing Lu Ran sought would come as a great help to Cheng Yi.

To call it a "great kindness" was no exaggeration!

Understand that the path to ascension isn't just about enhancing your power.

When you reach a certain level and ascend again, it can increase your lifespan!

Of course, it's only been four decades since the gods descended to earth.

How much lifespan one could gain specifically from ascending within the River, Sea, or higher realms was still uncertain.

Furthermore, in such a dangerous world, it was rare for Believers to die of natural causes.

No matter what, adding vitality to an aged body was indeed tangible!

"Great kindness, the Cheng family, will forever remember it in our hearts!"

Cheng Li likewise clasped his fists, the smile on his face disappearing into a solemn expression.

Lu Ran promptly returned the gesture, "It is Lord Immortal Goat who is willing to grant favor."

Cheng Li's smile returned as he nodded gently, "Good, good!"

With that, the pair turned and knelt towards the Immortal Sheep sculpture on the prayer mats.

Cheng Rou also knelt down beside them, continuously expressing gratitude.

Outside the hall, Lu Ran raised his eyes towards the distance, admiring the towering figure of the Immortal Sheep God Sculpture itself.

Jiang Ruyi stood slightly behind and to the side of Lu Ran, watching the Cheng family trio displaying their gratitude.

She could empathize with the three more profoundly.

Believers, in the presence of gods, had no rights to speak of.

You are but a servant summoned and dismissed at will.

If you receive a word or two from the god in your lifetime, it is an honor beyond measure!

Within the same sect, it is even a boast-worthy achievement!

Your fellow Disciples will respect you further.

After all, you are among those who have received a "Divine Edict" from the gods!

As for someone like Lu Ran...

It's really hard to say.

"Ruyi." Lu Ran gently took her hand.

Jiang Ruyi instinctively tried to pull away, but Lu Ran held on even tighter.

She looked up at the towering god himself, hesitated for a moment, then lowered her head, ceasing to struggle.

Lu Ran: "You can ask Grandpa Cheng Li about swordsmanship.

I think his style must be carefree and elegant, which suits you."

Jiang Ruyi: "..."

You can tell what weapon someone uses based on first impressions?

Actually, she could too.

After all, Jiang Ruyi was a producer of Divine Weapons, equipped with the corresponding qualities.

But to discern someone's combat style and the essence of their swordsmanship from a single encounter?

Lu Ran's understanding of weaponry, indeed, ran deep!

After all, he had opened the Divine Weapon Domain.

"Hm?" Lu Ran looked at his fiancée and gently pinched her palm.

It was soft and comfortable.

Jiang Ruyi bowed her head, whispering softly, "I'll listen to you."

That look of unwillingness to disrespect the gods and reluctance to pull away from Lu Ran's hand seemed awkward.

Quite amusing~

Lu Ran pushed further, interlocking his fingers through her slender ones.

Jiang Ruyi's gaze dropped even lower as she bowed her head further.

Lu Ran's voice was soft as he spoke, "I'm not asking you for intensive special training in the coming days, I'm hoping you will take him as your master.

I was originally thinking of asking my mother to teach you, but now it seems unnecessary."

Lu Ran paused, then continued, "Grandpa Cheng Li is a first-generation disciple!

He is among those who fought battles alongside Lord Immortal Sheep!

His combat prowess and mastery of martial arts are beyond our imagination.

I know your fighting style leans towards distance casting, but I also hope you can systematically study swordsmanship."

As Lu Ran spoke these words, he also mused in his heart.

If one day, you lose the Jade Talisman Divine Skill, or have a gap period...

If you can possess strong swordsmanship, you can at least protect yourself.

Of course, this was Lu Ran's worst-case scenario!

He would certainly do his utmost, try to seamlessly transition to the garden sculpture once Jiang Ruyi left the Jade Talisman Sect to avoid periods of "helplessness."

How should one put it,

Better safe than sorry!

Having a skill at hand is always beneficial.

Jiang Ruyi nodded, "I understand."

Lu Ran: "I will help you make the connection and arrange everything."

After I leave, you can often come to Luoxian Mountain, and preferably gain the true inheritance from Grandpa Cheng Li..."

While talking, Lu Ran felt his palm tighten.

Listening to Lu Ran's gentle whispers, Jiang Ruyi forgot her concerns and gripped his hand tightly.

It was as if...

The tighter she held, the later he might leave.

"Lu, young friend, Jiang, young friend."

The grandparent trio emerged from the Immortal Worship Hall, addressing the silent pair.

Cheng Li still had a cheery smile as if oblivious to the atmosphere between the two:

"What a pair of celestial paramours, truly enviable to others."

"Hehe~" Lu Ran chuckled, "If the two of you are free, shall we head to Luo Xian Residence now?"

"Certainly," Cheng Yi immediately nodded.

Receiving a Divine Blessing was no small matter, and it should not be taken lightly.

Not to mention accepting the blessing right away,

If you asked Cheng Yi to wait at the mountain residence's entrance for a decade or even longer, he would have no objections.

As they walked outside, Lu Ran recalled something and turned to Cheng Li, "By the way, I forgot to congratulate Grandpa Cheng Li for successfully leaving seclusion.

I presume your strength has improved a great deal, yes?"

Cheng Li: "I share your joy."

Lu Ran laughed, indeed it was shared joy!

He ventured, "Yesterday, Grandpa Cheng Yi said you were stronger than him; could it be that Grandpa Cheng Li has ascended to the Sea Realm?"

