

Old Gods 401

Chapter 401: Broken Blade

At this moment, the world in Deng Yutang's eyes seemed like a slow-motion scene.

Deng Yuxiang, coughing up blood.

The Night-slaying Great Saber, desperately pushing its master, trying to flee.

And the plummeting North Wind Divine Blade...

Deng Yutang was distraught, his body weakening.

Am I going to die?

Is my kin going to perish under this blade?

Bai Manni clutched her boyfriend tightly, eyes closed, not daring to watch.

"Lu..." Hu Jiaojiao stepped forward, her expression a mix of fear and joy.

For a moment, she truly thought it was time to collect her best friend's body.

Outmatched in skill, nothing much to say.

But Hu Jiaojiao couldn't help feeling sorrow, even a trace of resentment.

Why?

Why fight to the last breath, why not surrender?

Her grandfather had just said: In this world, there always are those who would rather die than submit.

Why bother?

Is anything really that important compared to life?

Really that... sigh, perhaps.

Da Xia, having faced hardships, stands steadfast even now because of armies of those "who would rather die than submit."

The resplendent camellias, after all, went nobly into battle, proudly blooming until their final Chapter.

Fortunately, he was there.

He said she wouldn't die.

Wouldn't die...

"Ah!!"

"Who is that?"

"That is..." From everywhere in the Cedar Forest, startled cries were heard.

Including Hu Jiaojiao, many North Wind Believers saw that speeding figure darting by.

Was that an Immortal Hoof?

A Believer of the Immortal Sheep?

So fast,

Dreadfully fast!

Fast enough to snatch a life straight from the hands of Death under the rapid slash of the North Wind Divine Blade!

The Divine Weapon, Night-slaying Great Saber, just a second ago was frantic, near despair.

In the next second, it was hit by a tremendous force!

A figure embraced its master, with both the person and the blade, rushing in a different direction.

While overhead, the North Wind Divine Blade, constantly adjusting its angle, sharply chopped down on the ground!

"Boom!"

The earth shook and the mountains trembled!

Fierce gales, along with frost and snow, surged chaotically in both directions.

"Whoosh!"

Under the terrifying gales, pine trees were snapped, their cracking sounds never ceasing.

Just one slash!

The earth was cleaved open, the spectacle so grand it was like a chasm created by the heavens.

On either side of the chasm, the pine forest was flattened!

North Wind disciples were tossed about, their screams echoing continuously.

There was a problem!

Lu Ran was just beside the chasm.

Yet he was only holding the "blood person" in his arms, staggering about and had not been thrown away.

This...?

In the Snow Forest, the elder beside Hu Jiaojiao closed his eyes, listening intently.

He furrowed his brow slightly, barely perceptible.

Meanwhile, up in the sky.

"You!!" Liao Wushuang's eyes widened in shock!

At the last moment, by relying on absolute strength and the help of the Divine Weapon, she moved sideways over ten meters, dodging Deng Yuxiang's North Wind Divine Blade.

As for being controlled by the tornado...

It was less of Liao Wushuang being imprisoned by the storm, and more of her going with the flow, luring the enemy into attacking.

Even the Night-slaying Great Saber could carry Deng Yuxiang and lunge several meters inside the tornado.

Naturally, Liao Wushuang's Divine Weapon could do it even more effortlessly.

But what surprised her was that someone dared to wreck havoc, to interfere?

Liao Wushuang had been watching Deng Yuxiang being severely injured, finally about to meet her end...

And now, Deng Yuxiang was saved?

"You've got some nerve!"

Fury filled Liao Wushuang's eyes!

She clenched her ring-handled saber, slashing fiercely!

Divine Weapon Domain, activate!

"Zing! Zing!"

"Zing..."

Below, at the Martial Arts Arena, beside the North Wind Divine Blade.

Countless sword energies appeared out of nowhere, tearing wildly.

Lu Ran, with immortal fog swirling underfoot, moved swiftly, rushing and stopping abruptly.

He held the "blood person" in one arm, retreating and advancing, rocking from side to side.

Sword energies came at him from every direction.

Surrounded within the Domain, the young man was quickly moving away from the center.

But Lu Ran, burdened with another person in the intense energy of the Divine Weapon Domain, couldn't possibly remain unscathed.

He often had to shield them with his body!

Every unavoidable sword energy, he bore it himself.

"Crack! Crack! Crack..."

The sounds of the blade being torn apart resounded.

The Night-slaying Great Saber was 2.8 meters long; it had a large surface area to be attacked.

Any contact from the sword energies sent it flying chaotically.

"Night, Night-slaying..." Deng Yuxiang's eyes brimmed with tears.

Tears cleansed her bloodstained face.

"Crack! Crack!"

The Night-slaying Great Saber, buffeted about and slashed repeatedly by the sword energies, fractured into pieces.

"Huff~"

Suddenly, the Night-Slaying Blade Spirit emerged.

She bore a similar visage to Deng Yuxiang and gazed at her master's silhouette, a smile on her face.

As though... a smile of relief.

This battle was never decided by Deng Yuxiang alone.

Facing the challenge,

The Night-Slaying Blade Spirit was far more tenacious than Deng Yuxiang!

Now...

Having fought with her life, let it be.

"Night-slay... pfff..." Deng Yuxiang coughed up blood, staining Lu Ran's shoulder.

"Crack!!"

The Night-slaying Great Saber, covered with crack marks, was severed by a blast of sword energy.

The spiritual link between the Divine Weapon and the master, mystically shattered.

Deng Yuxiang's gaze dulled, as she let herself be held by Lu Ran, making erratic moves.

"Snap" went a crisp sound.

Lu Ran suddenly surged forward over ten meters, audaciously grabbing the hilt of the Night-cutting Blade.

