

Old Gods 391

Chapter 391: Chi Feng Pattern

The day turned, and it was Chinese New Year's Eve.

In the airport of Ye Yu City, Cai Nan Province, Qiao's assistant walked briskly ahead.

Lu Ran, on the other hand, was dragging the assistant's large suitcase, following behind.

"Ru... Sister!" Qiao Yuansi stuttered a bit, then hurried his steps.

Inside the arrivals hall, two tall and graceful girls turned their heads.

One of them embodied a sexy and mature style, draped in a long coat, wearing high heels, with shoulder-length hair that was slightly curly and a bit messy.

Exceedingly gorgeous.

Strikingly attractive.

The other girl presented a girl-next-door mysterious style, dressed in a white knitted shirt, jeans, and white sneakers.

Her outfit was plain, but she had a hat and a mask that covered most of her face.

These two were a beautiful sight to behold, attracting the gaze of many and allowing the Lu siblings to spot them immediately.

"Yoohoo~" Qiao Yuansi ran over with a grin, his eyes curved in joy.

"Slow down," Jiang Ruyi said softly, letting the little 'swallow' return to its nest.

She hugged her charming and adorable sister, but her gaze drifted backward.

"Sister Ruyi, I've missed you so much~"

Qiao Yuansi murmured, his cheeks buried in Jiang Ruyi's neck, rubbing against it from left to right.

Si Xianxian quietly observed the girl, finding her to be like a well-behaved little cat.

Little Yuanxi's affection seemed misplaced.

Though Jiang Ruyi held the girl, her thoughts lingered at the forefront.

Lu Ran stood five meters in front of her, observing the warm scene, his voice muffled from behind his mask:

"Missed me?"

Jiang Ruyi gave Lu Ran a light glare, clearly waiting for someone, yet she didn't speak and started walking out with Qiao Yuansi.

Only then did Lu Ran notice Si Xianxian. He eyed her up and down: "Looking good, huh?"

Sister Xian'er's lips curled into a sweet smile.

Pure sweetness.

Not mad.

Lu Ran nodded inwardly.

Of course, the environment can influence one's mood.

Not to mention a place like Luoxian Mountain, a heavenly paradise.

"Give it to me, Young Master," said Si Xianxian, clicking her heels as she approached, reaching for the suitcase handle.

This address, 'Young Master', indeed caused the people around them to pause.

Lu Ran was quite sensitive and could even feel many envious and jealous looks falling on him.

"Stop fooling around." Lu Ran refused her kind offer, then with an odd expression, "Do you love beauty so much?"

Si Xianxian didn't understand, "What?"

Lu Ran motioned to her feet and whispered, "Luoxian Mountain is not short, and you're wearing high heels for climbing up and down?"

Si Xianxian pouted, "To match your fiancée."

Sister Xian'er was a brave and tall girl from the north, standing at 173cm.

Unfortunately, her best friend was a fairy of the human world.

For the sake of a harmonious appearance, Sister Xian'er's heels must be around 4-5 centimeters.

"Alright," Lu Ran nodded with a smile, "Let's go hiking."

Si Xianxian rolled her eyes and walked shoulder to shoulder with Lu Ran, casually saying, "Your lecture yesterday wasn't bad."

Lu Ran was intrigued, "What do you think? Are you willing to join me in business?"

Si Xianxian put her hands in her pockets, slightly tilted her head, "Make the world better?"

"Exactly," Lu Ran nodded.

"Hmph," Si Xianxian scoffed.

Casual and bold.

Where was the demeanor of a maid?

Lu Ran spoke, "Your disdain and disbelief don't matter.

What's important is the previous sentence."

Si Xianxian thought for a moment, then asked, "Are you willing to join me in business?"

Lu Ran nodded immediately.

Si Xianxian snorted, "As long as the young master shows mercy and doesn't drive me away, I'll follow you for life."

Lu Ran turned to look at the woman seriously, "I'm serious."

Si Xianxian stared blankly into Lu Ran's eyes, even stopping in her tracks.

Lu Ran slightly raised his eyebrows, his face curious.

Gradually, Si Xianxian smiled, "Alright then, you better be serious!"

Lu Ran watched as Sister Xian'er's smile bloomed like flowers, a thought crossed his mind:

Beneath the throne of Ran Shen, the first protector of the Human Clan—the Mad Immortal!

Reflecting on it, calling himself "Ran Shen" was somewhat shameless, wasn't it?

Hmm...

Then, change it to "The First Human Clan Protector of the Ran Sect."

Ahead, Qiao Yuansi held onto Jiang Ruyi's arm, chattering away.

"Sister Ruyi, let me tell you, it's a good thing I went with my brother."

"So many women saw my brother, their eyes lit up!"

"Especially that He Qifeng! Seriously, everyone else just lightly shook hands with my brother, she held it for like 5 seconds!"

"I can't beat them, but each time someone approached, I just kept staring at them."

Suddenly, Lu Ran's voice came from behind, "Don't talk nonsense!"

"Uh." Qiao Yuansi shrank his head and instantly shut his mouth.

Lu Ran spoke irritably, "That female warrior almost crushed my hand!

She was about to manifest three heads and six arms right there and fight me.

And in your mouth, it turns into her not letting go of my hand?"

Can you handle that!

Jiang Ruyi turned her head towards Lu Ran and asked softly, "Was there a conflict?"

Lu Ran shook his head, "Not really, they're all Heavenly Prides, all rather proud and aggressive. Many wanted to have a match with me, but who has the time for that?"

As they spoke, the group exited the airport building.

Lu Ran intended to hail a cab but was led by Si Xianxian to a sedan instead.

"Mountain Master, finally seeing you," greeted a man standing by the car, his attitude humble, nodding with a smile.

He was of average height, with a parted haircut, and looked scholarly, probably in his early thirties.

On the way, Si Xianxian had already mentioned this man's identity; he was none other than Cheng Rou's husband, Wen Yang.

True to his name, he was gentle and had a sunny disposition.

Wen Yang was also one of the fourteen Believers in Luoxian Mountain, his strength reaching the Third Rank of River Realm.

No wonder he was Mr. Cheng's son-in-law.

For a disciple of a Nine-level God, having such a level of power was quite impressive.

"Wen bro, thanks for the trouble," Lu Ran was equally polite.

"Not at all, not at all," Wen Yang hurriedly said, quickly stepping forward to take the suitcase.

Then, Wen Yang drove the group to the foot of Luoxian Mountain.

As they climbed, Lu Ran had a smile on his lips, occasionally glancing at Si Xianxian's high heels.

Si Xianxian's face grew darker, rolling her eyes countless times at the white clouds in the sky...

Wen Yang escorted them all the way, accompanying them to offer incense and worship gods, and then took the group to the temporary residence of the Jiang Family's couple in Luoxian Village, before bidding farewell and leaving.

"Little Ran is back."

Jiang's mother, Zhuang Jingyi, welcomed them at the gate, holding Lu Ran's arm, sizing him up.

"Auntie is well, uncle is well," Lu Ran lowered his eyelids, greeting each in turn, "Are you getting used to living here?"

Jiang Zheng obviously noticed Lu Ran purposely lowering his eyes, feeling somewhat moved, laughed, and said, "Very well, Little Ran, you're thoughtful."

Zhuang Jingyi, meanwhile, wore a full smile and teased, "Still calling me aunt?"

By her side, Jiang Ruyi's cheeks turned slightly red, thankfully masked, and she whispered softly: "Mom."

"Is this Little Yuanxi?" Zhuang Jingyi turned to the girl next to her daughter.

Qiao Yuansi blinked, "Hello, auntie~"

"Good good good, here, this is a red envelope from auntie."

"A red envelope?" Qiao Yuansi's eyes sparkled brightly.

Her look of a little money-grubber amused everyone.

The warm atmosphere permeated the small courtyard, and as everyone entered the house and gathered on the sofa, laughter and cheerful voices filled the living room.

For Lu Ran, Qiao Yuansi, and Si Xianxian, such a family atmosphere was something they had seldom experienced.

It even made Little Yuanxi somewhat covetous.

The Jiang couple was undoubtedly good parents.

In some ways, this filled some of the gaps in Qiao Yuansi's upbringing.

Soon, she clung to Zhuang Jingyi, indulging in the warmth.

Sometimes, Little Yuanxi would gaze at Zhuang Jingyi's profile, lost in thought.

This is my brother's other mother.

That rounds up to being mine.

She's so kind, so gentle.

Not at all like the mother I had on Jinghong Peak...

"Auntie, don't spoil Little Yuanxi too much," Lu Ran said as he ate an orange, "Her skills in taking an inch are quite formidable."

Qiao Yuansi turned her head, visibly dissatisfied, and wrinkled her little nose at Lu Ran.

"How could that be? Little Yuanxi is so adorable," Zhuang Jingyi gently pinched Little Yuanxi's cheek.

"Exactly, exactly!" Qiao Yuansi nodded repeatedly, her face the picture of innocence.

This time, it was Lu Ran's turn to roll his eyes.

"By the way, show us the reward?" Si Xianxian peeled an orange, looking expectantly at Lu Ran.

"I'll get it!" Qiao Yuansi quickly ran to the living room door and brought back a backpack.

With everyone's curious eyes on him, Lu Ran took out a treasure gourd from it.

It matched the Magical Artifact image announced on the "Heavenly Pride" official website.

Based on red jade stone, adorned with golden phoenix patterns.

It looked very exquisite.

The Blazing Phoenix Pattern Gourd!

"Snap~"

Lu Ran held the gourd in one hand, weighing it.

Suddenly, the golden phoenix pattern quietly lit up, the golden glow was brilliant, creating a rather fantasy-like scene.

"Tsk tsk~" Si Xianxian clicked her tongue in amazement, feeling the intense energy fluctuation.

Lu Ran spoke, "For now, I and the Chi Feng Pattern are still building our relationship."

The original owner of this magical artifact died in combat, which is why the Blazing Phoenix Pattern Gourd was collected by "Heavenly Pride" as a prize.

And here's the problem!

When Lu Ran got the gourd, it was already a complete magical artifact with a full Artifact Spirit.

With "Heavenly Pride's" help, the Chi Feng Pattern was willing to follow Lu Ran.

But there was no spiritual connection between them.

To truly bind the magical artifact to its owner, much like the Dawn Silence Night tightly connected to Lu Ran, there was still some way to go.

Si Xianxian looked left and right, "What does the Artifact Spirit look like? Male or female?"

Lu Ran shook his head, "Neither, it's a golden fire phoenix."

Qiao Yuansi cheerfully said, "And it's hollow! Just like the phoenix patterns on the gourd, made up of thin golden flame lines, forming a golden flame phoenix. It's so pretty~"

As the girl finished speaking, the gold patterns on the Red Jade Gourd lit up again.

The light was brilliant and eye-catching.

"Ha!" Lu Ran couldn't help but laugh.

Being flattered? I was worried about how to build a relationship with you! Now I get it!

Let's see how I praise you then~

...

Chapter 392: unexpected joy

Several families, celebrating New Year's Eve with joy.

The festive, united family atmosphere was something Lu Ran and the others especially enjoyed.

After midnight, Qiao Yuansi and Si Xianxian chose to stay overnight at the Jiang Family.

Lu Ran, however, returned to Luo Xian Residence with Jiang Ruyi.

The mountain path was quiet, with a warm breeze caressing the air.

The star-filled sky watched over a pair of silhouettes, walking hand in hand.

Having shared half a glass of liquor with Jiang Zheng, Lu Ran was slightly tipsy and murmured softly,

"They wanted me to join the national publicity department, and some old leaders tried to pull me into service, recommending me for enlistment.

I used the Immortal Sheep Sect to decline—it's true, this Luo Xian Mountain Master title does come in handy..."

Jiang Ruyi listened quietly, wordless.

Suddenly, Lu Ran stopped talking and looked at the girl beside him.

Perceiving his gaze, Jiang Ruyi turned to look as well.

"Ruyi."

"Hmm?"

"I've been talking all day; you've been so quiet."

Jiang Ruyi smiled and bent her head to walk forward,

but someone wouldn't allow it.

Lu Ran wrapped his arms around his fiancée's slender waist and drew her back into his embrace with one hand.

On the deserted mountain path, he was quite bold.

Jiang Ruyi raised her eyes slightly, gazing at the person close at hand.

In that moment, Lu Ran felt as if he saw the stars of the night sky hidden in the depth of her gentle pupils.

Admiring those beautiful eyes, he whispered, "Did you go to Galaxy Bay?"

Jiang Ruyi nodded lightly, "Grandpa Cheng took me there to practice swordplay; real combat is also necessary."

A sliver of guilt crossed Lu Ran's mind: "I should have gone with you."

Jiang Ruyi chuckled: "But you don't know how to use a sword."

Paths chosen by oneself.

And even more so, the people one chooses.

So there's nothing to complain about.

Over half a month ago, Lu Ran had hurriedly arrived and just as hurriedly departed.

Jiang Ruyi felt a tinge of grievance.

She woke to her senses, reflected after feeling the pain, and during the following days of focused cultivation, she worked hard to correct herself.

She had made up her mind early on:

Her focus would only be on gaining strength.

Any more dramatic emotional turmoil would only delay him and herself.