"Hehe." Cheng Li stroked his beard, looking at Lu Ran with a smile, "This old man reached the Sea Realm more than a decade ago."

Lu Ran couldn't help but grin.

Good fellow!

"Hehe~" Cheng Rou laughed as she watched her junior brother's astonished reaction.

Cheng Yi swept a glance at his granddaughter, and Cheng Rou immediately behaved, stifling her laughter.

Lu Ran composed himself. Having asked twice without a definitive answer, it would be impolite to press further.

He changed the subject, "Grandpa Cheng Yi, Grandpa Cheng Li, my fiancée is a practitioner of the sword.

Her foundation is not very solid; having joined the Jade Talisman Sect, she spends every day throwing talismans..."

The elders needed no further hints to understand Lu Ran's meaning.

Cheng Yi had just glanced at his younger brother when Cheng Li had already spoken,

"Young friend Lu, rest assured, I am also a swordsman and will be willing to offer some guidance."

"Really?" Lu Ran said with gratitude, "Thank you for the trouble."

Cheng Li continued smiling warmly, "As requested by the Mountain Master, it is my duty!"

The change in appellations also clarified their respective identities.

Lu Ran smiled at the elder, "Grandpa Cheng Li, if you do not mind, please take her as your disciple.

My fiancée desires to attain mastery in swordsmanship and seeks your true inheritance."

Hearing this, Cheng Li understood the implications.

This wasn't about learning a few tricks to assist the Jade Talisman Divine Skill in combat.

It was about focusing on swordsmanship?

Cheng Li pondered for a moment before replying, "Yes!

I shall devote my full effort and meticulous teaching."

Jiang Ruyi listened quietly, her thoughts fluctuating.

The master of Luoxian Mountain was indeed like the lords of Jiantianque City and Beifeng City—more than just a reputation.

Cheng Li was a Sea Realm Great Power...

An existence that people should revere and worship!

During the casual conversation, Cheng Li always smiled amiably, addressing Lu Ran as "young friend."

But once Lu Ran entrusted a serious request,

Cheng Li was so perfectly respectful.

Chapter 348: Do not think, do not ask

Outside Luoxian Pavilion, a column of light descended from the sky and lasted for quite a long time.

Body Tempering and Marrow Cleansing, Transforming.

Lu Ran had received Divine Blessing for the first time when he was at the River Realm·Third Rank.

At that time, he only lasted about an hour.

His frail body was disliked by Lord Immortal Goat...

But this time, the column of light that fell from the sky continued from morning till dusk!

This also objectively indicated that the body of River Realm was much stronger than that of the River Realm.

When the column of light dissipated, Jiang Ruyi, Lu Ran, and Cheng Yi, tried hard to sit firmly, attempting to maintain the demeanor of masters.

But it was obvious, very reluctant.

Only Cheng Li did not struggle; he was truly strong!

Cheng Li was even the first to stand up and cup his fists in a salute to Lu Ran.

Then Mr. Cheng helped his brother up and quickly left, not to disturb Lu and Jiang.

The two light bulbs left.

However, Lu Ran still couldn't do much.

After all, he still had to rest for a while...

Until night fell and the stars filled the sky, did Lu Ran and Jiang Ruyi barely manage to get up and return to Luo Xian Residence.

After cleaning themselves up, they returned to the ancient-scented bedroom and climbed into the bed.

The ancient-style bed was square and surrounded by gauze curtains.

The privacy was really good.

Yet, the two of them were prim and proper, not even speaking as they both adapted to their "upgraded and iterative" bodies.

Until...

"Lu Ran," Jiang Ruyi spoke softly.

"Hmm?" Lu Ran wrapped his arms around his fiancée.

Jiang Ruyi rested her head on Lu Ran's arm, her eyes filled with complex emotions.

"What's wrong?" Lu Ran asked with concern.

Jiang Ruyi hesitated, then after a long while, she pressed her thin lips close to Lu Ran's ear, her voice soft and low:

"What exactly does Lord Immortal Goat want you to do?"

From childhood to adulthood, her education had always influenced and constrained Jiang Ruyi, making her revere the deities.

But this time, having received such a great divine favor, Jiang Ruyi really couldn't hold back.

Human Clan believers shouldn't have had such treatment, even would be undignified!

People are supposed to be hardworking ants, devoutly worshipping every day, offering loyalty, faith, continuously providing the Power of Faith to the deities.

But with Lu Ran, everything had changed.

He received favor that he should not have had.

Even though people said that Lu Ran was exceptionally talented, and Lord Immortal Goat finally found a treasure to spoil...

But this was too extreme.

Lu Ran enjoyed Divine Blessing twice.

Even taking her, a missionary believer, to enjoy the blessing.

The more Jiang Ruyi felt her Human Clan body after being blessed, the more she found it unrealistic.

The benefits were simply too great...

Just the element of "improving aptitude and raising the cultivation limit" alone was a huge favor.

Jiang Ruyi really didn't know how to repay it.

Moreover, Lu Ran was also crowned the title of "Lord of Luoxian Mountain."

Those followers of Lord Immortal Goat, the first-generation disciples who conquered lands together, no matter how high their status or frightening their power, all respected Lu Ran immensely.

They took the tasks given to Lu Ran as mandatory commands.

There must be something odd with such abnormal events!

Thinking about three months later when Lord Immortal Goat was ready to open a Divine Ruins specifically for Lu Ran...

Jiang Ruyi couldn't help but worry.

Was that Divine Ruins behind him the so-called price?

Or was her perspective too narrow, her understanding slightly mistaken.

Was the real price still waiting for Lu Ran in the future?