To be precise,

It was a broken blade.

The hilt was cut off by almost half, and the remaining small piece of the blade, covered with cracks.

"Zap!"

Lu Ran paid the price for his rash action!

His sleeve was torn in an instant, and his forearm suffered a slash wound.

The water flow armor on Lu Ran, after being damaged and shattered, naturally took some time to regather.

"Stop! Cease the fight!!" Hu Jiaojiao shouted loudly, "Someone broke the rules!

Senior Liao, please stop!"

Stop?

Liao Wushuang's face darkened to the utmost.

You want me to stop?

As long as Deng Yuxiang remains alive, I can't rest easy!

And that person who suddenly appeared, trying to save her, no matter who you are, you are dead meat!

You want to save someone from under my blade?

How audacious!

Then you shall join her in death!

"Whoosh!!"

Liao Wushuang not only didn't stop but put even more strength into her move.

With an outstretched hand, a tornado was flung directly below Lu Ran's feet.

Hu Jiaojiao's face froze!

Keep in mind, the Divine Weapon Domain was still active.

Lu Ran, dodging the dense sword energies while holding Deng Yuxiang, was already a hair's breadth from death.

Now, Liao Wushuang released another tornado?!

In such a fearsome gale, how could Lu Ran maintain his stance?

A single misstep, a tiny mistake, would spell doom!

"Hisss..."

"Senior Liao is really furious, she's going all out now!"

"Not holding back at all, planning to take them both down."

"Heh, why should she spare them? It's that person who broke the rules first, disrupting the life and death battle. If you dare enter the fray, you should be ready to face the consequences!"

"Is this Immortal Sheep Believer... Lu Ran by any chance?"

"Must be! Besides Da Xia's genius, what other Believer of the Immortal Sheep could do such a thing?"

"Shit, can't be Lu Ran, right?"

"Ah??"

A group of North Wind Disciples was uncertain because the Martial Arts Arena was in utter chaos.

The previously fallen North Wind Divine Blade had whipped up fierce gales.

Though the snow on the ground was blown away, dust and debris muddied the air even more.

With their sight impeded, the North Wind Disciples had to rely on listening.

But as they listened, something felt off.

"Grandfather!" Hu Jiaojiao hurriedly grabbed the elder's arm, "Quickly make Senior Liao stop, please take control of the situation!"

The City Lord of Hu brusquely raised his hand, silencing Hu Jiaojiao's words.

This high and mighty City Lord, who was always composed.

His expressionless face only showed a caring smile when facing his granddaughter.

And at this moment, the elder's face was stern, eyebrows tightly furrowed!

The City Lord tilted his head slightly, clearly straining to listen, as if trying to confirm something.

The City Lord, ever so dignified, wouldn't be disobeyed by his anxious granddaughter.

Hu Jiaojiao had to exert herself in casting a spell, likewise straining to listen.

In the next moment, Hu Jiaojiao's complexion changed completely!

This...?

What on earth is this?

Lu Ran was holding Deng Yuxiang, actually advancing step by step within Jiang Pin, North Wind Roar?!

Lu Ran wasn't blown away by the tornado or wrapped up in the gale, spinning uncontrollably.

Despite stumbling, he could still dodge the sword energies and walk out from the tornado!

Hu Jiaojiao was utterly stunned!

Liao Wushuang was also stunned!

All the slightly stronger North Wind disciples were dumbfounded.

Why?!

Even Jiang Realm Great Power, Deng Yuxiang, had to rely on the Divine Weapon's assistance, both the master and blade united, to break free from the tornado's control.

Why could this Immortal Sheep Believer do it?

Simply because...

Lu Ran is the Evil Demon Lord!

He commands a powerful Evil Sculpture—The Barbaric Woman.

Her Evil Technique, Wilderness Power!

This technique boosts the caster's strength, drawing it from the ground.

The Barbaric Clan is closely connected with the earth, countering many skills.

They fear neither lightning nor thunder,

And can stand firm and laugh amidst the roaring gales!

Remembering when Lu Ran first encountered the Barbaric Woman, he faced her along with the "blood person" in his arms.

That Barbaric Woman laughed loudly within the tornado cast by Deng Yuxiang.

If even a servant could be so brazen, what more the Evil Demon Lord?

If not for the fact that the Barbaric Woman's Evil Sculpture was currently River Realm, meaning she could only cast River Grade, Wilderness Power, Lu Ran wouldn't even stagger!

Of course, his ability to advance like this also had another two powerful supports!

Dawn Blade, Silent Night Blade!

Two Divine Weapons on either side of Lu Ran, moving with his thoughts, aiding their master to maintain his stance.

"Is it really Lu Ran?"

"Ah?"

"Da Xia's Heavenly Pride, Da Xia's number one Heavenly Pride!!"

"I said it, who else could showcase such splendor, to fish Senior Sister Deng from amongst blades and flames!"

"He... this, but he broke the rules!"

"Damn awesome! What the hell?"

"Shit! Divine Weapon Domain, on top of North Wind Roar, and he just broke out like that??"

"Stop it, Senior Liao, that's Lu Ran!"

As Lu Ran dodged sword energies and walked out of the tornado, the scene erupted into pandemonium.

Surprised cries burst forth.

Liao Wushuang's complexion turned particularly unsightly!

Lu Ran walked out?!

Under everyone's incredulous gaze, he did just that, came out unscathed!

At that moment, Lu Ran was still dodging sword energies!

However, he had already distanced himself from the center of the Divine Weapon Domain, where the number and frequency of sword energies greatly reduced.

That effortless figure, in stark contrast with his extremely disheveled appearance, seemed paradoxical.

Lu Ran held the "blood person" in his arms, covered in bloodstains.