"What are you thinking?" Lu Ran's forehead rested lightly on hers.

Jiang Ruyi felt the warm breath, tinged with a hint of alcohol.

Lu Ran in turn smelled the light scent of jasmine, refreshing to the soul.

"Thinking of nothing," Jiang Ruyi gently pushed Lu Ran away, tilting her head back slightly.

"You seem different now," Lu Ran noted.

"How can that be?"

"The old you, you never pushed me away," Lu Ran said with a pout.

As soon as he finished speaking, Lu Ran froze!

Damn it?

How did that tone come out of my mouth?

I'm done!

I've spent too much time with Little Yuanxi; I've been influenced by her!

"Hehe~" Jiang Ruyi couldn't help laughing, teasing him, "The foremost Heavenly Pride of Da Xia, are you being coy with me?"

Lu Ran: "..."

Under the starry night sky,

Jiang Ruyi's eyes sparkled with beauty and a hint of playfulness: "Hmm?"

Lu Ran, thick-skinned as ever, pretended nothing happened: "So, why push me away?"

One person only attacked, never defending.

The other appeared cool and casual, not stepping into the fray.

Jiang Ruyi, still embraced around the waist, leaned slightly back, silent.

After a moment of silence, Lu Ran said, "Don't become a detached and passionless Immortal, okay?"

Jiang Ruyi looked at Lu Ran with a smile.

Was it possible that she had grown a year older and her understanding of love had deepened?

The right restraint would not hinder his steps.

Lu Ran was a bit panicked: "Don't be like that, you need to treat people like people!"

It doesn't matter about others, but at least you should treat me like a person... huh?"

Jiang Ruyi suddenly leaned in and lightly kissed Lu Ran on the lips.

Once again, her cheeks flushed slightly as she whispered softly, "Are you reassured now?"

Lu Ran, taken aback for a moment, then said: "Not really, but I still need to thank Jiang Xianzi for her grace."

"Slick talker," Jiang Ruyi glanced at him reproachfully, broke free from his embrace, and walked ahead.

The mountain path grew narrower, only wide enough for one person.

Although one followed the other, Lu Ran stubbornly took Jiang Ruyi's fair hand, playing with her slender fingers.

Jiang Ruyi didn't explain too much, leading Lu Ran to misunderstand.

To him,

Jiang Ruyi at this moment was a flower in full bloom at the summit of the clouds.

It couldn't drift any further away!

Lucky to have realized this early, he needed to pull it back to the mortal world...

"By the way, on the third day of the lunar year, will you accompany me to North Wind City?" Lu Ran invited.

"North Wind City?" Jiang Ruyi was somewhat surprised.

Right away, Lu Ran began to recount the story of Deng Yuxiang's struggle for the Divine Weapon Domain.

As the two neared Luo Xian Residence and the path widened, they walked side by side.

Lu Ran, stealing glances at Jiang Xianzi's profile, was astonished to find that she had refused.

"You don't want to go?" Lu Ran was truly dumbfounded.

How many years had it been?

When had Jiang Ruyi ever refused him?

"I have swordsmanship classes every day; it's not good to interrupt.

Plus, I need to cultivate.

I feel like I'm close to reaching the threshold of the River Realm·Second Rank."

Lu Ran: "..."

Crap!

Have I been so busy with my career that I've neglected my fiancée?

But regarding the reason Jiang Ruyi gave, Lu Ran believed it.

While Lu Ran was conquering on all fronts and busy with various "Heavenly Pride" events, Jiang Ruyi had been engaging in tough cultivation.

Even more crucially, she was cultivating under the feet of the divine presence itself!

This was far more terrifying than other Believers making pilgrimage!

After all, those making pilgrimages under the guise of worship couldn't even be sure of entering the inner city beneath the feet of divinity.

Yet Jiang Ruyi was rooted in the Luo Xian Residence daily!

Under the blessing of the statue of Immortal Sheep himself, she enjoyed the top resources for cultivation in the world.

How could she not grow rapidly?

"So... I'll go alone?" Lu Ran inquired.

Jiang Ruyi turned and looked at Lu Ran with a gentle voice: "Do you really want me to accompany you?"

Lu Ran opened his mouth, struggled for a long while, then shook his head: "Never mind, don't bother."

Jiang Ruyi was about to touch the threshold of advancement; how could he hold her back?

Because of this, Lu Ran swallowed all subsequent invitations.

He had wanted to take his fiancée back to Beijing to celebrate the Lantern Festival.

On that day, his mother would rarely return home.

Furthermore, that night was also the shared birthday of Lu Ran and Little Yuanxi.

But now it seemed best not to disturb her.

The two returned to the mountain residence, and Jiang Ruyi went to bathe.

Lu Ran sat by the eight immortals table in the master bedroom, pouring tea cup after cup.

After a long while, the sound of a hairdryer came from the bathroom.

Lu Ran thought for a moment, got up from the master bedroom, crossed the hall, and approached the bathroom door: "Can I help you dry your hair?"

Inside, the hairdryer stopped.

Leaning against the door frame, Lu Ran offered, "Little Yuanxi always lets me help her; I've just realized I've never done it for you."

"Click~"

The bathroom door opened, with thin mist swirling within.

Wearing a white bathrobe, just out of the shower, Jiang Ruyi's cool features had a tempting flush.

A different kind of charm.

"Sure," Jiang Ruyi smiled at Lu Ran.

"Gulp." Lu Ran's Adam's apple bobbed.

Holding the hairdryer, Jiang Ruyi said, "Let's go to the bedroom."

Suppressing his inner fire, Lu Ran followed behind, and when his fiancée sat down in front of the vanity mirror, he suddenly said: "Am I not good enough as a boyfriend?"

We lived together at home for so long, and it never occurred to me."

Jiang Ruyi smiled at the reflection in the mirror, her voice tender: "Your hands are meant to wield a sword."

Lu Ran silently combed through her hair, holding the hairdryer, setting to work.

Jiang Ruyi looked into the vanity, observing the serious reflection.

After only a few seconds, she closed her eyes.

That darned guy.

Stirring up my heart again!

Why be so gentle?

At this rate, I'm going to lose it.

After a while, the noisy sound of the dryer stopped.

Lu Ran's hand lifted her jet-black hair, as if holding silky satin, allowing strands to slip through his fingers.

Suddenly, Jiang Ruyi spoke up: "I'll accompany you on the third day."

This time, Lu Ran responded decisively: "No need, cultivation is most important!"

The more strength we have, the better our chances of survival."

Bowing his head, Lu Ran gently kissed her hair and left with the hairdryer.

Jiang Ruyi's gaze followed the reflection in the mirror, murmuring softly:

"Okay, I'll listen to you."

...

The rest of the night passed without words, and come early dawn,

When Lu Ran opened his sleepy eyes and reached beside him, the lady had already gone.

He pushed aside the bed canopy, listening intently, but there was no sound in the residence.

Only the tick-tock of the clock echoed in the distance.

Five-thirty?

Remember, they had stayed up past midnight before returning home yesterday.

Why was Jiang Ruyi up so early?

Lu Ran rubbed his head, dressed, and set out straight for the Luoxian Pavilion.

And as expected!

In an open space surrounded by woods, south of the Luoxian Pavilion, Lu Ran found two figures, an elder and a youth.

"Lu Ran, Happy New Year," Cheng Li greeted with a cupped fist and a beaming smile.

"Grandpa Cheng, I should be the one to greet you," Lu Ran quickly returned the greeting with respect.

"Ha ha," Cheng Li laughed heartily, stroking his long beard habitually.

"Not taking a break on New Year's Day?" Lu Ran asked with a smile.

Cheng Li turned to his disciple, pride shining in his eyes: "Lady Luo Xian is very hardworking."

Lu Ran looked over to see Jiang Ruyi holding a wooden stick, performing sword movements meticulously.

He asked softly, "How is the progress of her training?"

Cheng Li's smile was warm, "The lady is highly gifted, humble, and diligent.

She's been singularly focused and naturally progressing rapidly these past half a month."

Lu Ran: "..."

Are those words pointing at me?

Should I leave?

Understanding the hint, Lu Ran immediately cupped his fist: "After breakfast, both of us will come to visit and wish you a Happy New Year."

But Cheng Li asked, "Young friend, may I speak with you privately?"

Lu Ran was rather surprised but nodded, following Cheng Li deeper into the woods.

Once they were alone, Cheng Li said, "Young friend, I've heard that in a few days, Lord Immortal Goat will open a Divine Ruins for you?"

Lu Ran affirmed: "Yes."

After a silent moment, Cheng Li said, "The Mountain Master is blessed with enormous fortune; surely you will return safely."

Lu Ran smiled: "I appreciate Grandpa Cheng's kind words."

Cheng Li: "I have an unconventional request..."

Lu Ran interjected, "Grandpa Cheng, you're being too polite. Just say it."

Cheng Li carefully chose his words, then slowly stated, "Young friend, are you aware that I have four brothers in the Cheng Family?"

Lu Ran: "I've heard something of it."

The fates of the five Cheng brothers were diverse.

The eldest, Cheng Ren, had died in battle.

The second, Cheng Yi, and third, Cheng Li, were still stationed at Luoxian Mountain.

The fourth, Cheng Zhi, had left the Immortal Sheep Sect early and joined another deity.

The youngest, Cheng Xin, had disappeared without a trace many years ago.

Cheng Li: "What you don't know, young friend, is that my youngest brother disappeared after challenging the Divine Ruins."

Lu Ran's interest was piqued: "Oh?"

Cheng Li: "With your capabilities, you will certainly succeed in your challenge. When you venture into the world beyond the Divine Ruins, I hope you can help me find my youngest brother."

As he spoke, Cheng Li sighed, "I just want some news, whether alive or dead."

Lu Ran frowned slightly: "Haven't you asked Lord Immortal Goat?"

Cheng Li smiled without a word.

Who else but the Luo Xian Mountain Master could question a deity?

Cheng Li wasn't even sure if asking Lu Ran for help would displease Lord Immortal Goat.

Lu Ran read Cheng Li's expression, tentatively offering, "Shall I ask on Grandpa Cheng's behalf?"

Cheng Li shook his head: "It has been many years since Lord Immortal Goat mentioned it; there must be a reason. Best not to ask rashly."

That would be minor if it upset the deity, but if his still living brother were implicated, it would be disastrous.

Lu Ran reflected for a moment, sorting through his thoughts.

He was shown favoritism, but other Believers, even someone as strong as Cheng Li, had to be cautious.

Who would have thought, beyond the Divine Ruins, there existed followers of Immortal Sheep?

If Cheng Xin were still living...

How strong must he be?

Adding another powerful general to Ran Sect?

What an unexpected joy.

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Chapter 393: The Knife-Wiper on a Snowy Night

Lu Ran felt he had fallen out of favor.

His fiancée was focused on her studies and didn't plan to accompany him to Ice City.

Although, after Lu Ran had gently dried her hair, Fairy Jiang softened for a moment and agreed to his request.

But once Lu Ran knew about her cultivation progress, he naturally couldn't disturb her breakthrough.

Lu Ran turned to ask Yuanxi.

Unexpectedly, Little Yuanxi had been captivated by Jiang's mother.

No matter how stern and impartial this female judge was at work, she doted heavily on the lovely and cute Little Yuanxi.

Qiao Yuansi was comfortable.

Adhering to the principle "my brother's mom is my mom," Qiao Yuansi soaked in the honey pot.

He indulged in filling the void of his childhood.

The Jiang couple had already booked their tickets back home for the fourth day, so Qiao Yuansi decided to stay one more day and fly to Beijing with his new mom.

The siblings had agreed to meet in Beijing.

Lu Ran casually asked Si Xianxian.

Who would have thought, Sister Xian'er, who usually loved to play, was also not going!

Lu Ran felt that he might have really misunderstood Si Xianxian.

She didn't truly enjoy wandering around.

She seemed more like a lonely bird, forced to leave the flock, always searching for a place to perch.

Now, she had settled on Luoxian Mountain.

A warm world surrounded by goodwill.

The wandering bird didn't want to leave anymore.

She didn't want to return to the cold, disdainful gazes of the people, didn't want to return to a world filled with malice.

Not even for a moment.

Thus, Lu Ran had fallen out of favor.

Under the guidance of Grandpa Cheng, he led all the followers of the Immortal Sheep at Luoxian Temple in a grand ceremony of worshiping the gods.

Then, on the afternoon of the second day, Lu Ran flew to North Country Ice City alone.

Deng Yuxiang's challenge was set for eight in the morning on the third day of the first lunar month.

It was naturally too late by the time the day arrived.

Unexpectedly, before boarding the plane, Lu Ran received a call from Deng Yutang.

When he landed in Ice City and walked out of the airport lobby, he also found that familiar figure.

Deng Yutang was as handsome as ever, with a taller and more upright stature, holding a sign in his hand.

The sign read "Brother Lu."

Beside him stood a tall, elegant girl.

She had unique pale white skin and a beautifully delicate face.

Wasn't this Consultant Bai?

"Brother Lu!" Deng Yutang shouted loudly, shaking the sign in his hand.

Bai Manni, with her arm around Deng Yutang's arm, after confirming, also waved at Lu Ran with a joyful expression on her face.