"The deities want me to lead Lord Immortal Goat's sect forward and expand its influence," Lu Ran spoke while holding her tender body beside him, patting her arm gently.

Jiang Ruyi reached out her hand and turned his face towards her.

They looked into each other's eyes.

In her eyes, Lu Ran saw full of worry.

In his eyes, Jiang Ruyi was looking for traces of lies.

Eventually, Lu Ran admitted defeat.

He said softly, "I don't know."

"You don't know?"

"I'm still too weak, not qualified to know."

Jiang Ruyi's eyebrows furrowed deeply.

Inside the mosquito net, silence ensued.

Suddenly, Lu Ran said, "Do I have a choice?"

Jiang Ruyi was slightly startled, "Hmm?"

Lu Ran smiled, "On my Worship God Platform, there's only Yan Zhi and Lord Immortal Goat."

Jiang Ruyi rubbed Lu Ran's cheek with her thumb, still gazing directly into his eyes.

Lu Ran's expression turned serious, "Ruyi, Lord Immortal Goat has given me a second life!

Without it, I'd just be an ordinary person living in constant fear.

I wouldn't have the power to wield a knife against Evil Demons, nor the right to fulfill my heart's deep desires.

Ruyi..."

"Hmm."

Lu Ran's voice was soft, yet firm, "No matter what Lord Immortal Goat wants me to do, no matter what is waiting for me in the future.

I need to repay Lord Immortal Goat's kindness.

Using my whole life, with all my strength."

Jiang Ruyi lowered her eyelids, humming softly.

Lu Ran suddenly leaned forward, "Ruyi, promise me one thing."

Their eyes met, their eyebrows almost touching.

"You, you say."

"Practice normally; for anything happening to me, don't seek answers from any 'existence'."

Any existence?

A normal phrase would be "any person" instead.

Jiang Ruyi, intelligent as she was, immediately grasped what he meant.

"You are overthinking," Jiang Ruyi smiled, "other than you, no one can communicate with the deities."

Yes,

the Human Clan is just ants.

With a sigh in his heart, Lu Ran whispered softly, "After all, Jade Talisman has communicated with you."

Jiang Ruyi pursed her lips and refrained from saying anything disrespectful.

Indeed, she had been summoned to pass an interview with the sect.

But it might be that, back then on the Worship God Platform, she decisively abandoned Second-class God·Tianluan and resolutely joined under Third-class God·Jade Talisman.

So Lord Jade Talisman took an extra glance at her.

But that was all.

The reality was: Jiang Ruyi was among the thousand disciples summoned.

As a mere Stream Realm Believer,

from entering to leaving the sect, let alone speaking to the deities, Jiang Ruyi hadn't even entered the Inner City.

Like Beifeng City, the magnificent city under Jade Talisman's foot also had an Inner and Outer City division.

Believers above River Realm occasionally had a chance to enter the Inner City.

Jiang Ruyi had no such opportunity.

She just mingled among the group of disciples, daily facing the majestic Divine Sculpture to worship, sometimes going out to designated Demon Caves for trials, day after day.

Until one day, when the managing Senior Sister told them to leave, Jiang Ruyi returned to the rain alley.

Of course, being able to practice at the foot of the deity was a grace from Lord Jade Talisman.

Never mind Inner City, Outer City, Inner Hall, Outer Hall, the concentration of Divine Power where the deity resided is evident!

Thus, Jiang Ruyi was grateful for the pilgrimage.

But obviously, Lu Ran misunderstood!

He thought that Lord Jade Talisman only summoned a few favorite disciples and kept them close for special treatment...

Well, that's also understandable.

After all, what Lu Ran experienced within Luoxian Mountain was more than just special treatment.

The entire kitchen was yours!

Jiang Ruyi pondered for a long time, and finally organized her words, lowering her voice, and whispered into Lu Ran's ear.

After hearing about his fiancée's pilgrimage experience, Lu Ran was stunned!

Good lord~

Your pilgrimage, my pilgrimage, seemed different?

Lu Ran hugged his fiancée in his arms, twirling her hair and whispering,

"Forget about those things at the sect.

Here on Luoxian Mountain, you are the lady of the house, ask whatever you need from Senior Sister Cheng."

Lu Ran understood Jiang Ruyi's nature, knew she wasn't the type to abuse her position, so he didn't caution her against other matters.

Jiang Ruyi lay quietly on Lu Ran's chest.

Listening to his strong heartbeat, she slowly closed her eyes.

Her behaviour was so docile.

Much more than a civet cat~

Lu Ran continued, "Let's wake up early tomorrow, don't keep Mr. Cheng waiting."

"Hmm," Jiang Ruyi responded softly.

Lu Ran asked her to learn swordsmanship, so she would learn.

Moreover, Senior Cheng Li was a Sea Realm Great Power, holding an extraordinary position in the mountain.

Studying under such a person and keeping good relations with her master also helped Lu Ran be a good master of Luoxian Mountain.

Jiang Ruyi knew clearly why Lu Ran took the risk of offending the deities, shamelessly begged Lord Immortal Goat, and insisted on bringing the two elders of the Cheng Family to enjoy the blessing together.

"Don't think, don't ask."

These were the last two words Lu Ran said before going to sleep.

Jiang Ruyi silently recorded it in her heart.

She didn't receive a definite answer.

But in a sense, she had already gotten an answer.

Lu Ran had just said "no matter what awaits me in the future".

Just this sentence revealed some issues already.

At this moment, Jiang Ruyi, other than doing her utmost to grow stronger, didn't want to think about anything else.