His down jacket ragged, Lu Ran's body was riddled with blade wounds.

"Pause." The elder in the Snow Forest spoke calmly.

High above, Liao Wushuang held the ring-handled saber tight, her body shaking.

"Liao Wushuang." Again, the elder called in a low voice.

Suddenly,

The sword energies vanished, the fierce wind abated.

Lu Ran, covered in cuts, holding the blood-soaked Deng Yuxiang, came to a halt.

His right cheek bore a slash wound that revealed the white of his cheekbone.

Blood continued to pour out.

Within and outside the Martial Arts Arena, a hush fell.

Lu Ran's face expressionless, his left arm encircled Deng Yuxiang, supporting her neck with his palm, letting her face press into his shoulder.

In his right hand, he held a broken blade.

He slowly raised his right hand, using the back of his hand to wipe blood from his face:

"Lu Ran,

Pleased to meet all the senior members of the Human Clan!"

Chapter 402: Notorious Life

A single remark resounded like thunder.

Countless pairs of eyes within and outside the arena looked at Lu Ran, his body covered in sword wounds, as murmurs rose in waves.

"Really, it's Lu Ran! Damn, to see him alive!"

"Lu Tianjiao is too miserable, covered in cuts, and Senior Sister Deng too... turned into a blood person..."

"What's the relationship between Lu Tianjiao and Senior Sister Deng? Lovers?"

"The two of them are so wretched, they really seem like a pair of tragic mandarin ducks..."

"Don't spout nonsense, Ran Dog's girlfriend is Goddess Jiang!"

Among hushed whispers, Deng Yutang trembled with excitement.

Brother Lu had indeed made a move!

I knew it!

Brother Lu wouldn't just stand by and watch his sister die.

Despite the current state of Deng Yuxiang, drenched in blood, life and death uncertain, with Lu Ran by her side, Deng Yutang believed his sister must still be alive!

Deng Yutang's trust in Lu Ran was almost to the point of blindness.

Bai Manni was also incredibly relieved!

However, her jubilation was only felt deep inside.

At this moment, the atmosphere inside and outside the Martial Arts Arena was simply too solemn.

Lu Ran had brought back Deng Yuxiang, but what now?

This is the territory of the Beifeng Sect, Beifeng City!

And there stands the statue of the Divine Sculpture, tall and mighty within the city.

Lu Ran had violated the rules right under the nose of the Divine Lord and inside someone else's faction!

What should Lu Ran do now?

With this thought, Bai Manni's expression grew somber.

"A fine genius of Da Xia," suddenly came a hoarse voice from above.

Liao Wushuang stood suspended in the sky, her gaze cold, with a trace of resentment, her voice bitingly clear,

"To run wild in our Beifeng City, to disrupt a duel for no reason, to disregard the rules as if they were nothing!

Very well,

A fine genius of Da Xia!"

With these words, the entire place fell silent.

People stopped even their secretive whispers, their attention tensely focused on the unfolding situation.

Undeniably, many onlookers held a great deal of admiration for Lu Ran.

As the number one genius of Da Xia, Lu Ran had a vast fanbase.

As a swordsman, Lu Ran was the idol of many North Wind Disciples, the target they aspired to surpass.

There were even some whose admiration for Lu Ran reached fanatical levels.

In any other setting, quite a number would have already spoken out in defense of Lu Ran.

Right and wrong were secondary.

The fanatical fans were for the person, not the principle.

But this was Beifeng City!

The majority of the spectators were North Wind Disciples, and they could see the Divinity with just a lift of their eyes.

Liao Wushuang, especially, was a prestigious character within the Beifeng Sect; her words just now seemingly declared her stance.

"This matter was indeed the fault of Lu Ran breaking the rules first."

Lu Ran spoke up, admitting his mistake candidly.

He looked towards Liao Wushuang and continued, "Senior Sister Deng Yuxiang and I are from the same hometown, born in Rain Alley.

When I first became a Believer, I acted rashly and foolishly, unaware of the vastness of heaven and earth.

It was Senior Sister Deng who took me on missions, guided me forward, and protected my life."

Lu Ran paused, his gaze spanning the crowd, "Deng Yuxiang helped me too much.

She is my comrade-in-arms in life and death battles, my guide, who once slew Yan Paper on a rainy night to save my life.

I truly couldn't just watch her die before my eyes.

I broke the rules.

I admit my fault and accept the penalty."

Winter's warm sun shone upon Beifeng City.

Above and below the heavens, countless people encircled the empty Martial Arts Arena, where sunlight fell on the center stage, on the two bloodied figures.

The scene held a certain tragic beauty,

And carried a hint of heroism.

The North Wind Disciples, listening to Lu Ran's words, couldn't help but look on with complex expressions.

"You admit your fault and accept punishment?" Liao Wushuang's face darkened, pushing out the words through clenched teeth.

She gritted her teeth!

Deng Yuxiang, a youth with exceptional talent, was destined to dominate one day.

How could Liao Wushuang rest easy if Deng Yuxiang didn't die today?

But here was the genius of Da Xia, expressing his resolve to save Deng Yuxiang's life.

"Yes!" Lu Ran nodded emphatically.

Then, he lifted his broken blade, "My sister has lost, and her saber is broken.

She no longer qualifies to contend with Senior Liao's Divine Weapon for the Divine Weapon Domain.

But could you spare her life in light of her being a fellow member of the Human Clan, a comrade-in-arms?"

In fact, even if Deng Yuxiang were to foster another Divine Weapon, its Domain might not necessarily overlap with Liao Wushuang's Divine Weapon.

But "might not necessarily" implied "a possibility"!

Therefore, even though the Night-slaying Great Saber was broken and its Artifact Spirit dispersed, Liao Wushuang was still not appeased.