Lu Ran, dragging his suitcase, walked over.

In this large suitcase were all his treasures.

Three sabers, a gourd, and clothes for changing seasons.

Before coming out, Lu Ran had already put on his winter clothes; winters in North Country were not to be taken lightly.

Colder than a woman's heart.

The Vast River ensured he wouldn't freeze to death in the ice and snow, but who would want to suffer unnecessarily?

"Haha!" Deng Yutang stepped forward and gave Lu Ran a hug.

His large hand made Lu Ran's back resound with loud pats.

"Let's go out to talk, we might get recognized easily." Lu Ran's voice came from the thick white knitted scarf around his neck.

"Let's go," Deng Yutang said as he walked outside with his arm over Lu Ran's shoulders.

Girlfriend or not.

Bai Manni, ever the lady, followed behind the two, smiling as she watched their backs.

Lu Ran puzzled, "I'm wearing a hat and a scarf, and even sunglasses. How did you recognize me?"

Lu Ran really didn't understand.

This was his first time using sunglasses, but they seemed useless.

Deng Yutang chuckled proudly, "Your gait."

"Gait?"

"Yes, how could I not recognize the way you walk?"

"Goodness~" Lu Ran nodded, deciding to pay more attention to this aspect in the future.

Lu Ran did possess Evil Technique·Evil Recognition, so his observations were certainly more profound than others.

"You've bulked up quite a bit, haven't you?" Lu Ran turned his head and looked at Deng Yutang's imposing side profile.

Deng Yutang laughed, "You've grown taller too!"

Lu Ran: "..."

Both of them must have grown.

Otherwise, the angle at which Lu Ran looked at Deng Yutang wouldn't be the same as before.

Lu Ran pursed his lips and turned to the girl behind him, "Happy New Year!"

"Happy New Year." Bai Manni smiled and nodded.

She seemed like a gentle lady, but her heart wasn't as calm as it appeared.

The three were classmates.

But even in their senior year, Lu Ran had already distanced himself from his peers with his absolute dominance.

Bai Manni of course knew Lu Ran was strong.

But after each issue of "Heavenly Pride," Bai Manni's understanding of Lu Ran was refreshed.

Until the end of the year.

In her familiar hometown, on her familiar streets, Lu Ran had slain the leader of the Evil Demons and topped the summit of Heavenly Pride.

Bai Manni was amazed once again.

It was a curious feeling.

Half a year ago, they were still classmates, and in the blink of an eye, someone had become the most distinguished in Da Xia.

On TV, Lu Ran was everywhere.

His inspiring award speech still echoed in her ears.

Mainly because Deng Yutang loved to watch!

Watching it over and over, as if obsessed.

Bai Manni could only accompany her boyfriend and watch another man every day; she had almost memorized Lu Ran's speech...

"Congratulations to you both," Lu Ran continued with a smile.

Anyone could tell, the two were together now.

"Come here, Manni," Deng Yutang beckoned.

Bai Manni laughed and gave Deng Yutang a playful glare, then quickly stepped forward two steps.

Deng Yutang's right arm was around Lu Ran's shoulder, his left around Bai Manni's waist.

"Ho?" Lu Ran nearly laughed out loud, "Now you're embracing one on each side?"

What am I in this group, exactly?

"Hehe." Deng Yutang didn't speak, just laughed.

He seemed foolishly entranced by love.

Lu Ran suddenly understood how outsiders felt when he was with Jiang Ruyi before.

Bai Manni leaned forward slightly, looking towards her boyfriend's other side, "How are things with Jiang?"

Lu Ran shrugged off Deng Yutang's arm, "Pretty good, both parents have agreed; we're just short of getting married."

Bai Manni was all smiles, "Congratulations!"

Deng Yutang looked at Lu Ran, "When are you planning the wedding? You have to tell me in advance!"

Lu Ran fell silent.

After he returned from the Divine Ruins. If possible.

Bai Manni seemed to sense something and gently pinched Deng Yutang's waist.

Deng Yutang immediately changed the subject, laughing, "Brother Lu, are you still attending university? Don't you need the credits?"

Bai Manni chuckled, "The first place in 'Heavenly Pride' gets three thousand believer points credited!

If Lu Ran wanted, he could receive his university diploma right now."

Deng Yutang pulled Lu Ran back in, "But Jiang doesn't have the points!

She's been led astray by you for half a semester now, not attending classes, not participating in assignments, not coming to exams..."

Lu Ran grinned, "Still attending classes?

She's busy cultivating, striving hard towards the River Realm·Second Rank."

"Ah??" Deng Yutang's mouth fell open.

Bai Manni was also secretly astonished.

Lu Ran looked at Deng Yutang, "What realm are you at now?"

Deng Yutang suddenly sped up, "We've arrived, get in the car!"

Lu Ran laughed out loud but didn't continue to ask.

The car lights flashed, and Lu Ran couldn't help but raise his eyebrows at the blocky "piece of tofu."

Hummer H2!

Seeing the Wu Lie River province license plate, Lu Ran looked puzzled, "Did you drive here from Rain Alley?"

Deng Yutang picked up Lu Ran's suitcase, "Ah, it's not far."

A thousand kilometers, not far?

Hmm... okay.

Couples' business, a dog doesn't meddle.

The dog voluntarily climbed into the backseat.

Deng Yutang drove towards North Wind City, and Lu Ran looked at the passenger seat's Caster, "How do you feel?"

The question seemed out of the blue.

But being Lu Ran's consultant for a long time made her aware of what he was asking.

Bai Manni shook her head, "My Heart Sense Curse is only suitable for myself."

What would happen to her, what her city would encounter, and what impact it would have on her—this was what the Heart Sense Curse was designed for.

This time, Deng Yuxiang's challenge to the elder of the Human Clan, whether it was a victory or a defeat, had minuscule impact on the current Bai Manni.

Bai Manni turned to look at the back seat, "Lu Ran."

"Hmm?"

"Yutang just met Sister Yuxiang, and he feels she's under a lot of pressure. Can you help talk to her?"

In the driver's seat, Deng Yutang's smile also faded as he sighed deeply.

Seeing Lu Ran briefly alleviated Deng Yutang's sorrow, but after the joy of reunion, his heart was heavy again.

Lu Ran furrowed his brows, "She's going into battle tomorrow, isn't she in seclusion? You still saw her?"

Bai Manni glanced at Deng Yutang, hesitated for a moment, then said,

"Sister Yuxiang's friend took us there; her friend is also a bit worried, thinking Yutang could help..."

Deng Yutang suddenly spoke up, "Brother Lu, please go see my sister, you're more persuasive than I am."

Lu Ran felt a heaviness in his heart and nodded immediately, "Alright."

The vehicle soon reached the parking lot outside North Wind City.

On this third day of the lunar new year, North Wind City was as bustling as always, swarming with people.

This time entering the city, the North Wind Disciples guarding the city didn't make things difficult for Lu Ran.

Even though he stood out among the kneeling crowd of tourists admiring the gods, it wasn't considered a sin.

Under the night sky, the ancient city streets were bright and festive.

The Red Scarf Young Master cleared a path through the bustling crowd, protecting his girlfriend and Lu Ran, heading straight for the inn.

Meanwhile.

In the northeastern part of North Wind City, within the Martial Arts Arena.

The dense pine forest became natural barriers for the divided combat zones.

In the snow forest, a figure in thin clothing leaned against a pine tree.

She seemed to have been sitting in this icy snow for a long time, her hair and shirt dusted with a layer of frost.

On her lap lay a long Night-slaying Great Saber.

The woman was silent and frightening, mechanically moving.

Like a beast trapped in a cage, repeating meaningless actions.

Her fingers inch by inch brushed across the cold blade.

Again and again.

The weather was cold, so was the saber.

Both colder than her expression.

Not far away, another woman with short hair leaned against a big tree, her eyes hiding a trace of worry, quietly accompanying the saber-wiping woman.

Slowly, the short-haired woman sighed internally.

She could feel how heavy her friend's heart was, and the immense pressure she was under.

This was a fight she was almost certain to lose.

Senior Liao was a merciless and harsh person.

The consequences of defeat were almost foreseeable.

She would accompany her friend through the night.

To take a few more glances at her.

After tomorrow...

Sigh...

Chapter 394: Withering Camellia

"Miss Hu."

The sudden voice interrupted the thoughts of the short-haired girl.

Hu Jiaojiao still leaned against the big tree, turning her head to look and saw Deng Yutang.

But in the next moment, her gaze fell on the young man beside Deng Yutang.

Hu Jiaojiao's heart began to beat even more fiercely!

Of course, she knew whom Deng Yutang had gone to the airport to pick up.

So, this is Lu Ran, right?

Well concealed.

"Creak, creak..."

Without saying a word, Lu Ran began to walk.

His boots stepping on the snow made a unique sound.

Hu Jiaojiao licked her lower lip, her lively eyes fixating on Lu Ran's departing figure.

Da Xia's number one Heavenly Pride, huh!

Tsk tsk, a legendary character indeed.

As she watched, Hu Jiaojiao suddenly lifted her hand slightly and hooked her two fingers.

Deng Yutang: "..."

There's a saying: "Birds of a feather flock together."

The temperament of her sister's best friend, Deng Yutang could probably guess a bit.

He glanced at his girlfriend Bai Manni, hesitated a moment, but still chose to lean in closer.

Hu Jiaojiao, lowering her voice, said, "There won't be any trouble, right? Your sister's current state is..."

Her words abruptly stopped, her expression one of utter astonishment.

No!

Was this guy here to offer comfort or to provoke?

Hu Jiaojiao casually pushed Deng Yutang away, using the force to stand straight up.

In her line of sight, Lu Ran had already walked up to Deng Yuxiang, hands in pockets, looking down at her.

Like a high and mighty deity, gazing down at the silent trapped beast.

Remaining in that pose, motionless.

"Hisss..." Hu Jiaojiao inhaled sharply.

That daring, huh?

Yes! You are Da Xia's number one Heavenly Pride!

But Deng Yuxiang is no pushover either.

She is a Jiang Realm-Third Rank powerhouse of the Human Clan.

More importantly, Deng Yuxiang is exceptionally irritable at the moment and still holds the Divine Weapon in her hand.

With her temperament, if she were to strike you with it...

You wouldn't even have time to cry!

"Go away."

The cold words spilled from the woman's cold, thin lips.

Consequently, even the temperature of the Snow Forest seemed to drop a bit.

Hu Jiaojiao shivered.

Others might not have heard it, but as a disciple of the North Wind, Hu Jiaojiao possessed an exceptionally keen sense of hearing.

A single "Go away,"

might have been the greatest act of mercy Deng Yuxiang could muster for the visitor.

If the newcomer insisted on staying or dared to talk nonsense, Hu Jiaojiao was certain that his fate would be very, very dire.

"Sister."

The same simple word, sounding exceptionally tender.

As if it could melt this icy and snowy world.

Hu Jiaojiao nearly answered!

Sometimes, having too keen ears wasn't necessarily a good thing.

That was just too warm!

Thinking back to how the young man is Da Xia's acclaimed number one Heavenly Pride, no girl could withstand that.

Indeed, the woman soaked by frosty snow couldn't resist it either.

Deng Yuxiang slowly lifted her head to look.

Lu Ran removed his sunglasses and pulled down his knitted scarf a bit, revealing the lower half of his face.

Deng Yuxiang stared blankly at Lu Ran.

As if time itself had ceased.

Hu Jiaojiao held her breath.

Previously, when Deng Yutang tried to offer comfort, Deng Yuxiang had been unhesitatingly dismissive.

The powerful aura of a Jiang Realm Great Power had crushed Deng Yutang to the point where he had no choice but to step back.

"Whew~"

The cold wind blew, and the frost and snow struck the face.

Deng Yuxiang came back to her senses, slowly lowering her gaze, "You've come."

There was no oppressive dominance, no continued drop in temperature.

All that was left was a low statement.

Hu Jiaojiao: !!!

Deng Yutang: "..."

Bai Manni hugged Deng Yutang's arm, silently comforting her boyfriend.

Lu Ran chuckled, "The battle hasn't even started yet, and you're ready to self-sabotage, freezing yourself solid?"

Deng Yuxiang continued her mechanical movements, her long fingers gently wiping over the cold blade.

Lu Ran stepped closer, half-kneeling beside her.

He tilted his head slightly, looking at the rigid face so close to him, pressing further, "Is that it?"

Deng Yuxiang's action of wiping the blade halted.

Not far away, Hu Jiaojiao exploded inside!

Some could become acclaimed throughout Da Xia and admired by countless people.

And also could kneel on one knee, whispering softly into the ear of a particular person.

Hu Jiaojiao gazed at Lu Ran's figure and screamed inside her heart:

"I want one too! I want a brother just like that, wuwuwu~~~"

"I just want some peace," Deng Yuxiang said quietly.

Lu Ran: "You can lie to me, but don't deceive yourself."

Deng Yuxiang's expression grew unpleasant, her gaze as sharp as a knife, directly piercing into Lu Ran's eyes.

Their gazes intertwined, but her cutting gaze seemed to vanish into the serene and deep night sky full of stars, leaving no trace or news.