...

A night without words, the early hours of the morning.

Jiang Ruyi quietly opened her eyes, looking at the guy sleeping beside her, she quietly watched him for a long time.

In his sleep, his brows slightly furrowed, as if he was dreaming about some troubles.

Jiang Ruyi held back again and again, but still extended her hand, and gently smoothed his brows with her fingertips.

After doing all this, she watched contentedly for a moment, then climbed out of the bed.

Her bare feet gently touched the ground, but Jiang Ruyi suddenly stopped.

This body, tempered and cleansed, gave her a sense of foreignness.

She had tried hard to feel it yesterday.

But today in the morning, she still found it difficult to adapt.

The external skin, the internal bones.

The blood and flesh that more easily absorbed the energy between heaven and earth, and the vast rivers flowing through the spacious meridians...

Her skin cold as ice and delicate as jade, her appearance heavenly and lustrous.

When she advanced to River Realm, some people didn't even recognize her.

Even her parents felt the daughter they had raised for eighteen years was so unfamiliar.

Now after the blessing, it was Jiang Ruyi who didn't recognize herself.

Is this the real blessing from the deity?

No wonder people sought it eagerly, desperately completing tasks, devoutly kneeling, begging for divine grace...

Jiang Ruyi knew she had neither virtue nor ability, fearing she could never obtain the deity's blessing in her lifetime.

But...

Lu Ran had asked for it on her behalf from Lord Immortal Goat.

"It's not even that early," suddenly, a voice came from behind.

"Hmm?" Jiang Ruyi had just turned her head.

But saw a hand stretch out from the bed canopy, wrapped around her slender waist, and pulled her back to bed.

"It's just beginning to light up." Lu Ran held his fiancée in his arms, smelling her hair.

Jiang Ruyi's face turned slightly red, she whispered, "Senior Cheng Li is old, he must sleep very little, right?"

Lu Ran: "..."

Jiang Ruyi gently struggled out of the embrace, "I'll go check on him first, you can sleep a little longer."

Lu Ran wanted to say something else, but Jiang Ruyi leaned down.

She lightly pressed a kiss on his cheek, like a dragonfly skimming the water:

"Be good."

Lu Ran: ???

By the time Lu Ran reacted, Jiang Ruyi had already left.

She passed through the hall and entered the bathroom on the east side.

In this room mixed with modern facilities and ancient decor, Jiang Ruyi headed straight to the sink, looking at herself in the mirror.

Looking and looking, she found it somewhat comical.

How could she face people looking like this...

No, she would need to ask Mr. Cheng for advice later on how to tone down this brilliance.

Chapter 349: An Untroubled Bead

Jiang Ruyi worked very hard.

In the following days, each dawn found her on her way to learn her arts.

Her training ground was near Luoxian Pavilion.

Lu Ran had visited several times and saw that Master Cheng was indeed putting in the effort, starting from the very basics.

Jiang Ruyi was exceptionally talented and learned quickly, but Master Cheng's teaching standards were extremely strict.

This made the lessons exceptionally dull and tedious.

Jiang Ruyi was very patient, repeating the same few moves over and over without complaint.

Even at night, Lu Ran saw her carefully organizing her notes.

She recorded every single word Master Cheng said, every explanation of every move on her little notebook.

She said that even the most basic elements contained Master Cheng's insights and understanding of swordsmanship.

Hmm... truly a model student.

It's worth mentioning that in just a few short days, Jiang Ruyi's unrivaled charm had been significantly restrained.

Though still transcendent, she no longer made people feel deeply ashamed or inferior to the point of wanting to bury themselves in the ground.

Lu Ran had once asked her how she managed it.

Jiang Ruyi smiled gently, her eyes showing a touch of pride as she sized up Lu Ran:

"You don't need anyone to teach you; you've already understood it."

Lu Ran was a bit puzzled.

What have I understood?

I'm not good at studying; don't fool me, study genius...

Until dusk, when Lu Ran saw her silently gazing at the sunset glow, her eyes reflecting the rosy clouds at the horizon...

Lu Ran fully understood what she meant.

Luoxian Mountain indeed had a magical power that could soothe one's spirit.

The skill of containing one's radiance,

Was hidden between heaven and earth.

As long as you had enough wisdom, you wouldn't even need to consciously comprehend it.

The Cang Mountains and Erhai, the sunset and the rosy clouds, including every flower and leaf in Luoxian Mountain would subtly influence you and help transform your mindset.

Time moved to the thirteenth day of the lunar month.

That day, Jiang Ruyi uncharacteristically threw a small tantrum.

In the early morning at Luoxian Pavilion,

Master Cheng looked at the silent figure standing quietly next to the pillar; he wanted to say something several times but ultimately chose not to say anything.

"Hehe."

After hesitating for a long time, Master Cheng couldn't help but shake his head and smile.

It had been almost a week since he started teaching his disciple.

He had come to understand this disciple's temperament.

She was diligent and humble, showing great respect for him as her master.

However, today, when Master Cheng arrived, Jiang Ruyi had been standing there, looking at Erhai, motionless.

The swordsmanship lesson, naturally, was significantly delayed.

The aura she exuded also alerted Master Cheng that she was in a bad mood.

"Master Cheng." Suddenly, a young man's voice came from behind.

Master Cheng turned his head to look and saw Lu Ran draped in a white robe.

He immediately bowed with clasped hands, smiling: "Young Master Lu."

Jiang Ruyi obviously heard this address, but she did not turn around.