To cut grass,

You must eradicate the roots!

Liao Wushuang articulated each word sharply, her voice as cold as ice, "The great genius of Da Xia, a pillar of the nation!

How shall you be punished?

This matter began because of Deng Yuxiang, so the punishment should also fall on her!"

Lu Ran stared fixedly at Liao Wushuang, tightening his embrace around the bloodied figure in his arms.

Sister,

She truly seeks utter annihilation...

It's evident, who couldn't see through Liao Wushuang's murderous intent?

"Cough cough." Deng Yuxiang's gaze was distant as if her soul had departed, and blood flowed from the corner of her mouth.

From the moment the Night-slaying Great Saber broke, she seemed to have become an empty shell.

Lu Ran knew her injuries couldn't wait any longer.

His gaze swept the snow forest, and he proclaimed loudly,

"Lu Ran, Mountain Master of the Luoxian faction, Immortal Sheep sect, pays respects to the Beifeng City Lord!"

As his words fell, whispering erupted around the Martial Arts Arena.

"What immortal mountain?"

"Luoxian Mountain, the main mountain of the Immortal Sheep sect, the abode of the Divine!"

"Mountain Master of Luoxian? So Lu Ran is..."

"Damn! If Lu Ran is the Mountain Master of Luoxian, doesn't that put him on the same level as our Beifeng City Lord?"

"Nonsense, otherwise, what makes Lu Ran eligible to request a dialogue with our City Lord?"

"The Human World Sect Master of the Immortal Sheep sect, doesn't that sound somewhat lacking?"

"Not at all, even if the Immortal Sheep sect is declining and the faction is small, Lu Ran is still a sect leader appointed by the Divine, on the same level as our City Lord."

In the high sky, Liao Wushuang's expression shifted.

Everyone knew Lu Ran as the number one genius of Da Xia.

If he were to talk to everyone in this capacity, he would still be on the level of "Da Xia."

But now, Lu Ran openly claimed the title of "Mountain Master of Luoxian."

This was negotiating with the Beifeng Sect on a divine faction level.

"Grandfather?" Hu Jiaojiao looked pleadingly at the elder beside her with eyes full of entreaty.

The elder glanced at his granddaughter but offered no reaction, his figure slowly rising into the air.

Clad in a white robe with its hem fluttering dramatically, he emanated an impressive aura.

As the elder gradually descended to the center, a robust voice resounded,

"Beifeng City Lord, Hu Cheng."

Lu Ran clasped his fists in greeting, "City Lord Hu, my apologies for the disturbance."

Hu Cheng looked at Lu Ran, in tattered clothes and covered in wounds, and nodded slightly.

Since entering the arena, Lu Ran had only defended, never attacked.

Now, presenting himself in such a manner, his attitude was respectful.

Lu Ran continued, "Senior Sister Deng Yuxiang has saved my life, and I wish to preserve hers.

I will take full responsibility for all consequences, and I implore Lord Hu to grant my request."

On Hu Cheng's aged face, wrinkles piled upon wrinkles, and he regarded Lu Ran expressionlessly.

After a long while, under the watchful eyes of all, Hu Cheng slowly said, "Mountain Master Lu jests.

As the Human World Sect Master of the Immortal Sheep sect, we are not entitled to punish you.

However, today's disturbance in my city, intervening in the duel, causing chaos..."

"City Lord Hu!" Suddenly, Liao Wushuang's voice rang from the sky.

In listening, pay heed to the voice.

Regardless of what Hu Cheng might say next, the first two sentences had set the tone.

Liao Wushuang realized where things were heading and didn't want Hu Cheng to continue.

Liao Wushuang shouted loudly, "The Life and Death Contract was signed in front of the Divine Lord!

This battle is unfair to me!"

Hu Cheng's brow furrowed slightly, his expression subtle.

As the imposing Beifeng City Lord, a figure of unimaginably high status and authority, he commanded great respect.

Yet, as he interacted with the Sect Master of another sect, he was interrupted by a member of his own disciples...

Liao Wushuang was indeed desperate.

In fact, if you think about it, Liao Wushuang's insistence on killing Deng Yuxiang to achieve her goal is questionable.

If Deng Yuxiang were to live, her future Divine Weapon was still a long way off.

Besides, it's not confirmed whether their Divine Weapon Domains will overlap again in the future.

Even if their Divine Weapon Domains do overlap and the future Deng Yuxiang wins, she might still spare Liao Wushuang's life.

All these potential outcomes are progressively escalating.

But if Deng Yuxiang is forced to die here...

Then the crisis Deng Yuxiang might pose is resolved for Liao Wushuang.

But she would have established a deep-seated enmity with Lu Ran!

One is an unknown, potentially emerging threat.

The other is a certainty, an inevitable grudge...

How should one choose?

People have two sides to their mouths.

When Lu Ran mentioned "life-saving grace," all it would take is for Liao Wushuang to change her stance and say, "Since that's the case, let's leave it at that."

She could even offer a significant favor!

Lu Ran, for the sake of Deng Yuxiang's life, broke the rules.

On this basis, he accepted this favor, and the future Liao Wushuang no longer needed to worry about Domain issues.

But Liao Wushuang was impatient.

To be precise, she was mentally overwhelmed!

Her unique upbringing shaped her unique personality.

Compared to emotions like anger and resentment, at this moment, Liao Wushuang's heart was filled with envy!

Endless, boundless envy!

Why?!

Why should Deng Yuxiang be exceptionally talented, achieving so much at only twenty-two?

Why should I, with average aptitude, spend half a lifetime practicing, and still live in anxiety and vigilant against juniors?

Why does Deng Yuxiang have someone like Lu Ran by her side?

He is the first Heavenly Pride revered by the world, the august Human World Sect Master!