Lu Ran was undaunted, extending his hand to grasp a corner of her shirt collar and gently shook it:

"From the moment I saw you, you've been mired in quicksand, seemingly without any intention to save yourself."

On the third day of the New Year, the cold in the North Country could freeze people to death.

This isn't an exaggeration; every winter, there are reports of people freezing to death in the North Country.

And there Deng Yuxiang sat in the Snow Forest, in just a thin ladies' shirt.

Her clothes were already frozen stiff.

Judging from how thoroughly she was drenched in frost and snow, she must have been sitting there for a long time.

You tell me you just want some peace?

No, you want to be chilled to the bone.

"In my memory, Deng Yuxiang is proud and dazzling, like a camellia."

As he spoke, Lu Ran stood up, taking off his down jacket.

"Win or lose, life or death, those come later."

He draped the white, thick down jacket over her, wrapping it tightly.

"On your path towards your goals, you're always unstoppable."

Deng Yuxiang remained motionless, her body ice-cold, feeling a warmth she hadn't felt in a long time.

She silently looked at the young man close to her.

In her daze, she saw the face of the boy from the past on that face.

Youthful, stubborn.

And that concealed care in the depths of his heart, due to inadequate strength and a lack of voice.

In another daze, that face changed, everything changed.

Valorous, composed.

A confidence built from powerful strength and distinguished status.

Unabashed tender eyes, brazen caring actions.

"I thought you'd be proudly preparing for battle, even impatient to take the stage."

"To settle the score with all the demons and ghosts that block your way."

Lu Ran removed his knitted scarf while looking down at her, "But Beifeng City has turned you into this."

Deng Yuxiang pursed her lips and finally spoke in a low voice, "Talk too much."

Lu Ran hummed, kneeling down again, wrapping the knitted scarf around her neck.

As he did so, he said, "Giving up?"

Deng Yuxiang didn't respond, just cast a cold glance at Lu Ran.

Lu Ran nodded, "As long as you haven't given up, that's good."

He reached out, grasped the handle of the Night-slaying Great Saber, and gently pushed it upward.

Not far away, Hu Jiaojiao tensed up.

Lu Ran's series of actions had already dumbfounded her.

This was Deng Yuxiang!

In the vast Beifeng City, there were few who dared to annoy her.

When had she ever been lectured like this?

What stunned Hu Jiaojiao even more was that the proud and formidable Deng Yuxiang just sat obediently and took the scolding.

Throughout it all, she only uttered one line of retort.

And that "Talk too much" wasn't really a defense, just stubbornness.

And now, as Lu Ran reached for the Night-slaying Great Saber, Hu Jiaojiao completely lost her composure.

That was a fearsome weapon!

Quiet, yet exceptionally domineering.

Even the slightest reaction from it could be murderous, more threatening than Deng Yuxiang by threefold.

Hu Jiaojiao prepared herself mentally, but what dumbfounded her was...

The Night-slaying Great Saber simply allowed Lu Ran to hold it and then floated upward as he suggested.

She gaped, her mind numbed.

Even if it were any other Divine Weapon, how could it be so obedient, listening to the words of an outsider?

Wait!

An outsider?

Hu Jiaojiao incredulously turned her head towards Deng Yutang, "Aren't you Yuxiang's brother, and Lu Tianjiao also calls her sister, he..."

Deng Yutang whispered, "I'm related by blood."

Hu Jiaojiao had an epiphany, finding a reasonable explanation, "Oh, so Lu Ran is related by... huh? You're related by blood?"

Deng Yutang: "..."

Silence,

silence was tonight's Beifeng City.

Lu Ran: "Now that you haven't given up, let's not delay any further."

He looked at the ice-cold, stiff face in front of him, continuing, "Shall we find a tea house to warm up and have a chat?

Or would you prefer to go back to your place, take a hot bath, and get a proper rest and prepare for the battle?"

Deng Yuxiang lowered her head, hiding the lower half of her face into the knitted scarf.

Lu Ran watched the nearly withered camellia in front of him, waiting in silence.

After a long while, he grasped Deng Yuxiang's wrist, wrapped it around his shoulder, and helped her rise:

"Let's go. You haven't eaten or drunk anything since your advancement to the Jiang Realm, have you?"

Deng Yuxiang, who had been sitting in the Snow Forest all along, finally agreed.

Or rather, she was forcibly helped up.

Hu Jiaojiao tried to digest everything, sighing with emotion.

Given Deng Yuxiang's ongoing sullen state, tomorrow's battle seemed a certain defeat.

Now, there was a variable.

Could there be a chance?

After pondering for a moment, Hu Jiaojiao shook her head inwardly, sighing again.

Impossible.

The gap was too big.

"Mr. Deng." Lu Ran helped Deng Yuxiang up, "Shall we find a private room at the Northern Tea House?"

"Sure thing, I'll go make the arrangements!" Deng Yutang immediately responded.

Hu Jiaojiao pulled out her phone, "At this time, on this day, the tea house can't possibly have a private room. Let me handle it."

Lu Ran smiled and nodded, "Thank you, may I ask your surname?"

Hu Jiaojiao looked at Lu Ran, after several seconds of silence, she said, "No need for formalities, Hu.

The overbearing Hu."

Lu Ran: "Much appreciated, Miss Hu."

Hu Jiaojiao made a call, pretending to be nonchalant as she glanced beside her, "No problem, Lu Tianjiao.

I was classmates and best friends with your sister, you can call me elder sister too."

Deng Yutang: "..."

Bai Manni: "..."

Lu Tianjiao is very polite, and yet you're not cautious at all, hm?

Deng Yuxiang suddenly spoke up, "I can walk by myself."

Lu Ran turned to look at her side profile, "Your mouth is harder than your frozen-solid body."

Deng Yuxiang also turned to look, quietly saying, "Your wings have grown harder too."

Chapter 395: Withering Camellia

South of Beifeng City, the Northern Tea House.

On the third floor, in an ancient-styled private room, five people sat around a table.

The table was placed by the window.

Deng Yuxiang sat on a wooden chair, her elbow resting on the windowsill, gazing down at the bustling, joyous, and harmonious scene below.

Hu Jiaojiao sat close to Deng Yuxiang, and directly opposite was Lu Ran, who also sat by the window.

"Creak~"

The wooden door opened, and a few waiters dressed in plain clothes came in carrying tea and snacks.

"Miss, you haven't visited in a long time."

The one leading was a middle-aged man, his overly enthusiastic smiling face bearing the words "flattery."

Hu Jiaojiao glanced at the man: "Did I cause you trouble?"

The man jumped with fright and hastily replied, "Not at all, not at all, this room is always reserved for you..."

Hu Jiaojiao looked at the fruits, pastries, and sweets being set on the table one by one, and waved her hand: "Alright, that's enough, you can leave now."

"Of course, if you need anything else, just let us know," said the man as he ushered the other waiters to leave.

They left the room walking backwards carefully and closed the door gently behind them.

As soon as the room quieted down, Lu Ran, who had been facing the window, finally turned around: "Miss Hu, you have quite a reputation."

Hu Jiaojiao: "I have no other abilities, I can only request a private room."

With that, she turned to look at Deng Yuxiang beside her and sighed deeply in her heart.

Lu Ran was silent for a moment, then suddenly said, "I heard the Beifeng City Lord's surname is Hu?"

Bai Manni, who was pouring tea, paused momentarily, her eyes showing surprise as she looked towards Hu Jiaojiao.

Underneath the table, Deng Yutang gently patted Bai Manni's leg.

Bai Manni immediately cast her eyes down and continued pouring tea for everyone.

"Seems like it," Hu Jiaojiao looked toward Lu Ran, her almond-shaped eyes lively, and blinked.

Lu Ran looked at Deng Yutang beside him and smiled: "Our sister's two best friends, each more formidable than the other, eh?"

Deng Yutang really wanted to ask, apart from Miss Hu, which other best friend does our sister have.

But he held back.

Hu Jiaojiao picked up a tea cup casually and smiled: "So, who do you think is more impressive, Shuangzi or I?"

Lu Ran choked.

Yan Shuangzi was the same typ as Deng Yuxiang, full of mature charm, like a sharp and aggressive broadsword.

Hu Jiaojiao had a baby-face appearance, more on the cute side, with short ear-length hair and sparkling big eyes.

Simply based on her face, one would assume she was of petite build.

However, Hu Jiaojiao was just as tall as Deng Yuxiang, and even her figure was somewhat excessively voluptuous...

Of course, Lu Ran was not blinded by appearances.

With Jiang Xianzi's elegance as a prior reference, his eyes had long become discerning.

Besides, Lu Ran had long passed the stage of "assessing people by their appearances."

Hu Jiaojiao was like a dagger.

Hmm... maybe two daggers.

Very sharp, very lethal.

"Rustle~"

The sudden sound of rustling clothes interrupted their conversation.

Deng Yuxiang still wore Lu Ran's white down jacket, her arms not inserted into the sleeves.

Her cold fingers picked at the collar, slightly pulling it up.

"Hehe~" Hu Jiaojiao turned her head to look at her best friend, "Usually you don't care about anyone and wish everyone would stay far away from you.

Now, I've only said a few words and you're coming out to defuse the situation?"

Deng Yuxiang still looked out the window expressionlessly, silent.

Lu Ran: "It's a different kind."

Hu Jiaojiao, appearing very interested, immediately asked: "How are they different?"

Lu Ran shrugged his shoulders: "A broadsword and a dagger, different in every way."

Hu Jiaojiao's beautiful eyes shone as she looked at Deng Yuxiang: "As expected of Da Xia's genius, much better than the dregs in this city."

"Hmph," Deng Yuxiang snorted coldly.

What are they?

Can they even compare with Lu Ran?

"Ah~ don't be angry, it's my fault," Hu Jiaojiao followed up, holding one of Deng Yuxiang's cold hands.

She continued to smile, "Your brother is a 'Moonlight Radiance', I shouldn't compare him to rotting fireflies."

Hu Jiaojiao didn't deny her interest in Lu Ran.

But at this point, her priority was to help her best friend "come back to life."

Naturally, Hu Jiaojiao noticed the deep bond between Lu Ran and Deng Yuxiang.

With just a few words, she managed to get a reaction from Deng Yuxiang, which was a satisfactory result.

"Why are you so troubled?" Lu Ran changed the subject, looking toward Deng Yuxiang.

Deng Yuxiang still watched the window.

Below, in the streets of the ancient city, the night was vibrant with lights and decorations, creating a heated atmosphere.

The hawking cries of vendors occasionally drifted in, as if transporting one back to ancient times.

Lu Ran stood up, reaching out in front of Deng Yuxiang's face, and pulled her knitted scarf down, exposing her frost-covered thin lips.

That somewhat haggard face carried a sense of shattered beauty.

The bright camellias of yesteryears had certainly been ravaged by frost and snow.

Hu Jiaojiao instinctively tightened her grip on Deng Yuxiang's hand.

Although she saw the deep connection between the siblings, she knew her friend well and was aware of everything she had endured.

Hu Jiaojiao was truly worried that Deng Yuxiang would erupt in anger!

Fortunately, Deng Yuxiang remained unresponsive, which made Hu Jiaojiao breathe a sigh of relief once again.

Lu Ran offered a cup of hot tea to Deng Yuxiang: "Drink some to warm yourself up."

Deng Yuxiang finally turned her gaze to Lu Ran.

Her usually bright eyes were now dull and unclear.

Lu Ran stubbornly offered the tea cup, his gaze unwavering.

After a long while, Deng Yuxiang slowly raised her hand.

Lu Ran: "What exactly have you gone through?"

The woman sipped her tea lightly, her head lowered in silence.

Lu Ran's voice deepened: "Deng Yuxiang, tell me, why is it about to break?"

"Crack!"

Deng Yuxiang didn't control her strength well, and the purple clay tea cup in her hand shattered.

Deng Yutang and Bai Manni quickly stood up, searching for paper and a towel.

Hu Jiaojiao hurriedly pulled away her friend's palm and brushed off the broken pieces of the cup.

Others might not understand what Lu Ran meant.

But Hu Jiaojiao knew clearly; when Lu Ran said it was about to break, he was referring to a broadsword.

To Deng Yuxiang's broadsword!

To herself, and to her martial heart.

"Miss Hu, here's the towel," Bai Manni swiftly passed a towel.

Hu Jiaojiao took it with gentle motions and tenderly wiped her friend's hands, a trace of pity in her eyes.

Lu Ran looked towards Hu Jiaojiao: "Could I trouble Miss Hu to tell me?"

Hu Jiaojiao pondered for a moment, then chose to speak: "Your sister fought with Senior Liao three times."

"Senior Liao?"

"The one that Yuxiang is challenging this time."

"Did she lose all three times?"

Hu Jiaojiao nodded lightly, her heart adding several phrases: More than just lost!

She was completely crushed in experience, martial skills, and physical fitness. Otherwise, Deng Yuxiang would not have fallen so low.

The room sank into silence.

Deng Yutang's face darkened. Although he had prepared himself, hearing this news still made him struggle to breathe.

Did she really have no chance of winning?

Lu Ran: "Is she going to spar before the real challenge?"

Hu Jiaojiao shook her head: "There's no hard rule."

But with the senior coming personally to spar, in front of all the disciples, Yuxiang can't refuse."