Lu Ran looked apologetic, clasping his fists: "I must leave today. So, could today's lesson be..."

"Of course, it's all good," Master Cheng said with a smile as he left.

"Master," Jiang Ruyi suddenly turned around, her eyes holding a hint of apology, "my state of mind isn't good today."

"Never mind, never mind," Master Cheng still smiled, waved his hand casually, and floated away.

Once the elder left, Lu Ran approached Jiang Ruyi from behind.

Jiang Ruyi continued to gaze at the distant Erhai.

Lu Ran gently stroked her hair with one hand, chuckling:

"Starting to feel like the mistress of Luoxian Mountain, huh?"

Jiang Ruyi: "..."

Damn him!

He had booked a flight back to defend Rain Alley City and to participate in "Heavenly Pride".

Yet he left her here!

Lu Ran stood behind her, his voice soft: "You've just started your swordsmanship lessons; you need to focus.

Don't worry about me.

I was able to slay the River Realm Demon Monarch even in River Realm, let alone now.

The night of the fifteenth... won't bother me."

Actually, there was another reason for Lu Ran's action.

He hoped that Luoxian Mountain would continue to help Jiang Ruyi contain her brilliance.

Even now,

She was still dazzling to behold.

When she appeared in "Heavenly Pride" back in River Realm, she was enough to amaze the world.

Now, not only has she ascended to River Realm, but she has also received a Divine Blessing.

Today's Jiang Ruyi was on a completely different level from before.

The influence of "Heavenly Pride" was too great; if she were to appear again, it would surely cause a significant stir in Da Xia.

It would be one thing if ordinary people saw her, but if Divine-Jade Talisman noticed...

Better to avoid additional trouble.

She could live normally, train and fight, but it was really not suitable for her to appear in "Heavenly Pride" again.

In fact, Lu Ran had discussed with Lord Immortal Goat whether they should let Jiang Ruyi switch to the Immortal Goat Sect first.

But for various reasons, Lu Ran gave up this idea.

First was Lord Immortal Goat, which advised Lu Ran to keep a low profile and not to publicize it.

Next was Jiang Ruyi herself; given her nature and having been protected by the Jade Talisman Divine Skill for so long, it made no sense for her to defect.

This also involved a belief:

The higher you cultivated, the more your mindset mattered, clinging to one's original nature.

When under various influences, if you do something against your heart, it might haunt you for life, becoming a stumbling block on your path of growth.

Of course, Lu Ran didn't want this to happen.

He wanted to discover the nature of this world, allowing Jiang Ruyi to retire from the Jade Talisman Sect without any concerns.

If Lu Ran had such confidence, it was naturally guaranteed by Lord Immortal Goat's own words.

Lastly, to be frank, she was there only because of her connection to Lu Ran, receiving a Divine Blessing.

If it really came down to it, that was all there was to it.

Lord Immortal Goat also made it clear to Lu Ran to be at ease.

Whatever happened, it would ensure that Jiang Ruyi was well protected.

"Stay here and practice with peace of mind, improve your strength and realm, and master your swordsmanship as soon as possible, okay?" Lu Ran whispered.

Jiang Ruyi remained silent, not speaking.

With a body blessed by the Divine, indeed her cultivation speed had surged.

Furthermore, the one-on-one instruction from the Sea Realm Great Power would undoubtedly cause her battle strength to soar.

The only problem was, she wanted to stay by his side.

In three months, Lord Immortal Goat would open the Divine Ruins!

While separation was already destined, before that predestined moment, he still had to leave.

Lu Ran fiddled with her hair: "Concentrate on your practice, and conceal your radiance sooner so you can return to society.

Next time we see each other, don't dazzle me so much.

I can't keep taking it day after day..."

Jiang Ruyi turned her head to look at the mirror-like Erhai.

A faint smile almost surfaced on her face, but she held it back immediately.

Still angry!

What's there to smile about, huh?

Lu Ran: "Hmm?"

After a long time, Jiang Ruyi let out a deep sigh:

"I understand; I'll work hard at my cultivation."

Lu Ran stepped forward, wrapped one arm around her delicate body, and inhaled the scent of her hair:
"Wait for my return."

"Mm," Jiang Ruyi bowed her head.

No matter what the future holds, I will face it with you.

She had made up her mind one-week prior, at night.

Apart from strength, she would not consider anything else.

And yet, this damn person was leaving her to return on the night of the fifteenth.

Such a jerk,

Really disturbing my peace of mind!

"Go on then," Jiang Ruyi struggled slightly.

But Lu Ran held her even tighter. After she lightly struggled again, she let him have his way.

As the old saying goes, four things in this world are hard to hold back:

The pig at New Year's, the startled donkey, the angry wife, and a fish out of water.

Now it seems, they're not that hard to manage after all~

"I have a gift for you." Lu Ran lifted Jiang Ruyi's arm, rolled up the sleeve of her white robe, and exposed her slender wrist.

She had always worn a delicate bracelet, and that small red bean was increasingly smooth and lustrous.

Lu Ran took off the bracelet and took out a jade bead.

The small jade bead was warm and luminous white, similar in size to the red bean, surprisingly matched when strung on the bracelet.

"What is this?" Jiang Ruyi slightly raised her eyebrows.

"It's a 'Worry-free Bead.'" Lu Ran strung the jade bead properly and refastened the red bean bracelet for her.

"A bead for 'affairs'?"

"Right, a 'Worry-free Bead'," Lu Ran held her wrist, his palm covering the bracelet, "if something happens, just crush it.

Even if there's trouble, it will turn into nothing."