Lu Ran is wrong!

Lu Ran violated the rules!

He unabashedly used his Sect Master identity, begged for mercy, and requested a person from Lord Hu Beifeng.

To Lord Hu and the Beifeng Sect, Lu Ran was seeking forgiveness.

But to Liao Wushuang, wasn't Lu Ran using his status to pressure her?

This "perfect" image of Lu Ran in the eyes of the world, just a single stain would be magnified infinitely.

His entire life subjected to gossip and controversy!

The higher you stand, the harder you fall!

He, willing to face punishment, scorn, even if his reputation was destroyed...

Even if he risked attracting the Divine's wrath, he would still protect Deng Yuxiang at all costs!

Liao Wushuang really exploded.

Why is my life like this, my own existence devoid of anything?

Nothing from childhood to adulthood!

Why?

"Huu~"

High above, Liao Wushuang plummeted to the snowy ground.

As everyone was puzzled, they saw Liao Wushuang kneeling, looking up to the Divine, "Lord North Wind!"

Hu Cheng's expression remained unchanging, but his gaze turned stern.

Liao Wushuang cried out loudly, "Your disciple, Liao Wushuang!

One year ago, I signed a Life and Death Contract before Your Divine Sculpture!

Today's battle was unfair to me; I beseech Lord North Wind to do me justice!!"

Extreme emotions,

Lead to extreme choices.

As her words ended, a collective gasp rose from within and outside the Martial Arts Arena.

second, 2 seconds, 3 seconds...

Dead silence enveloped the world.

Liao Wushuang knelt with bowed head, whispering lower, "Since joining our sect, I have been loyal and devoutly worshipful..."

Silence still prevailed around her, only the sound of the cold wind audible.

Liao Wushuang lowered her head further, "I have fought for nearly thirty years in the Demon Cave for our sect, giving my all, expanding our territory..."

"Whoosh!!"

Above in the high heavens, a tumultuous surge of Divine Power began to whirl violently.

Chapter 403: Camellia

In an instant, the entire area fell silent.

Following that, a sound of "thud, thud" could be heard.

Inside and outside the venue, North Wind Disciples were kneeling on the ground.

Throughout Beifeng City, including the streets outside the ancient city, rows of people knelt down.

In previous years, people could only catch a glimpse of the gods at the Worship God Platform on the first day of the sixth lunar month.

And today, on the third day of the lunar new year, did a divine presence actually appear?

High above in the sky, the huge phantom of a god permeated with a majestic heavenly might!

He wore a snow-white cape and had a silver crown that tied his hair up.

Mighty and stern!

His overwhelming aura crushed the insignificant humans below.

Divine·Beifeng!

"Lord Beifeng, Lord Beifeng..."

Liao Wushuang was both shocked and overjoyed, looking up at the sky, murmuring to herself.

It was well-known:

The high gods regarded all beings as mere ants.

Why would they condescend to judge these lowly ants?

And the character of Divine-Beifeng was rather cold.

Thus, when Liao Wushuang called for the divine apparition, she did not harbor much hope.

But Lord Beifeng came!

When Liao Wushuang mentioned the Life and Death Contract, there was no reaction from the god.

When she spoke of being a devout Believer for thirty years, the god also did not react.

But when she mentioned fighting in the Demon Cave and shedding blood for her sect for thirty years...

Divine-Beifeng really came!

It seemed that total devotion to one's sect could indeed earn the mercy of the gods.

"Please, Lord Beifeng, vindicate me!"

At the brink of joyful tears, Liao Wushuang bowed her head deeply into the snow.

Under the great heavenly might, all beings knelt and worshiped.

Even Hu Cheng, a man of peak mortal power, also knelt on the ground, bowing his head respectfully.

It seemed as if only two people were still standing in the world.

Lu Ran and Deng Yuxiang.

Strictly speaking, Deng Yuxiang was supposed to kneel reverently as well.

Yet, she was soulless at the moment, heavily impacted mentally and physically, and unresponsive to the external affairs.

"Huh..."

Lu Ran, smelling the pungent blood from the person in his arms, took a deep sigh of relief.

This matter,

Could end here with Liao Wushuang.

Lu Ran was ready to admit his guilt, and he had prepared to owe favors and make compensations.

However, there was no chance to negotiate with Liao Wushuang!

Lu Ran faintly felt that Liao Wushuang's intention towards Deng Yuxiang was not merely pure murderous intent but also held other minor psychological factors...

It was the kind that utterly precluded discussion!

This matter,

Could also be escalated to the sect level, resolving it with Hu Cheng.

Hu Jiaojiao, who had a life-and-death relationship with Deng Yuxiang and was Hu Cheng's own granddaughter,

With this connection, and his own status as Sect Master, everything still had room for maneuver.

Hu Jiaojiao had revealed: the Life and Death Contract was signed before the Divine Sculpture with no room for manipulation; no one could intervene during the battle.

Since that was the case, Lu Ran threw himself into the fray!

You want a loophole?

I'll give you one!

It turned out that Lu Ran's thoughts were right, and the Beifeng City Lord set the tone in a few words.

However, just when the Beifeng City Lord was rebuking Lu Ran, trying to propose a solution, Liao Wushuang disrupted the situation.

She had burst the heavens!

She gave Lu Ran the one result he least wanted—the questioning of the gods!

Now things were really blown out of proportion.

Lu Ran sighed inwardly, looking up at the god high above all beings.

"Lord Immortal Goat."

Lu Ran had no choice but to ask the esteemed ancestor of the Immortal Goat to step in.

Think about the Great Sage Equaling Heaven; even with heaven-reaching abilities, he still had to go to heaven to find someone.

I'll also seek help,

No shame in that~

Suddenly, a terrifying pressure descended from the sky!