Lu Ran's expression became grim.

Can't refuse?

No, she won't refuse.

Under the watchful eyes of all, a warrior as supremely proud as Deng Yuxiang would never decline.

Lu Ran: "Did he use that Divine Weapon that has a Domain?"

Hu Jiaojiao shook her head again: "No, during the spars, both sides used regular weapons."

Lu Ran felt his heart sink to the bottom.

The opponent didn't use his biggest advantage and still won three out of three?

Deng Yutang suddenly spoke: "What strength level is that person?"

"Jiang Realm, stage five."

"Dammit," Deng Yutang rarely cursed, but he couldn't help it.

If Deng Yuxiang had been preparing all along, perhaps she could have overcome in one go.

Even if she couldn't win, at least she could face the enemy in her prime.

But look at her now!

Her fighting spirit is all but gone.

Just imagining the possible gazes and murmurs of the audience after the opponent's victory made Deng Yutang feel explosive.

The Deng siblings had never been particularly close.

But when all is said and done, they are family, flesh and bone connected by sinew!

Deng Yutang truly hated.

He hated his own powerlessness.

Hu Jiaojiao finished cleaning her friend's palm, her voice low with guilt:

"If only I knew sooner, if only I returned to Beifeng City earlier, maybe I could have protected..."

"No need to think like that," Lu Ran said softly, "With Yuxiang's character, she would inevitably accept the challenge."

Bai Manni finally couldn't hold back and asked: "Can... can she not challenge anymore?"

Deng Yutang immediately looked at Hu Jiaojiao.

Hu Jiaojiao's eyes were complex, and she shook her head: "No!

Yuxiang signed a Life and Death Contract upon her return to Beifeng City, setting a date.

She signed it in front of her sect's members, in the Divine Temple of Lord Beifeng."

Bai Manni's face turned pale, and she clenched Deng Yutang's hand tightly.

The last part of Hu Jiaojiao's words was the most crucial.

If you confirm everything in front of the Divine Beifeng, of course, you cannot go back on your word.

Are the divine presence and promises to be trifled with?

Besides, even without the divine presence, if you've signed a contract in front of the Beifeng sect's many powers, you can't change it.

And from the personal growth perspective of Deng Yuxiang and her future, she would not likely break the agreement.

Facing battle,

You may lose, you may die.

No matter the outcome, you stand tall.

To flee from battle,

How shall you live the rest of your life?

You're not an ordinary person; you are the Vast River, with high and increasingly stringent self-expectations!

From this perspective, you cannot even participate in a fixed fight; you cannot just go through the motions and surrender.

Because you must be responsible to yourself!

Unless...

You are ready to abandon the path of cultivation and prepare to go back to being an ordinary person.

Deng Yuxiang suddenly spoke, the first words since entering the private room:

"What do you all take me for?"

The room fell silent.

Deng Yuxiang's gaze swept over everyone; Bai Manni immediately lowered her head, Deng Yutang opened his mouth, but couldn't figure out what to say.

She slowly stood up, the white down jacket she was wearing fell off, and she turned to leave.

"Yuxiang?" Hu Jiaojiao hurriedly got up.

"Sister Yuxiang?" Bai Manni was full of guilt and fear, knowing she had misspoken.

There are different ranks among people.

And the same goes for cultivators.

Deng Yuxiang is undoubtedly a Heavenly Pride, and even a Jiang Realm Great Power!

What Bai Manni said was an insult to Deng Yuxiang!

Deng Yuxiang stood and left without disciplining anyone, which was already giving them great face.

"I'll go," Lu Ran picked up the down jacket and quickly walked out.

Bai Manni's eyes reddened, and she didn't dare to follow.

Busy and anxious, she turned to Deng Yutang, apologizing repeatedly: "I'm sorry, I'm so sorry..."

Deng Yutang wrapped his arms around Bai Manni, unable to speak any words of blame.

As a Believer, even he had that fleeting moment where he wanted to prioritize his sister's life above all.

...

Chapter 396: caught in the act?

Outside the teahouse, at the staircase entrance.

Lu Ran caught up with Deng Yuxiang, holding a down jacket, and wrapped it around her from behind.

Deng Yuxiang's steps halted.

Her body, not yet warmed, was once again enveloped by the thick down jacket.

Beside them, Hu Jiaojiao looked worried but chose to silently step back.

Deng Yuxiang took a deep breath, as if she was trying hard to suppress something, her voice low and soft,

"Do you also think I should avoid battle?"

Lu Ran stepped down a stair, stood in front of Deng Yuxiang, and looked up at her with a smile,

"Am I that sort of person?"

Deng Yuxiang looked down, quietly watching Lu Ran's eyes.

His gaze was peaceful.

Like a mysterious and deep night sky.

All emotions that surged from the outside world could not stir a single ripple.

After a long time, Deng Yuxiang softly hummed in acknowledgment.

Lu Ran picked up her wrist, threading it through the sleeve, "Let's go, I'll take you back.

Take a good hot shower, get a good night's sleep, then fight vigorously tomorrow."

As he spoke, Lu Ran zipped up her down jacket to her neck where the knitted scarf lay.

Lu Ran looked into her eyes and whispered softly, "Adjust your condition well, for the sake of Night-slaying, for your sake."

Deng Yuxiang raised her hand, ruffling Lu Ran's hair.

Her icy expression finally softened somewhat.

Lu Ran looked at Hu Jiaojiao, "Shall we accompany her together?"

Hu Jiaojiao did not refuse, "I'll go get my coat."

Lu Ran hurriedly said, "Please pack up the tea snacks, I must get my sister to have a bite today."

What does that mean?

A last meal?

Deng Yuxiang pursed her lips as she looked at Lu Ran, pushed his head away, and walked down the steps.

Lu Ran casually took out sunglasses and a hat from her pocket and put them on her, "Is your place far from here?"

Deng Yuxiang remained silent, continuing to move forward.

Her formidable aura made everyone along the path step aside.

When she exited the teahouse, even the crowded people outside hastily made way.

Lu Ran bowed his head, following behind her, praying not to be recognized.

The two headed directly toward the Martial Arts Arena.

Near the pine forest close to the Martial Arts Arena, Lu Ran saw a row of low houses; Deng Yuxiang entered a small solitary courtyard on the far right.

"You can go back," Deng Yuxiang said, standing in front of the door, pulling down the zipper of her down jacket.

Lu Ran replied, "I'll wait until you have taken your hot shower and gone to bed, then I'll go back."

Deng Yuxiang paused, turning to look at Lu Ran.

Lu Ran pursed his lips and smiled, giving her a classic expression pack.

Deng Yuxiang softly said, "Little Lu Ran, go back. Tomorrow..."

Lu Ran interrupted, "Sister, are you and Hu Jiaojiao close?"

Deng Yuxiang was not annoyed, casually replying, "Hmm."

Lu Ran looked serious, "How close exactly?"

Deng Yuxiang frowned slightly, silent for a moment, then said, "Friends through life and death."

"Got it, go enjoy your hot shower," Lu Ran stepped back, spreading his arms, "I'll keep my distance and promise not to eavesdrop."

Both siblings were well aware of how sharp each other's hearing was.

Deng Yuxiang was slightly stunned, watching as Lu Ran gradually stepped back.

Until he stood stubbornly at the entrance of the courtyard.

They looked at each other for a long time, each as stubborn as the other.

Suddenly, Deng Yuxiang shook her head and smiled lightly.

This frostbitten camellia, with its slightly shattered beauty, bloomed an enchanting smile.

She turned, pushed open the door, and strode into the house.

Lu Ran stood at the entrance, hands in pockets, looking around.

In a short while, he saw a tall, voluptuous figure approaching from not too far away.

Truly juvenile yet... with an impressive figure.

"Heavenly Pride, why aren't you going inside?" Hu Jiaojiao arrived at the courtyard entrance with many snacks.

"Miss Hu," Lu Ran nodded in acknowledgment, "My sister has gone to take a bath."

Hu Jiaojiao reacted, then broke into a smile, "Then I'll go in first with the snacks. Do you want your coat?"

Lu Ran tilted his head slightly, gesturing toward the pine forest, "Shall we take a walk?"

"Sure," Hu Jiaojiao did not hesitate and followed Lu Ran towards Snow Forest.

Lu Ran lowered his hat brim and his voice, "Is there really no hope at all?"

Hu Jiaojiao shook her head, "As tough as ascending to heaven."

In three challenges, Deng Yuxiang was thoroughly defeated.

And that was when Senior Liao hadn't even used the Divine Weapon!

If they truly fought with real swords, Deng Yuxiang's disadvantage would be even greater.

Setting aside the effects of the Divine Weapon Domain, just looking at the basic properties of the two Divine Weapons:

The Night-slaying Great Saber's power, speed, sharpness, toughness, and so on, completely overwhelmed the others.

After all, Senior Liao's Divine Weapon belonged to a higher tier.

Like the current Dawn Blade and Silent Night Blade.

If these two Divine Weapons clashed, the Dawn Blade had enough strength to break the Silent Night Blade!

Hu Jiaojiao looked at Lu Ran, explaining, "Senior Liao holds a high position in our sect, with outstanding battle achievements.

She is one of those stationed at Demon Cave in the city.

But unlike those who merely defend the city, she's among those who expand territories.

Unlike most people, Senior Liao's martial skills weren't gained during the age of fifteen from defending a city.

Instead, they were forged deep in Demon Cave, amidst warfare."

Lu Ran listened quietly.

No wonder Big Nightmare was completely overwhelmed.

Hu Jiaojiao sighed longingly, full of regret, "Yuxiang is not inferior; in terms of talent, she definitely surpasses Senior Liao.

Only twenty-two, Yuxiang is already at the Jiang Realm·Third Rank.

It's unimaginable what Yuxiang's future accomplishments might be.

But at this time point..."

Hu Jiaojiao left her sentence unfinished, just helplessly shrugging her shoulders.

Chapter 397: Packet capture?_2

Lu Ran still held a sliver of hope, "Since Sister Yuxiang is so talented, and we are all fellow disciples, would Senior Liao spare her life?"

Hu Jiaojiao suddenly stopped in her tracks, turned around, and looked at Lu Ran, "Would Lu Tianjiao nurture a tiger that might cause trouble?"

Lu Ran pursed his lips.

Right, knowing this is an enemy with explosive talent.

Would you keep her and allow her to grow wildly?

Hu Jiaojiao spoke up, "This battle is inevitable; Yuxiang's defeat is certain. I've tried to persuade her to admit defeat at the right moment.

But she wouldn't listen."

Hu Jiaojiao's tone shifted, "You're different to her, Lu Ran. In front of you, she can almost do whatever she wants.

May I know why?"

Upon hearing this, Lu Ran's thoughts drifted away.

Because she's a comrade-in-arms?

Born and bred through life and death, supporting each other through thick and thin?

Because we're from the same hometown?

For our hometown, do we share the same goals and dreams?

Because our "paths" are rooted deeply like two large trees with intertwined roots underground?

Or perhaps because...

"If you don't want to talk, then don't," Hu Jiaojiao raised her hand and patted Lu Ran's shoulder, "What I mean is, you could try and persuade her.

Losing to a predecessor who has expanded the territory of Beifeng City isn't shameful.

Yuxiang can admit defeat.

And admitting defeat will greatly increase her chances of survival."

Lu Ran suddenly said, "I won't persuade her."

Hu Jiaojiao was taken aback, "What?"

Lu Ran lifted his head, exhaling mist into the cold air, "Deng Yuxiang, so radiant and extremely proud as a martial artist, will fight until the last moment.

She won't truly be defeated until she is utterly exhausted."

Hu Jiaojiao suddenly reached out and grabbed Lu Ran's chin.

Lu Ran: ???

What's happening?

Is she revealing her true nature?

Hu Jiaojiao's face came closer, those lively almond eyes carefully examining Lu Ran's eyes, "That's why in front of her, you can act recklessly.

Because you are kindred spirits.

Your thoughts align perfectly.

You will support her, even if she dies tomorrow at the Martial Arts Arena."

Lu Ran took a half step back and pushed her hand away, "How could I possibly watch her die?"

Hu Jiaojiao's eyebrows raised, "What about you?"

Lu Ran said, "Miss Hu, is the Beifeng City Lord your...?"

"Ah, so that's your angle." Hu Jiaojiao turned to look deep into the Snow Forest and spoke softly, "I might as well tell you, to spare Yuxiang's life, I have already begged my grandfather.

Not just once.

I begged on my knees."

Lu Ran: "Then, Old Master Hu..."

Hu Jiaojiao snorted coldly, "The Life and Death Contract has already been signed, within the Divine Hall, signed before the divine beings themselves, leaving no room for manipulation.

Even the Beifeng City Lord you mentioned must act according to the rules!

He can't intervene during the fight."

Saying this, Hu Jiaojiao turned her head to look at Lu Ran, her expression dissatisfied, "Senior Liao, a killer like no other, knows how to eliminate future threats.

And you, Deng Yuxiang's dear brother, still support your sister fighting to exhaustion.

It seems I need to start preparing to claim my best friend's body."

Lu Ran felt deeply moved; this was a true best friend, doing so much behind the scenes.

He was willing to trust Hu Jiaojiao.