Jiang Ruyi's brows furrowed slightly, intuitively realizing something.

What kind of bead was it that gave Lu Ran such confidence to declare it could solve all crises?

A magical artifact?

Impossible!

No matter how powerful a magical artifact was, it had specific effects and couldn't solve every problem.

Then, the only remaining answer, the only one — Lord Immortal Goat!

Once the jade bead shattered, the Divine would save her!

Other than that, Jiang Ruyi couldn't think of any existence that deserved the phrase "turn troubles into nothing."

Jiang Ruyi's heart clenched: "You're going to..."

"Don't overthink it; I just want some peace of mind," Lu Ran instantly soothed her, his expression sincere, "I bet you'll wear it for a lifetime."

Hearing this, Jiang Ruyi felt a bit more at ease.

"Join me for breakfast before I leave?" Lu Ran smiled, "I have a morning flight."

"Oh," Jiang Ruyi responded softly.

...

Lu Ran left, not taking a single cloud with him.

By midday, when he landed in Beijing, it was Chen Jingjing who came to pick him up.

Lu Ran usually traveled alone, not bothering others.

However, a few days ago, he spoke with Chen Jingjing on the phone about wanting to train in the Jade-faced Snake Demon Cave, inadvertently revealing his schedule.

"Jingjing." Lu Ran stepped out of the terminal, and immediately saw that ethereal figure.

Now by comparison to little Ruyi, even Chen Jingjing's elegance seemed to dim a bit.

Perhaps because Chen Jingjing hadn't received a Divine Blessing?

"Little Lu." Chen Jingjing revealed a charming smile.

Naturally, the cold and aloof disciple of Sword One could not act coldly toward Lu Ran.

"It's such a hassle; I could have just taken a taxi to the high-speed train station," Lu Ran approached her, chuckling.

His hat and mask covered most of his face.

But those eyes were nevertheless mesmerizing.

Chen Jingjing's face paused slightly, then she nodded and smiled: "Not a hassle, let me join you for lunch.

Also, congratulations on ascending to River Realm."

The young man from River Realm had grown to be so remarkable.

The Divine Weapon Domain of the Dawn Blade was astonishing.

Chen Jingjing sighed in her heart over and over.

Thinking about it, how could the son be mediocre when his mother had such unrivaled charm?

As for Qiao Yuansi, that kid, he never settled down, and it was uncertain when he would genuinely grow up.

"Hehe." Lu Ran chuckled, walking towards the parking lot with her.

Along the way, Lu Ran asked: "Has my mother mentioned when she will come out of seclusion?"

Chen Jingjing shook her head: "That side of the back mountain has been off-limits for a long time."

"Oh." Lu Ran seemed helpless.

He had called his mother, but it was always Chen Jingjing who answered. His mother had completely secluded herself.

His own wedding, when would it be possible to hold it?

Now it was already the middle of the lunar October.

Three months later, on the fifteenth day of the first lunar month, Little Yuanxi's birthday, would his mother be able to participate?

Hopefully, he could see her before leaving.

If not, should he go up the mountain to find her?

"The Demon Cave matters have been arranged," Chen Jingjing said, "It's relatively easy this time.

Hearing that Da Xia's genius was going, they are very welcoming with open arms."

Lu Ran: "..."

What originally required calling favors to secure seven days for training, seemed not to require so much hassle anymore.

In the future, for such matters, he should directly contact the local demon cave military, instead of troubling Chen Jingjing.

Chen Jingjing suggested: "Do you want to spend the fifteenth in Beijing? After defending the city, I can accompany you to train."

Lu Ran refused: "Jingjing, I can manage on my own; you tend to your matters."

Not only did he want to activate the Jade-faced Snake Evil Sculpture and learn the Purification Skill.

He also wanted to practice various Jiang Grade Evil Skills, and naturally, he couldn't have anyone at his side.

Chen Jingjing pondered for a moment: "That's true; you're now in River Realm.

However, the intensity of the Evil Demon invasion here in Beijing is more significant, which could help you achieve better results."

Lu Ran still shook his head: "Beijing is full of talent; one more or one less of me wouldn't make a difference.

Sister, you know about Rain Alley City."

After a moment, Chen Jingjing nodded, not saying anything more.

Chapter 350: Child of Destiny?

Lu Ran's train was at one o'clock in the afternoon.

Chen Jingjing said she wanted to join him for a meal, and Lu Ran couldn't really refuse.

However, he hadn't expected the meal to be so lavish.

In Beijing, where land was worth its weight in gold, this restaurant occupied a substantially large area.

The restaurant's decor was elegant, built around a large courtyard complete with artificial mountain rocks, small bridges, and flowing water, quite tasteful indeed.

Expensive.

That was Lu Ran's first thought.

When he saw the guests inside the restaurant, Lu Ran realized that having money alone was probably not enough to dine here.

Hmm... it did match Chen Jingjing's style.

"Autumn Waters Homestead."

Lu Ran remembered the restaurant's signboard and thought to himself, "What a good name."

"Miss Chen, this way," a well-dressed waiter, smiling broadly, gestured and immediately led the way.

Chen Jingjing looked indifferent and nodded slightly.

"Sister, a simple meal would have been okay," Lu Ran said, feeling a bit embarrassed. "This is too extravagant."

When Chen Jingjing looked at Lu Ran, her expression thawed like ice melting, revealing a mysterious smile.

Which puzzled Lu Ran quite a bit.

The two followed the waiter to a private room on the second floor and pushed the door open.

Lu Ran only felt a figure rushing towards him:

"Brother!!!"