It made Lu Ran's legs tremble, and a layer of cold sweat appeared on his forehead quickly.

Such a terrifying aura!

Divine-Beifeng was already immensely imposing, and now his gigantic eyes were locking onto Lu Ran.

"Lord Immortal Goat!" Lu Ran cried out in his heart, "Lord Immortal Goat!!"

"Hmm?"

Finally, a voice came in his mind.

A casual reply, but it filled Lu Ran's heart with blooming joy!

Master save me!

Lu Ran couldn't even catch his breath when he urgently responded, "I've caused a big mess!"

"You?" The voice of Immortal Goat was hoarse, intriguingly, "Causing trouble? That's rare."

The world knew of Divine-Immortal Goat's doting on Lu Ran.

But for such a long time, Lu Ran really hadn't caused any trouble.

On the contrary, Lu Ran had again and again met Lord Immortal Goat's expectations.

Although there was the incident of failing to properly combine with the Body of Substitute, from Lu Ran's overall discipleship, it was still barely a blemish.

Now, Lu Ran being so panicky and anxious, saying he caused a big mess?

Divine-Immortal Goat was truly intrigued!

Lu Ran quickly reported the situation.

"Hiss..."

Before he could finish, Lu Ran suddenly gasped.

He hurriedly pressed down on Deng Yuxiang's head, shielding her in his embrace.

The overwhelming presence seemed about to completely crush him!

The people kneeling in the distance also trembled and some sneaked glances over here.

Seeing Lu Ran and Deng Yuxiang still standing, the North Wind Disciples were dumbfounded.

Lu Tianjiao, are you really seeking death?

Yes, you indeed are not a North Wind Believer, but the fault lies with you, and the god has come specifically to hold you accountable.

Aren't you going to kneel?

"Lord Immortal Goat, I..." Lu Ran was pale.

"Huh!"

Energy surged, and Immortal Fog erupted!

The pressure on Lu Ran suddenly lightened, and a phantom boldly appeared!

Divine·Immortal Goat!

It was clad in a white jade robe, and though it was a phantom, it shimmered with the luster of a fat lamb jade.

Under the warm sunlight, that expansive white jade robe sparkled with a strange sheen, also shielding Lu Ran and Deng Yuxiang under it.

Not far away in the snow, the bowing Hu Cheng twitched his eyelids.

How immense was the phantom of Lord Immortal Goat?

Certainly not smaller than the 200-meter-tall Stone Sculpture!

That white jade robe naturally brought the Beifeng City Lord and all the surrounding disciples at the Martial Arts Arena under its refuge.

It was unexpected that a conflict among the human race would escalate to this level.

Even the two sect masters couldn't resolve it.

The god himself had personally attended!

High above in the sky, Beifeng looked displeased, eyeing the suddenly appeared Immortal Goat.

Immortal Goat, however, was smiling amiably, giving a courteous bow to Beifeng.

One in the heavens, and one on the earth.

The two divine beings gazed at each other from a distance.

The gods did not speak, no one knew what they were communicating.

The human race naturally didn't dare to speak; apart from trembling in worship, they dared not make any other movement.

And the scene of the two gods meeting brought everything inside and outside the ancient city to a "standstill."

Especially in the further districts of the city.

Citizens in the street corners, behind the windows of tall buildings, distanced from the ancient city area, felt less psychological pressure.

Many didn't kneel but gaped at the scene.

"Is the god in the sky Lord... Lord Beifeng?"

"Yes! The one standing in the city is Lord Immortal Goat!"

"Truly an eye-opener! What are these two gods up to?"

"I have no idea!"

"Right, today is the third day of the first lunar month! Maybe, Lord Immortal Goat is here to give New Year's greetings?"

"Quick, look! There's a change!"

High in the sky, Beifeng's expression turned cold, reverting to an expressionless state.

While the Immortal Goat in the city center, was still grinning, gave another courteous bow.

Does this mean a resolution has been reached?

"Huh~"

Indeed, the phantom of Immortal Goat quietly vanished, like a dream or illusion.

"Let's go." A voice transmission suddenly descended, imprinting into Lu Ran's mind.

"Ah?" Lu Ran was stunned.

Is it over just like that? Lord Immortal Goat's influence is so great?

Lord Immortal Goat blandly said, "Leave Beifeng City."

Lu Ran couldn't care for more, hurriedly grateful, "Thank you, Lord Immortal Goat, then my sister...?"

At the same time, not far away, Liao Wushuang had been murmuring with her head bowed, "...Lord Beifeng, this is everything I have encountered.

Wushuang carries Divine Weapons, loyal and devoted to the Beifeng Sect, having shed blood for thirty years.

This unresolved duel to the death, I implore Lord Beifeng to arbitrate."

Divine·Beifeng coldly glanced downward, noticing the critically injured, half-dead Deng Yuxiang.

That Life and Death Contract,

Indeed was signed before him.

Since the battle had already determined the victor, the fate of life and death was naturally decided!

Divine·Beifeng looked at Deng Yuxiang as if looking at an ant.

What Jiang Realm Great Power, what outstanding talents.

Mere ants.

Following that, Beifeng's gaze turned slightly colder.

He watched that defiant Immortal Sheep Believer who disregarded the Life and Death Contract and the authority of the gods...

Slowly, Beifeng reached out one hand.

"Pfft!" Deng Yuxiang suddenly spat a mouthful of blood in Lu Ran's arms.

"Sister? Sister Yuxiang?" Lu Ran turned pale suddenly, raising his head to look at Beifeng.

"Huh!!"

Inside Lu Ran, the phantom of Immortal Sheep abruptly expanded.

Its size became incredibly majestic, towering into the heavens!

"Ah ah ah ah!!"