Because Lu Ran was willing to trust Deng Yuxiang, trust her judgment and abilities, trust the friend she believed in.

Lu Ran smiled, "Thank you, Sister Hu.

You think too highly of me; my support or lack thereof won't change Deng Yuxiang's decisions."

Hu Jiaojiao's brows lightly furrowed, shooting Lu Ran a cold glance before turning to leave, "Don't call me sister."

"Wasn't it your request?"

"I don't feel like it now."

"I bet your best friend won't die." Lu Ran watched her retreating figure and suddenly spoke.

Hu Jiaojiao paused her steps but didn't turn around, only scoffing lightly, "You're betting?

For Da Xia's number one genius, better to keep your promises golden."

Lu Ran's voice was soft, "I only support Deng Yuxiang's proud approach to combat.

Following one's heart, thoughts clear.

Win or lose, live or die, those are secondary.

I support the process, support her glowing radiantly throughout her life."

Hu Jiaojiao abruptly turned around, a slight movement in her heart, faintly grasping something.

He supports the process.

Not the result!

And he explicitly said he bets Deng Yuxiang won't die!

Lu Ran looked at her with a smile.

The fate of the Nightmare is not determined by a mere Life and Death Contract.

Nor is it up to any Senior Liao!

"You..." Hu Jiaojiao's facial expressions fluctuated, finally realizing something, her almond eyes slightly widening.

The next moment, she stepped back towards him.

Lu Ran still wore a smile but soon felt a bit panic.

Because Hu Jiaojiao seemed unstoppable.

What was she up to?

Looking for a collision?

Lu Ran decisively stepped back, but Hu Jiaojiao caught hold of his sweater's collar and pulled him close.

Hu Jiaojiao leaned forward, her lips close to Lu Ran's ear, her voice very low, "You better think about the consequences!"

This is Beifeng City, the sacred ground of the Beifeng Sect.

Tomorrow's challenge is at the Martial Arts Arena, right below Lord Beifeng!

If you dare to interfere with the fight, even if you are Da Xia's genius..."

"Tomorrow, will the Beifeng City Lord come to oversee or watch?" Lu Ran abruptly interrupted her.

Hu Jiaojiao straightened her body, looking at the face so close to hers.

Those almond eyes slightly narrowed, no longer so lively.

The pressure was immense!

second, 2 seconds, 3 seconds...

Hu Jiaojiao curled her lips, "I think I know why Yuxiang likes you so much."

So it is...

I support all your decisions, go ahead and follow your heart.

And,

I'll take care of everything for you, the consequences are mine to bear.

What kind of divine brother is this?

Lu Ran asked again, "Will Old Master Hu personally be there?"

Hu Jiaojiao with a smile in her eyes, "Not sure, why don't you call me sister and I'll go ask for you?"

Lu Ran smirked, "Didn't you say you didn't want me to call you that?"

Hu Jiaojiao's eyes twinkled mischievously, "I told you not to call me 'Sister Hu', it sounds awful.

'Sister Jiaojiao' sounds much nicer, don't you think?"

"Shh!" Lu Ran suddenly issued a silencing gesture.

Hu Jiaojiao tensed up, listening intently.

A tall figure approached through the Snow Forest.

Her hair was wet, clearly she had just bathed.

Her tall, slender body still wrapped in that thick white down jacket.

Deng Yuxiang's eyes narrowed slightly, looking at the pair in the grove:

"What are you two doing?"

"Yuxiang's here?" Hu Jiaojiao released Lu Ran's collar, turning to approach, "I brought you some snacks.

Just now, you didn't eat much."

Deng Yuxiang eyed the smiling woman in front of her, "You brought me snacks, all the way to the grove."

Hu Jiaojiao: "..."

Lu Ran: "..."

"Alright, alright." Hu Jiaojiao linked arms with Deng Yuxiang, "Our brother here is Da Xia's genius, right!

I just thought of getting his autograph, maybe take a photo together."

Deng Yuxiang: "My brother."

Hu Jiaojiao: "Ah?"

Deng Yuxiang pursed her lips, remaining silent.

Hu Jiaojiao burst into laughter, unable to resist teasing, "You really are!

How come I never noticed how stingy you are before?

Don't you have two brothers? Give me one, I want this one, and you can have the other."

At this, Deng Yuxiang frowned slightly, her gaze seeming a bit disdainful.

"Cough cough." Lu Ran coughed, "Let's head back, your hair is freezing."

"Come on, let's go back. I'll blow-dry your hair and you can have some snacks. Get a good night's sleep, there's a big fight tomorrow!" Hu Jiaojiao led her best friend away, "Lately, you've been quite gloomy, not in a good mood.

But now, you seem happy?

Why?

Because of Lu Ran?"

"Jiaojiao."

"Uh?"

"Lu Ran has a childhood sweetheart, a girl he loves."

Hu Jiaojiao looked speechlessly at Lu Ran:

"That someone, quickly tell your sister, who am I to you?"

Lu Ran smiled, "Although it's our first meeting, I feel like we're kindred spirits.

In the future, we might become comrades-in-arms, fighting side by side."

Hu Jiaojiao's smile was meaningful, receiving all the messages yet spoke,

"Brother, I am your Sister Jiaojiao!"

Lu Ran: "..."

Wasted emotions.

I'm still your proud brother!

Chapter 398: must not be kept!

The third day of the first lunar month, the weather was clear.

The warm winter sun shone on the Martial Arts Arena of Beifeng City.

Today's Cedar Forest was not as crowded as one might imagine.

The audience in the forest was mostly dressed in white outfits, clearly disciples of the Beifeng Sect.

Although the Martial Arts Arena was in the Outer City and visitors could come here for sightseeing, the Beifeng Sect had already sealed off the area.

Deng Yutang and Bai Manni were still led in by Hu Jiaojiao.

"Hu Sister, is that Senior Liao?" Bai Manni asked softly, looking towards the center of the field.

This field was the largest in the Martial Arts Arena.

Strictly speaking, it was a training field, not a sparring ground.

At different times each day, there were batches of nearly a thousand North Wind Disciples practicing swordplay on the field.

It was spacious enough to accommodate them all.

"Mm," Hu Jiaojiao replied with a complicated look in her eyes.

In the very center of the vast field stood a woman.

She was draped in a white robe, slightly over one meter sixty, clearly of mature age yet her hair was already grey.

Every so often a cold wind blew by, ruffling that slightly disheveled long white hair and revealing her rigid facial features.

Her gaze was indifferent, as if devoid of any human emotion.

There also stood a thin and long ring-pommel saber, plunged into the snow beside her.

Motionless, both her and the saber.

But the terrifying aura was enough to intimidate the entire field.

North Wind Believer—Liao Wushuang!

Far off in the Snow Forest, Bai Manni couldn't help but shiver, clutching Deng Yutang's arm tightly.

Today Beifeng City's temperature had warmed up, and there was even a warm sun hanging high.

Yet the white-haired woman in the center of the field seemed to defy nature itself, making that part of the world bitterly cold.

Deng Yutang's expression grew even worse.

How could such a cold-hearted person possibly hold back?

The corpses of the Evil Demons that died under that ring-pommel saber, perhaps they could pile up into a mountain.

To such people, killing someone was simply no big deal.

"You all stay here to watch the fight, don't wander around, or you'll be driven out," Hu Jiaojiao said. Then, seeing several figures in the distant forest, she quickly stepped away.

Deng Yutang hurriedly said, "My sister, she..."

Hu Jiaojiao paused for a moment: "Little Lu Ran is with her, don't worry."

Bai Manni rolled up her sleeves to reveal a ladies' wristwatch of considerable value on her wrist.

7:40 a.m.

This watch was a birthday gift from Deng Yutang to her.

Bai Manni always felt sweet inside whenever she looked at the time.

But at this moment, the precisely moving second hand felt like a countdown to death.

No more sweet affections of love, only fear, worry, resistance, and other emotions surged in her heart.

Bai Manni pulled down her sleeves to cover the wristwatch: "Lu..."

"What?" Deng Yutang looked down at his girlfriend.

Bai Manni buried her face in Deng Yutang's chest, her voice small and muffled, "Lu Ran is here."

"Mm." Deng Yutang replied in a low voice, nodding.

Last night, Lu Ran returned to the inn just to get his luggage and did not rest in the room.

Deng Yutang sent many messages but received no reply.

It was not until he made a phone call that he learned Lu Ran had spent the night at Deng Yuxiang's place.

Lu Ran,

This legendary figure who was unparalleled in Da Xia, his good brother...

He should be able to help his sister.

At this moment, Lu Ran had become Deng Yutang's only hope.

And the one Deng Yutang was incessantly concerned about was still at Deng Yuxiang's residence.

Inside the simple and tidy living room,

Deng Yuxiang stood in front of the floor-length mirror, meticulously adjusting her shirt collar.

Not far behind, Lu Ran sat on the sofa, quietly accompanying her.

The body of River Realm was indeed terrifying.

Deng Yuxiang had simply taken a hot bath, enjoyed some tea, and slept a night under Lu Ran's protection.

She restored her vitality.

Her lips were rosy again, and her face was radiant.

But in Lu Ran's eyes, she still hadn't returned to her best condition.

Three exchanges,

Three times utterly crushed, indeed that had taken a toll on this camellia flower.

"Tired?" Deng Yuxiang suddenly asked.

"Ah?" Lu Ran returned to his senses.

After adjusting her shirt collar, Deng Yuxiang shook her head slightly and ran her hand through her wavy long hair:

"You were sitting there all night, weren't you?"

"I wasn't just sitting idle; I've been bonding with Little Blazing Phoenix," Lu Ran picked up the Blazing Phoenix Pattern Gourd beside him.

Like Luoxian Mountain, Beifeng City was rich in Divine Power.

That night, Lu Ran used the Chi Feng Pattern Gourd to absorb a lot of energy.

Hmm, enough to just throw his head back and drink it down.

Deng Yuxiang bit her wristband and pulled it off lightly, then raised her hand to tie up her long hair, seemingly ready to make a high ponytail.

With each lift of her arms, her beautiful body lines were fully revealed.

Biting her wristband, she spoke with some ambiguity, "If you're tired, rest here.

After the fight, I will come back for you."

Lu Ran averted his gaze, not engaging her, instead weighing the exquisite gourd in his hand:

"Poor Little Blazing Phoenix, it has no sense of smell, can't smell the fragrance of camellia~"

The gold phoenix pattern on the Red Jade Gourd lit up momentarily.

It was unclear if it was expressing discontent or simply responding to its master.

Deng Yuxiang glanced at someone in the mirror.

Lu Ran looked back at her tall and graceful figure: "The fight is about to start, and you're telling me to sleep now?"

With an expressionless face, Deng Yuxiang continued tying her hair and spoke faintly, "I will come back."

Lu Ran shifted his gaze slightly, looking into the eyes of the woman in the floor-length mirror through reflection:

"Don't forget what I came here with."

Deng Yuxiang paused, "What?"

Lu Ran complained, "You don't remember that night on the terrace by Wu Lie River when we said goodbye?"

Deng Yuxiang grew silent, recalling that warm, breezy night.

She also remembered the eager young man who insisted on coming to watch the battle.

His earnest voice was still echoing in her ears:

"Before you challenge, let me know, I'll come and watch you!"

"If you win, I have to celebrate with you; if you lose, at least I can collect your body."

"We agreed; make sure to tell me in advance, okay!"

...

Thinking about it made Deng Yuxiang's expression soften and her lips curled up in a gentle smile.

Lu Ran nodded, "Looks like you remember."

Only the warm memories of the past could bring a slight smile to Deng Yuxiang at this time.

"Mm," Deng Yuxiang continued tying her hair.

"So, what did I come here with?" Lu Ran asked with a smile.

Deng Yuxiang finished her high ponytail, revealing her astonishing beauty.

She reached out to her side, and the Night-slaying Great Saber flew towards her.

"Snap!"

"You brought what," Deng Yuxiang said casually, firmly gripping the handle of the saber.

The camellia began to bloom fully, her aura rising and rising.

Both beautiful and heroic.

Lu Ran shrugged his shoulders: "I came with that part of the sky above Wu Lie River that night.

With the crescent moon in the night sky.

With the flowing waters of the Wu Lie River...

I've come to see you with everything from our hometown."

Deng Yuxiang's face froze for a moment, then she looked at the young man in the mirror.

Lu Ran smiled brightly: "Hometown will surely bless you."

It definitely will, I promise.

Because in this land of ice and snow in the North Country, next to the Martial Arts Arena where a life-and-death battle will soon unfold...

I,

am the home.

Your hometown.

"Tap, tap..."

Deng Yuxiang took steps forward, the heels of her boots making soft sounds against the floor.

A complete, gentle smile finally appeared on her face.

Just like in the memories.

Her eyes were slightly moist, deeply moved.

The long suppressed life, the body and heart soaked by frost and snow, were quietly warming up.

Lu Ran nodded silently, thinking to himself that it was good.

Her eyes were brighter than before.

She regained some of her past elegance.

"Let's go," Deng Yuxiang said gently, placing the Night-slaying Great Saber aside.

Lu Ran immediately stood up.

Deng Yuxiang tightened the white down jacket on Lu Ran, her movements gentle as she zipped it up for him.