Lu Ran got startled and quickly reached out his hand.

"Slap!"

He pressed down on the newcomer's head.

What was this jumping thing?

Hugging someone as soon as they meet?

Shameless... oh, isn't this my sister?

"You!" Qiao Yuansi pushed Lu Ran's hand away furiously, her large eyes glaring at him.

"Yuansi ah."

"Hmph!" Qiao Yuansi, still stomping her feet in anger, rubbed her forehead.

Thanks to her dear brother, her forehead had turned red.

"Does it hurt?" Lu Ran hurriedly asked, feeling relieved.

Lucky he had used his hand!

Just now, Lu Ran almost lifted his leg and kicked the person out...

"Cold-blooded, heartless, stinky brother."

Qiao Yuansi mumbled and turned her head away.

"Sorry, my mistake," Lu Ran quickly moved forward, hugged his sister, and gently patted her back.

Don't say it~

Little Yuansi's face looked puffed up in anger, which was quite amusing.

Like a little pufferfish?

Lu Ran turned his head and looked at Chen Jingjing.

Chen Jingjing smiled apologetically, "Yuansi heard you were stopping over in Beijing, so..."

In his arms, Qiao Yuansi cut her off: "Don't blame Jingjing sister. I asked her to keep it from you."

Sister Ruyi told me about your schedule!

Darn it, I wanted to surprise you."

"Surprise, indeed a surprise," Lu Ran stroked the girl's back, "You've grown taller too."

"Not at all! Liar!"

Qiao Yuansi still hugged Lu Ran, her face buried in his chest: "I measure every day, still 168, haven't grown at all."

Lu Ran felt a bit awkward.

Qiao Yuansi looked up, her big watery eyes looking woefully:

"It's probably because I grew too much in the past two years."

Lu Ran: "..."

Suddenly, Qiao Yuansi exclaimed: "Brother seems taller though."

Lu Ran smiled and nodded, gently rubbing her red forehead.

He had indeed grown a bit taller, not sure if it was because of the Divine Blessing, or due to the change of environment.

Since his journey to Luoxian Mountain a few months ago, Lu Ran had grown 2-3 centimeters.

Now he should be about 182cm barefoot.

"Hehe~" Qiao Yuansi's face lit up with a smile, "Being taller is good.

That way, Sister Ruyi can wear high heels!"

Lu Ran's lips twitched.

Finally getting to see each other, and she has to poke at my heart?

Qiao Yuansi's expression changed again, pouting: "You're passing through Beijing, why didn't you look for me?"

Lu Ran explained, "Today is already the thirteenth of the lunar month; the city watch is about to begin."

Since Qiao Yuansi entered Beijing University, she's had a strenuous timetable!

Being one of Da Xia's top institutions, Beijing University offered the best cultivation resources and busy schedules for students like Little Yuansi.

They had kept in touch rather frequently.

After the fifteenth of the month, they would message each other to check in, which had become a routine.

Including the two months Lu Ran was in seclusion on Luoxian Mountain, he had informed Little Yuansi ahead of time to let her know his whereabouts, as he wouldn't be able to send messages while inside Demon Cave.

Additionally, Lu Ran had joined "Heavenly Pride."

As Little Yuansi also had to guard the city on the night of the fifteenth, she would watch the recorded broadcast of Lu Ran's performance in "Heavenly Pride" the next day.

Little Yuansi's calls usually came in the afternoon on the sixteenth day of the lunar month.

She would chatter away with her brother, commenting on his performance in "Heavenly Pride."

Once the results were out on the eighteenth, she would either text or call Lu Ran.

Though their living environments and paths of growth were different, in the face of their father's death and their mother's busy life, the siblings always looked out for each other.

In fact, during his recent trip to receive blessings, Lu Ran had considered bringing Little Yuansi along.

Unfortunately, she was on a mission in Demon Cave at that time.

Moreover, Yuansi was currently at River Realm·Fourth Rank, while Lu Ran, with his River Realm body, went to receive the Divine Blessing.

Lu Ran knew Lord Immortal Goat indulged him quite a bit.

But to ask the Lord to take care of this Lantern Believer and also adjust the intensity of the blessing...

It was indeed difficult to ask.

After all, Lu Ran had already taken advantage of bringing a Jiang Realm Jade Talisman Believer to share in the blessings.

Hmm... after Little Yuansi advances to the River Realm, and after he returns from the Divine Ruins and gains the favor of the gods, he might have the face to ask.

"Bro! Brother?"

"Hmm?" Lu Ran came back to his senses and smiled apologetically, "Sorry, I spaced out. What were you saying?"

"Wow!" Qiao Yuansi tilted her head back, looking into Lu Ran's eyes.

Tiny stars nearly sparkled in her eyes.

Being together, Lu Ran was naturally more sincere and tender.

Thus, his eyes, tinged with the stars of the night sky, appeared even softer.

Qiao Yuansi couldn't help but reach out to touch Lu Ran's eyes.

Lu Ran: ??

He instinctively closed his eyes and leaned his head back.

Qiao Yuansi's slender fingers poked at Lu Ran's eyelids...

Her puffed-up pufferfish face blew up again: "What are you dodging?"

Lu Ran almost laughed out of irritation: "You poke my eyes, and I shouldn't dodge?"

Qiao Yuansi pursed her lips, muttering, "Just wanted to touch, you stingy."

Lu Ran felt numb!

You poke someone's eyeballs, and you still think you're right?

"Hehe~"

"Haha!" Laughter echoed in the private room.