As the Immortal Goat appeared, Deng Yuxiang suddenly screamed in agony, her voice extremely shrill.

Her eyes rolled back, and she tightly clutched her head.

If it weren't for Deng Yuxiang possessing the body of the Jiang Realm, she would have died from excessive blood loss long ago.

Even though she transformed and was no longer a regular human, at this moment, she was half-dead!

In this state, Deng Yuxiang should not have made a sound, should not have had any movement.

It was hard to imagine the intense pain she was experiencing!

"Buzz!!"

A vibrating noise came from high above in the sky.

Around Beifeng's phantom, Energy Fluctuations were particularly intense.

Earth-shattering!

And in Divine-Beifeng's eyes, a hint of indignation appeared as he looked at Divine-Immortal Goat.

Immortal Goat, reappearing, was still smiling, once again giving a courteous bow to Beifeng.

No one knew what specifically happened in those few seconds.

People were just kneeling, trembling.

Again, two divine beings, one in the heavens and one on the earth, faced each other from afar.

The atmosphere seemed somewhat tense.

No, it was Divine-Beifeng unilaterally showing anger.

Divine-Immortal Goat still maintained a friendly demeanor, smiling towards the sky.

"Lord Immortal Goat?"

"Hmph, Beifeng wants to take the life of your beloved, to retrieve her soul and energy essence."

Lu Ran tensed inwardly, Beifeng wanted to take Deng Yuxiang's life?

So, was that why she suddenly vomited blood?

Another voice transmission entered his mind: "You've created this mess, just wanting to save her life..."

This person, I'll help you save!

I forcibly severed her contract with Beifeng, Beifeng can't take her away!"

Lu Ran: !!!

So, was that why Deng Yuxiang clutched her head and screamed?

Was it because the pact between the Believer and the god was broken?

"I know the person in your arms is exceptionally talented, she can join your forces, becoming your aid in the future.

But remember this, Lu Ran."

"Disciple is here!"

Immortal Goat's voice was hoarse, the tone dark, "Shortly, I will present energy essence as a compensation gift.

After all, this is Beifeng's territory, and I have compromised his dignity.

Remember this!

The compensation I give today, you must reclaim a hundredfold from Beifeng in the future!"

Lu Ran looked at Deng Yuxiang in his arms, who was nearly deprived of her life and almost shattered in soul.

He bowed his head, a trace of hatred flickering in his eyes:

"Yes!"

Immortal Goat looked at Beifeng, sensing the swirling emotions within Lu Ran's heart.

Immortal Goat's smile deepened, and once more, he transmitted a message:

"If in the future, the person in your arms could replace Beifeng's position...

That would be even more interesting."

Chapter 404: I bet she won't die!

Within and outside Beifeng City, there was complete silence.

The image of two deities in confrontation made all beings tremble with fear and unease.

It is always said that when gods fight, the lesser spirits suffer.

Should these two deities truly come into conflict, not to mention Beifeng City, even the entirety of Ice City would cease to exist!

The atmosphere was oppressively terrifying.

It seemed as though in the whole world, only Lord Immortal Goat remained smiling...

The dialogue between deities did not require speech.

Thus the people were unaware of what the two deities had said.

But from Lord Immortal Goat's actions, some things could be inferred by the people.

Before the eyes of the world, it presented a ball of mist with both hands.

One party with a cold, frowning face, the other with a smile in accompaniment.

Anyone could see that Divine-Immortal Goat was adopting a very low stance, probably offering an apology.

After a lengthy silent negotiation between the two deities, North Wind finally accepted the apology with a cold face.

Then, North Wind gave Immortal Goat another cold glance, as if expressing dissatisfaction or perhaps issuing a warning or threat.

Immortal Goat bowed once more with a smile, and only then did the figure of North Wind gradually disperse.

The people in the city had knelt with bowed heads the entire time, unaware of what had transpired.

Those outside the ancient city saw everything clearly, with many capturing the moment on phones and cameras.

This was also the outcome Immortal Goat wanted.

You want to regain face, huh?

It's just a small matter, here you go.

Have I not bowed before everyone as a gesture of apology, is that enough?

Not enough?

Should I smile even more courteously?

"Let's go, take her back to Luoxian Mountain."

Lord Immortal Goat's phantom dissipated, and a telepathic message reached Lu Ran's mind.

Lu Ran was extremely grateful and also filled with guilt.

He didn't know just how much Lord Immortal Goat had sacrificed, or how humbly it had pleaded, to appease North Wind's anger.

This disaster he had caused was far too great.

"Lord Immortal Goat, you..."

"Leave the sphere of influence of North Wind!" The telepathic voice descended again, stern in tone,
"Now!"

"Yes!" Lu Ran nodded firmly, leaving further discussion until they were back on the mountain.

With one arm, he supported Deng Yuxiang's back and with the other, he slipped under her knees, cradling her in a princess carry.

Such a carry should have been romantic.

Or possibly doting.

Alas, these two were truly in too pitiful a state.

Lu Ran was covered in cuts, Deng Yuxiang was covered in blood.

As Lu Ran moved, blood traced his steps, staining the white snow red.

It was tragically beautiful yet heroic.

With the deities gone, heavy, ragged breaths could be heard both inside and outside the Martial Arts Arena.

The people, who had been tense, finally relaxed, awkwardly collapsing onto the snow-covered ground, feeling the relief of surviving disaster.

"What just happened?"

"That was terrifying, felt like I died for a moment."

"Is Heavenly Pride Lu taking Senior Sister Deng away?"

"Ah??"

Amidst murmurs, everyone looked toward the two bloodied figures on the Martial Arts Arena.

"Manni," Lu Ran called out loudly, "Moonlight Spell."