The suitcase beside quietly opened.

The Dawn Blade and Silent Night Blade, with their sheaths, flew and clung to Lu Ran's back.

Deng Yuxiang didn't care about the Divine Weapons, as she raised her hand and rubbed Lu Ran's head lightly.

Then, Lu Ran felt a gentle kiss land on his head.

"You're taller than me," Deng Yuxiang loosened her hand, allowing Lu Ran to look up.

Her gaze was equally gentle, looking at the young man before her, tall and valiant.

Lu Ran smiled proudly.

And Deng Yuxiang smiled as she picked up the Night-slaying Great Saber and walked outside: "Let's go!"

Lu Ran quickly grabbed a knitted scarf and hat and followed her.

Deng Yuxiang's residence was within the boundaries of the Martial Arts Arena, just outside were the Cedar Forests.

She dragged the long Night-slaying Great Saber through the forest.

With each step, her aura surged.

Lu Ran followed behind her, calmly tying his scarf, feeling the martial artist ahead of him growing stronger.

Along the way, one North Wind Disciple after another in white outfits appeared, with different expressions.

People watched the woman in her simple white shirt and tidy high ponytail walking resolutely towards life-and-death battle.

Their eyes and faces...

Some with respect, some excited, some adoring, some expectant.

There were also those who regretted silently, unable to bear to watch.

Regardless of what the North Wind Disciples felt inside, their actions were uniform, stepping aside to clear the path.

"Go for it, Senior Sister Deng!!"

Suddenly, a loud shout came from somewhere.

As if a chain reaction had been triggered in the entire Snow Forest, voices kept coming.

"Show them your spirit, Sister!"

"Take care, Senior Sister Deng!"

...

The closer they got to the field, the more North Wind Disciples there were, and the crowd dressed in white automatically parted ways.

Deng Yuxiang's gaze sharpened!

Her pace never faltering, she saw Liao Wushuang waiting in the center from afar.

Liao Wushuang turned to look, and seeing that stunning woman with an astounding aura, she was utterly astonished.

Three exchanges,

Three brutal suppressions.

This young girl had almost been crushed, left to sit alone in the forest, increasingly despondent.

But now...

Deng Yuxiang had "revived"?

Liao Wushuang narrowed her eyes slightly.

Looking at the once again brilliantly blooming, proud and beautiful woman.

How is this possible?

Liao Wushuang didn't know why Deng Yuxiang could suddenly regroup.

She was also unclear how this nearly broken great saber had solidified once more.

But Liao Wushuang was certain of one thing:

This young successor...

Absolutely must not be spared!

Chapter 399: Purgatory- Unmatched

Deng Yuxiang dragged the long Night-slaying Great Saber, striding through the forest, accelerating with each step.

From the looks of it, was she intending to skip all the formalities and directly start the battle?

Liao Wushuang was naturally aware of the young woman's overwhelming intent to fight.

"Hmph." Liao Wushuang let out a cold laugh.

The ring-pommel saber, buried in the snow, suddenly flew up, and its handle landed precisely in its owner's palm.

Deng Yuxiang's aura was tumultuous, her high ponytail nearly horizontal in the air, as she stepped out of the Snow Forest.

Liao Wushuang, holding her saber, pointed it from afar at Deng Yuxiang, her eyes brimming with murderous intent and her ring-pommel saber buzzing.

At that moment, their gazes locked onto each other.

From each other's eyes, they understood the other's thoughts.

Battle?

Battle!

Amidst the exclamations of the crowd, the two, without a word exchanged, directly commenced a fight to the death!

"This... Isn't there going to be a greeting, or something to say?"

"What else is there to say? It's come down to either you die, or I live."

"Yes! One wants to break through the barriers ahead, the other wants to protect her own path. These two Jiang Realm Great Powers, although they might not have had grievances before, are now mortal enemies at this moment!"

"Isn't this a fight over the Divine Weapon Domain? How has it turned into personal animosity?"

"You, you're still too young! Our Beifeng Sect cultivates by relying on the saber to ascend."

"Which truly powerful North Wind Disciple isn't united with the blade in body, in heart, and ultimately, in spirit?"

"This battle will surely result in one of the sabers shattering! Think about it, what will be the consequences for the loser?"

"Hiss..." The younger North Wind Believers sucked in a breath of cold air.

Turning their heads to view the battlefield again, they saw a gale sweeping across.

Deng Yuxiang had just emerged from the Snow Forest, having traveled barely twenty to thirty meters, her momentum sky-high when a tornado spontaneously arose.

In the center of the arena, Liao Wushuang's face was ice-cold as she reached out her hand.

Waves of energy churned around her palm.

North Wind Divine Skill-North Wind Roar!

During sparring among North Wind Disciples, it is an unwritten rule not to use tornadoes.

Of course, now it was a deathmatch, and such crap rules did not apply.

Liao Wushuang's attitude was consistent as ever: even when a hawk strikes a rabbit, it uses its full force!

You want to build up momentum?

You want to press the attack?

Dream on!

Just as in the past several months, Liao Wushuang had thrice challenged Deng Yuxiang!

In the sparring arena, she seemed to show mercy.

But her suppression was done with all her might.

She mercilessly crushed this young and ambitious contender for "power and influence."

Again and again, she trampled and shattered the other's ambitious heart!

Or perhaps, in Liao Wushuang's eyes, what the other harbored was not ambition but rather wild ambition!

Should Liao Wushuang, as a senior with a distinguished identity and eminent status, act this way?

She did indeed.

People have different characters, different environments, and thus, different choices.

Liao Wushuang was born in the mid-1970s. She had witnessed the very beginning of the God Demon's descent on earth during her childhood.

It was chaos the likes of which later generations could not imagine.

It was the dark age when countless people were displaced and barely clinging to life.

To survive,

people did whatever they had to.

The so-called life creed was reinforced repeatedly through fights for food, for survival.

At the age of seventeen, Liao Wushuang was lucky enough to receive divine pity.

Strictly speaking, her natural talents and abilities were not quite sufficient.

But in that era, when the gods urgently needed more worshiper resources to consolidate their rule, she was fortunate enough to mix into the North Wind camp.

But waiting for her was the fate shared by most North Wind Believers.

The fate of cannon fodder.

She was placed into a veritable suicide squad and sent into the Demon Caves at the deities' feet, to the frontlines to "plug holes."

It is known that the Demon Caves at the feet of the gods are managed by themselves and their sect's numerous disciples.

Thus,

surviving remained Liao Wushuang's life creed.

It did not change due to the shift in her status.

She struggled to persist in the heaps of dead in the human realm, only to end up struggling for her life in the seas of blood and mountains of corpses within the Demon Cave's depths.

But she survived.

Again and again, she survived and climbed her way out.

It was a choice of will, and it was also the favor of destiny.

The human realm's conflicts eventually calmed.

Yet the flames of war in the depths of the Demon Cave never ceased.

Throughout the endless years of war, on the battlefield interwoven with life and death, Liao Wushuang understood a truth:

To win,

is to live!

To lose,

is to die!

This was a concept equated.

I want to live.

I want to stay alive!

I will definitely live!

Therefore...

"Whoosh!!"

One tornado after another arose, lifting the ground's frost and snow into terrifying Snow Tornadoes.

Deng Yuxiang, wrapped in gusts, rapidly moved and dodged continuously.

The momentum she had accumulated was forcibly interrupted.

Amidst her awkward dodging, between the gaps of two Snow Tornadoes, Deng Yuxiang's bright and beautiful eyes met Liao Wushuang's ruthless gaze.

Their sights intertwined.

Liao Wushuang's killing intent surged!

At twenty-two, the younger generation, a third-stage in the Jiang Realm!

She was without a doubt a Heavenly Pride of the Human Clan, with a terrifying talent far surpassing the ordinary believer!

Deng Yuxiang, a proud and radiant young person, enviable by all and igniting a burning jealousy.

In the future, Deng Yuxiang was bound to be an existence she had to look up to!

Therefore, in this battle, she must die!

Just to shatter the Night-slaying Great Saber?

No!

After all, the saber is cultivated by the person wielding it.

The Night-slaying Great Saber could be shattered three times, ten times, a hundred times!

As long as Deng Yuxiang was still there, as long as her spirit was intact, as long as she remained proud and moving forward...

Then maybe one day, she would appear before her, holding the next Night-slaying Great Saber.

At that time, would she spare me?

Maybe.

Maybe not.

How could I possibly bet on it?

And how could I possibly put my life in her hands?

"Swoosh! Swoosh! Swoosh..."

Liao Wushuang flung her arm fiercely, sending no fewer than 16 Wind Blades piercing forward.

At the same time, gusts churned around her.

Liao Wushuang, with winds swirling at her feet, quickly darted towards the distance.

Sure enough, a tornado began to spin, picking up the ground's accumulated snow, forming another terrifying Snow Tornado.

North Wind Believers possess exceptional hearing, all heard the sound of weapon clashes.

Wind Blades, with an overwhelming presence, were showered upon Deng Yuxiang.

Another 16 Wind Blades met them head-on.

It was a collision of titanic forces!

Amidst the "ding ding dang dang" noises, Snow Tornadoes spread out over the arena.

The battle between Jiang Realm Great Powers truly decimated the earth and sky.

Frost and snow danced through the air, and gales roared across the battlefield.

Those outside the arena could scarcely see what was happening within.

Deng Yuxiang clenched his fists.

The layers of wind and snow driving towards the forest even made it difficult for him to open his eyes.

He tried hard to discern something, but it was futile.

Bai Manni shielded her face with one hand, praying quietly in her heart, unable to do anything more.

Let alone the red sash or Caster believers, even the North Wind Believers watching from the sidelines, could hardly discern the movements of the two great powers of the Human Clan.

North Wind Divine Skill-Wind Listening, indeed allows one to hear the voice of the wind.

But the battlefield was too chaotic, the information too complex; without true power, it was difficult to pinpoint their locations.

Lu Ran locked on!

He did not possess the Beifeng Sect's Wind Listening, but he had the Evil Dog Clan's Evil Sense!

"So... so fast!"

Lu Ran stood at the edge of the Snow Forest, his expression grave.

Since the fight began, his heart gradually sank to the depths.

Liao Wushuang, truly a soldier tempered in the depths of the Demon Cave, in the throes of war!

Ordinary Human Clan believers mostly come from battles on nights of the fifteenth, from city defense missions.

The difference was clear!

Such fast sabers, such ferocity.

After all this time, not a single superfluous movement.

All were critical, each strike lethal!

"Crack!"

Lu Ran slightly tilted his head, straining to listen.

The two were engaged in close-combat with blades.

The sound just now was likely the noise of a blade being notched by a strike.

Lu Ran's expression subtly shifted.

You can't beat her head-on, Big Nightmare!

The opponent's ring-pommel saber is of a higher Grade than the Night-slaying Great Saber.

In the distant Snow Forest, Hu Jiaojiao's expression was full of reluctance.

Being a Jiang Realm Great Power herself, she naturally also heard something.

"Grandfather, why doesn't Yuxiang just surrender?" Hu Jiaojiao quietly inquired.

Beside her stood an elderly man towering and stately, though his hair was silver-white, his spirit fierce and vigorous.

If Lu Ran saw this old man, he likely would see him as a domineering, heavy, Green Dragon Yanyue Blade.

The old man, his eyes closed, his face expressionless, spoke softly, "Jiaojiao, there is a type of person in this world.

They would rather die than submit."

Hu Jiaojiao's expression was complicated. She parted her lips to say something but suddenly looked upwards.

From this one movement alone, the disparity in strength among the onlookers was evident.

The majority of North Wind Disciples watching had no reaction.

But Lu Ran, who looked up immediately, saw in the high sky, two figures fiercely fighting.

"Ding! Ding! Ding..."

The frost and snow filled the battlefield, still falling to the ground, while the heavens above were clear.

The two North Wind Great Powers fought on even ground in the sky, and the battlefield reached a delicate balance.

Thirty-two Wind Blades divided into two groups.

One group attacked Liao Wushuang, and the other aimed to kill Deng Yuxiang.

Deng Yuxiang wielded the Night-slaying Great Saber with both hands, it wrapped in potent Divine Power, swinging wildly, cleaving the surrounding Wind Blades.

Liao Wushuang held the ring-pommel saber with one hand, her movements extremely straightforward, her offensive incredibly swift.

Lu Ran's eyes widened!

Such straightforward cutting.

Such efficient killing!

With absolute dominating force, Liao Wushuang casually dealt with the crises on her path, flying straight towards Deng Yuxiang!

Behind her, a group of Wind Blades followed.

Liao Wushuang didn't care!

The buzzing ring-pommel saber in her hand drew out a long saber mark from its tip.

North Wind Divine Skill·Residual Wind Trace!

This skill, claimed to be the best single-target assassination technique below River Grade.

And Jiang Grade·Residual Wind Trace, though not the first, was absolutely among the top tier!

"Come on, youngster."

Liao Wushuang's voice was hoarse, chilling to the bone.

Her white hair fluttered with the wind, revealing her eyes filled with astonishing murderous intent.

Deng Yuxiang's eyes narrowed!

She couldn't confront her strength head on!

Disregarding everything else, she flicked her fingers, and a tornado burst forth in front of her.