Lu Ran had long noticed there were others in the room, but naturally, Little Yuansi was more important to him.

He followed the sound, turned his gaze, and saw three young men and women standing.

The most eye-catching was the towering, burly man—Niu Zhengzheng!

"Ran bro!!"

Niu Zhengzheng grinned, showing a mouthful of white teeth.

Lu Ran also smiled, "You've bulked up again? This time you could really fit two of me."

"Hehe." Niu Zhengzheng seemed not to hear what Lu Ran said, just kept staring at him.

Back when they first met, this reckless man wanted to compare himself with Lu Ran.

But now...

Adoration filled his eyes.

Qiao Yuansi giggled, "Big guy, turned into a little fanboy, huh~"

Lu Ran looked at Niu Zhengzheng's side and saw a cold beauty.

Interestingly, when Lu Ran and Guan Yiren's eyes met, she slightly averted her gaze.

Lu Ran's vision was too good.

Good enough to notice a blush spreading across the aloof beauty's face.

Lu Ran chuckled again.

He had inherited his parents' good genes and was naturally handsome. It was just his age that made him seem a bit green.

Now, Lu Ran had grown another year, killed for a year, ascended to River Realm, undergone a transformation.

He also received the Divine Blessing, graced with a celestial physique.

Hmm... he indeed had the looks to charm the world.

"It's been a while, Yiren," Lu Ran spoke softly, "Thanks for looking after Yuansi."

Guan Yiren still looked at Lu Ran, but her eyes focused on his mask as she softly said,

"It's part of the job."

Being comrades in arms, it indeed was part of the job.

"And who is this?" Lu Ran glanced at a young man standing aside and studied him.

Rare to see someone even slimmer than himself...

The young man was like a pole, and at first glance, one might worry he'd be blown away by the wind.

But upon closer inspection, he was quite something!

The young man had a dignified air, with short, neat hair, steadfast and confident eyes, probably just over six feet tall, and carried himself erectly.

"Lu Tianjiao!" The young man stepped forward, reaching out his hand to Lu Ran, "I am Wang Ling.

Today is a fortunate day to meet you!"

Lu Ran, not one to put on airs, shook hands with him.

In his arms, Little Yuansi said, "This restaurant is owned by the Skull family."

"Skull?" Lu Ran didn't understand.

Yuansi nestled in Lu Ran's arms, having not seen him for a long time, and was particularly clingy.

She gestured at Wang Ling with her lips: "Ghost, you know, the Skull~"

Wang Ling: "..."

"Stop giving people nicknames," Lu Ran chided softly, patting Qiao Yuansi's head.

Qiao Yuansi playfully stuck out her tongue, then buried her face again in Lu Ran's chest.

Lu Ran looked puzzled.

While the siblings indeed had a great relationship, they didn't need to hug this long, did they?

A hint of worry crossed Lu Ran's mind as he softly asked, "Feeling wronged?"

"How could that be!" Qiao Yuansi's muffled voice emerged from Lu Ran's chest, "Sister Yiren, Bullhead Skull, they all protect me.

The sisters who worship Sword One at the school, they all treat me so well, who dares trouble me?"

Lu Ran: "Uh."

Right!

Qiao Wanjun is Jinghong Peak Master, and Qiao Yuansi naturally is cherished like gold.

Whether Qiao Wanjun proactively charged, the school's leadership and teachers, etc., would generally be aware of the mother-daughter relationship, and the word would spread.

Who would dare bother Qiao Yuansi?

"Hehe~" Qiao Yuansi smiled broadly, "Besides, I have a Heavenly Pride brother too!

At Wu Lie River University, we had a big fight, who dares bully me?"

Lu Ran: "..."

Well, as long as she wasn't bullied, it was fine.

Lu Ran spoke up, "Okay, a lot of people are watching, let go now."

Qiao Yuansi resisted: "Let's hug a little longer!"

Lu Ran helplessly said, "How come the older you get, the clingier you are?"

Qiao Yuansi whispered, "Brother is the First Heavenly Pride, likely the Child of Destiny of Da Xia!

I stick close to you to catch some good fortune.

Maybe, I can advance all at once!"

Lu Ran was dumbfounded: "Ah?"

Qiao Yuansi murmured softly, "That's how they write it in fantasy novels.

I'm telling you, I've been listening to a novel before bed recently..."

"Stop stop!" Lu Ran, half laughing and crying, called out to everyone, "Let's all sit down."

This little pufferfish, really whimsical, hasn't changed at all.

While speaking, Lu Ran realized that Wang Ling was still standing there, having been ignored for quite some time.

Feeling a bit embarrassed, Lu Ran looked Wang Ling over and said:

"Friend, impressive skills."

Wang Ling's eyes brightened: "My modest skills aren't worthy of such praise from Lu Tianjiao."

Lu Ran pondered for a moment and asked, "A Gun Corpse Believer?"

Wang Ling nodded, "Lu Tianjiao has sharp eyes. I am a disciple of Qiang Xiu."

First-class God·Spear Saint, real name Qiang Xiu.

Since Qiao Yuansi mentioned "even the Skull is looking out for her," it meant Wang Ling was likely part of this trio.

Geez, truly a gathering of mighty believers?

He thought, if he weren't a top player, how could he join the team?

"Yuansi?"

"Hmm, Sister Yiren?"

"Stop clinging to your brother, come sit down, we have things to discuss."

"Oh, right away," Qiao Yuansi replied softly.

Her little face still buried in Lu Ran's chest, she took in another deep breath, as if trying to absorb more good fortune...