At the same time, Deng Yuxiang rapidly plummeted diagonally downwards.

"Ding! Ding! Ding..."

"Crack!"

In just an instant, Deng Yuxiang, forced to change her moves and cast a spell, was stabbed in her waist, back, shoulder, and neck in quick succession by Wind Blades.

The Shattering Wind Armor she wore, from the North Wind Sect, shattered loudly.

No matter, Deng Yuxiang still had the Human Clan believers' Universal Skill: Water Flow Armor.

But the issue was, one blow after another, the astonishingly powerful Jiang Grade Wind Blades stabbing and slashing at Deng Yuxiang, also disrupted her flying speed and trajectory.

"Whoosh!!"

A tornado suddenly rose, swallowing Deng Yuxiang's slender figure.

Liao Wushuang firmly seized the fleeting opportunity!

She entered the fray, stabbing her saber into the storm.

Her voice grew even colder and more hoarse, as if harboring tens of thousands of Dead Souls within her body, echoing out with her:

"Come on, youngster!"

This path of survival was destined to be lined with bones.

I've lived for more than forty years.

Lord Beifeng threw me into the Demon Cave, where I struggled to survive for nearly thirty years...

They died.

I lived!

...

Chapter 400: Shadows under the Divine Sword

"Arghhh!!"

From high in the sky, a hoarse roar was transmitted.

Lu Ran had known Deng Yuxiang for a long time, but this was the first time he had heard such a battle roar from the Big Nightmare.

She was indeed in a life-threatening situation.

The terrifying tornado engulfed her figure.

Deng Yuxiang couldn't stabilize her body, all she wanted was to escape the range of the tornado.

She exerted all her strength to activate the Divine Technique·Breeze Dance, but the intensity of the tornado greatly restricted her movement.

What was even more terrifying was that Liao Wushuang was rapidly attacking!

The killing move had arrived!

Under the winter sun's warm rays, the Ringed Saber shimmered slightly, slicing directly through the tornado!

Was Liao Wushuang intending to cut through both the person and the wind?

"Get ready!"

Suddenly, the Night-slaying Great Saber received a mental message from its master.

Deng Yuxiang could fly on her own and typically didn't rely on divine weapons.

At this moment, her mind was full of the image of Lu Ran being carried away by a divine weapon.

"Buzz!!"

The Night-slaying Great Saber trembled violently.

Deng Yuxiang no longer resisted.

She didn't try to fly out of the tornado, instead allowing the storm to cleanse her, seemingly going with the flow.

No!

Deng Yuxiang's body vibrated violently with the Divine Technique; she was desperately activating the technique!

North Wind Divine Skill-Breeze Dance!

Below the River Grade, the Divine Technique-Breeze Dance could only generate wind under the feet of North Wind Disciples.

At most, this wind would wrap around their shins.

But the Jiang Grade-Breeze Dance could envelop one's entire body with wind.

At this moment, Deng Yuxiang's body was as light as a feather, letting the tornado spin her round and round...

"Down!" Deng Yuxiang clenched the saber handle.

"Buzz!" Suddenly, the Night-slaying Great Saber forcefully took flight with its master.

Both master and weapon, using the inertia of the storm, thrust diagonally downwards three meters simultaneously.

"Whoosh!"

Liao Wushuang, with a long saber mark, slashed past the side of the tornado.

From below in the Cedar Forest, a series of exclamations arose.

"My God!"

"Be careful! Senior Sister Deng... that was close."

"Can the North Wind Roar be cut through too?"

"Senior Liao is too strong..."

Their conversations surrounded the two overwhelmed individuals.

Bai Manni gazed dumbly upward.

Deng Yutang's heart hung in his throat, his body trembling excessively from the tension.

Today, the weather was clear with no snow falling.

Thus, the tornado blooming high in the sky was not thick with frost and snow, allowing Deng and Bai to see it clearly.

Liao Wushuang had attacked right over Deng Yuxiang's head!

Had it not been for the split-second decision by Deng Yuxiang to thrust diagonally downwards by two to three meters, she would have been beheaded!

Beheaded!

Deng Yutang could not bear to imagine the sight of his sister's head, lonely as it fell.

Strictly speaking, Liao Wushuang did cut something.

Hair tips.

As Deng Yuxiang plummeted downwards, her ponytail fluttering high, the tips of her hair were cleanly sliced off.

Those strands of hair, drifting with the wind, took the punishment instead of her head.

"Young one, why bother struggling?"

Liao Wushuang's voice was hoarse, chilling those who heard it.

Her eyes were sinister, and as she turned to fly backwards, she had already slashed with the Ringed Saber!

All this time, Liao Wushuang's attacks were like a fierce storm, never pausing for a moment.

Not even the spectators had a chance to catch their breath.

Her mid-air saber-slashing movements were certainly not futile!

"Buzz!!"

The Ringed Saber trembled violently.

Above the blade, cold light shone brightly!

"Divine Weapon Domain!" Lu Ran's heart tightened, and the Dawn Blade at his back trembled slightly, ready to unsheathe.

"Zi! Zi!"

"Zi..."

Centered around Deng Yuxiang, within a radius of a hundred meters, a great amount of sword energy suddenly emerged.

Endless sword energy swept horizontally, chopped vertically, flicked upwards, and slashed diagonally.

The attack was dense and chaotic, making onlookers' scalps tingle!

Contrary to everyone's expectations, Deng Yuxiang did not dodge initially, but instead reached her hand towards Liao Wushuang's direction.

The wind suddenly rose sharply!

Just as Liao Wushuang turned to slash and stopped her backward momentum, a tornado engulfed her figure.

These two Jiang Realm Great Powers truly taught everyone a lesson!

Liao Wushuang's offensive was relentless.

And was Deng Yuxiang any less diligent?

Both individuals moved faster than the eye could follow, their action speeds left people dumbstruck, and their frequency of casting was frighteningly high.

Are these two North Wind Disciples?

No,

This is purely two rabid dogs!

From the southern end of the Martial Arts Arena to the northern side, from the snowy white ground to the clear high sky.

Since the battle started, the seconds hand on Bai Manni's expensive watch hadn't even completed one full rotation...

In fact, Deng Yuxiang had no choice but to act this way.

She needed to buy herself time, needed the tornado to control her opponent, even if it was only for a short time.

If Liao Wushuang had a stable environment to launch her attacks, then it would truly be over for Deng Yuxiang!

"Hisss..."

Deng Yuxiang gasped in pain, paying a painful price.

In the moment she cast her spell and reached towards Liao Wushuang, a swipe of sword energy struck.

The sharp sword energy created a crack in the freshly gathered Shattering Wind Armor on her body.

Had there been just this one strike of sword energy, it would have been bearable.

But unfortunately, Deng Yuxiang was at the center of the Divine Weapon Domain.

Four words: Death by a thousand cuts!

"Zi!"

The sword energy hit Deng Yuxiang's arm.

"Crack!"

The sword energy hit Deng Yuxiang's shoulder.

The Shattering Wind Armor shattered violently, and the Jiang Grade-Water Armor instantly took its place.

However, the Jiang Grade-Water Armor could not withstand the two or three strikes of sword energy that simultaneously appeared.

Deng Yuxiang screamed because a swipe of sword energy slashed open her pants.

From her calf to her thigh!

Blood spurted out,

The wound was bone-deep!

Once a divine weapon domain is activated, there are no easy opponents.

Lu Ran's Dawn Blade, employing the Divine Weapon Domain-Blessed Cloud, had once forcefully repelled the Night of Ghosts!

From another perspective:

Could the divine weapon domain activated by a blade nurtured by someone like Deng Yuxiang be weak?

Alas, fate is blind; there is only one domain.

Regrettably, she wasn't born at the right time, and another murderous god had seized the initiative.

"Zi! Zi!"

"Crack!"

Covered in wounds, blood splattered everywhere.

Even the blade of the Night-slaying Great Saber was covered in hairline fractures.

The area from which the Ringed Saber had chopped was peeling off steel, flaking and flying off.

The radius of this Divine Weapon Domain was a hundred meters.

The closer to the center, the denser the sword energy.

Deng Yuxiang plummeted at high speed, desperately reassembling the Water Armor, continuously summoning the Shattering Wind Armor for protection.

"Whoosh!"

Deng Yuxiang's downward momentum suddenly halted, a swipe of sword energy passing right in front of her.

That was a close call!

North Wind Divine Skill-Wind Listening saved her life.

But her abruptly suspended body gained another wound on her back.

"Zi!"

Deng Yuxiang, ignoring the pain, flew downward again.

Within the Divine Weapon Domain, every extra second spent increased the mortality rate!

As it turned out, when an offensive was sufficiently dense, even a North Wind Believer adept at Sound Positioning couldn't evade.

Swipe after swipe of sword energy continuously struck Deng Yuxiang.

Finally!

The surrounding sword energy diminished and its frequency of appearance reduced.

Deng Yuxiang, teetering and covered in wounds like a bloodied figure, was a horrifying sight!

Murmurs arose from the Snow Forest.

"Hisss..."

"There's no way to fight, Senior Liao has the Divine Weapon Domain, how can you fight against that?"

"They're simply not on the same level! She was already at a lower strength realm, and the divine weapon is overwhelmingly powerful."

"Once the domain is activated, there's simply no way out."

"Will Senior Sister Deng die? There's so much blood..."

"Don't, for goodness sake, she's our compatriot, show some mercy, please don't!"

"Sister..." Deng Yutang couldn't help but step forward, yet he didn't know what he could do.

Bai Manni couldn't bear to watch any longer, nor did she dare to.

She tightly closed her eyes, afraid that in the next second, Deng Yuxiang would completely perish.

"Yuxiang!" Hu Jiaojiao's expression was complicated as she suddenly widened her eyes.

She saw Deng Yuxiang, during her free fall, suddenly raise her right hand.

The storm returned!

Was she still willing to fight?

Hu Jiaojiao bit her silver teeth tightly, clenched her fists!

Yuxiang...it's okay to admit defeat now!

It's already okay!

In sight, Deng Yuxiang lay back as she fell, her body streaming with blood, eyes firmly fixed on the high sky.

And high in the sky, within the tornado "going with the flow," Liao Wushuang seemed to have no intention of escaping?

Indeed, Liao Wushuang was fiercely activating her divine weapon, jointly casting!

She realized the storm was coming again.

But Liao Wushuang's lips slightly curled upward.

That smile was cold and cruel.

Good!

This North Wind Roar was well-timed!

I was afraid you would give in, afraid you would just give up!

Then how would I be able to kill you?

"Ergh." Deng Yuxiang suddenly clenched her fist, her Divine Power surging.

High in the sky, endless wind waves converged rapidly, taking shape.

That was a giant saber, a hundred meters long!

Around the blade, fierce wind waves spread out.

A great move of the Beifeng Sect in the Jiang Realm — the Beifeng Divine Blade!

"Whoosh!!"

In the tornado, Liao Wushuang, seemingly trapped, also raised her hand high.

High in the sky, below the Beifeng Divine Blade, another Beifeng Divine Blade converged!

Great move VS great move?

Such a frightful spectacle disturbed the entire Beifeng City.

Even in the Ice City beyond the ancient town, vehicles and pedestrians on the streets stopped, their faces in shock, staring at the high sky.

"Young one, it's time to hit the road!"

Liao Wushuang murmured in her heart, her murderous intent surged!

Without the matter of the domain, you would have had such a bright future.

In the future, you were sure to be a pillar of the Beifeng Sect.

Alas, regrettably.

Heaven has no two suns, realms have no two masters.

Blame it on you stepping onto my path, trying to take what is mine!

"Ah!!"

"What?"

"Holy shit!!" Exclamations were everywhere.

Just when everyone thought that the Beifeng Divine Blade summoned by Liao Wushuang was going to clash with Deng Yuxiang's Beifeng Divine Blade...

Liao Wushuang's blade went straight for Deng Yuxiang!

There was never any earth-shattering confrontation between divine sabers.

The tone of the battle had been set from the start: a rabid dogfight!

And Liao Wushuang's great move, which came later, arrived first.

Jiang Grade Fifth Rank·Beifeng Divine Blade, converged earlier than Jiang Grade Third Rank's saber, descending faster by three parts.

It was not hard to imagine, the terrifying power of its descent!

"Whoosh!!"

One blade slashed toward the north of the Martial Arts Arena.

"Whoosh!!"

One blade slashed toward the high-sky storm.

The great move of the Beifeng Sect, from assembly to slashing, required continuous casting throughout the process.

The caster needed to be fully focused, unable to move.

Luckily, the Night-slaying Great Saber could move freely.

It braced its fracture-filled blade, striving to push Deng Yuxiang to the side to dodge.

But the Beifeng Divine Blade was massive in scale, with an astonishing output range!

Under Liao Wushuang's control, it kept adjusting angles, relentlessly pursuing Deng Yuxiang to strike...

"Yuxiang!!"

"Senior Sister Deng!"

"It's over! No..."

Amidst a series of exclams, a different voice intermingled.

"Sss—"

The Immortal Fog swirled, and snow danced chaotically.

A young man wearing a white down jacket, facing the giant divine blade descending from the sky...

Rushed towards that blood-drenched figure.

...