In the Snow Forest, tears shimmered in Bai Manni's eyes as she excitedly fumbled with her hand seals.

Caster Divine Skill-Moonlight Spell!

This skill could infuse the target with vitality, hastening the healing of wounds.

So... I can cast it now?

Never mind, since Lu Ran said so, then it must be okay!

Of course, Bai Manni did not want her boyfriend's sister to die, but not just anyone has the courage to defy a deity.

Or to phrase it differently, common folk always treat deities with immense respect and servility.

A person like Lu Ran, acting so insolently and even daring to snatch someone from a god's clutches, was an exceptional anomaly.

At first, when Lu Ran saved the seriously injured Deng Yuxiang, Bai Manni didn't dare cast her spell.

This was Beifeng City!

Lu Ran had not yet successfully negotiated with City Lord Hu, everything was still unresolved, and if Bai Manni acted rashly and made things worse, what then?

Moreover, the North Wind Disciples in the forest were not to be underestimated!

What Lu Ran could do did not mean Bai Manni had the capability or the right to do the same.

Then, with the appearance of the two deities, Bai Manni was even more hesitant to use the Moonlight Spell!

At one moment, Divine-Beifeng was even prepared to personally claim Deng Yuxiang's life!

How could a lowly ant of the Human Clan dare to make the slightest move?

Now, however, things were different!

The deities had left, and Lu Ran gave her a direct command.

Even so, Bai Manni, in the midst of mustering her efforts to cast the spell, was still scared out of her wits.

Because she was unaware of the full story.

But faced with Lu Ran's command, Bai Manni chose to obey unconditionally!

"Whew~"

One by one, the characters for "moon" appeared, radiating in milky white light, revolving around Lu Ran.

"Master Lu." Hu City stood up, brushing snow from his knees and gazing in the direction of Lu Ran.

Lu Ran was amicable, nodding and saying, "City Lord Hu, with matters thus resolved, I will take my leave now.

It was an honor to meet today!"

As Lu Ran finished his sentence, whispers immediately erupted all around.

Truthfully, people were mentally prepared for this outcome.

After all, both deities had left, and Lu Ran had asked for the Moonlight Spell from a caster believer outside the arena.

All signs suggested that the matter was fully concluded!

"Is it over? Heavenly Pride Lu said it's done?"

"Fantastic! Senior Sister Deng doesn't have to die!"

"Really? After all the commotion, it just ends like this? Is Lu Ran lying?"

"You fool! Lord Beifeng's statue still stands tall right here, how could Lu Ran dare to lie?"

"Holy shit, that's incredible! They managed to bring a deity and actually saved someone?"

"Senior Sister Deng really gets to live..."

"Ah?? He's just... just leaving?"

Amidst the murmuring, City Lord Hu cleared his throat.

The area went silent.

Just as Hu City was about to speak, Liao Wushuang stood up from a nearby patch of snow.

Her face was deathly pale, and her voice trembled, "You... you!"

In an instant, all eyes turned to Liao Wushuang.

With her hair already white, her disheveled appearance now made her look like a madwoman.

Her emotions had been on a rollercoaster in a short period, from tears of joy with a deity defending her, to utter shock at the arrival of Immortal Goat.

Then to rage and inward curses at Immortal Goat's presence.

Liao Wushuang's worries grew, uncertain of success, and yet, in the end, Lord Beifeng took action!

When Divine-Beifeng aimed to end Deng Yuxiang's life, Liao Wushuang's face was filled with mockery, her heart soaring with pleasure!

But then came Immortal Goat once more!

And Liao Wushuang's heart plummeted to the depths.

Deng Yuxiang...

Deng! Yuxiang!

Why you?

Why can't you just die?

Must Lu Ran risk it all just to keep you safe?

Liao Wushuang could barely imagine the price Lu Ran had paid.

After all, what deity would make their presence known amongst mortals so easily?

For Lu Ran to summon Immortal Goat once was already extraordinary and earthshaking.

And he had even managed to bring it a second time?!

The progression of events now far exceeded the issue at hand.

It became Liao Wushuang's obsession, her demon.

She needed a result!

Yet, Liao Wushuang's greatest reliance, the deity she devoutly worshipped, just left like that.

Without giving her as much as a glance.

Divine·Beifeng was indeed ruthless and cold-hearted.

Deep inside, it had never cared for the worthless, lowly ants.

At this moment, before Liao Wushuang's incredulous eyes, Lu Ran hoisted Deng Yuxiang and strode away!

Her world,

Collapsed entirely.

"Take Liao Wushuang to rest." City Lord Hu raised his hand, signaling.

From the Snow Forest, eight North Wind Disciples flew swiftly over, surrounding Liao Wushuang.

Their attire was distinctive, all dressed in black gear and wearing black masks, faces unseen.

What was called sending off...

More resembled an escort?

Hu City silently watched Liao Wushuang, his eyes dark and indecipherable.

Only when Lu Ran stepped forward did Hu City turn his gaze to the bloodied figure: "It was an honor to meet Master Lu today," he finally spoke.

While Hu City appeared calm on the surface, he was internally filled with awe.

Indeed, a great reputation is never unearned!

This first Heavenly Pride of Da Xia was formidable...

Master Lu was willing to admit his wrongdoings to the Beifeng Sect.

And he was also willing to bow to the Beifeng City Lord.

But Lu Ran refused to persuade Deng Yuxiang to surrender in front of Liao Wushuang.

Nor would he kneel before Divine·Beifeng.

Amidst such contrasts, City Lord Hu was astounded and profoundly shaken.

Only his expressionless face helped hide his multitude of emotions.

"Take care, City Lord Hu, until we meet again." Lu Ran nodded in acknowledgment.

"Until we meet again," City Lord Hu returned the nod just as slightly.

The two Human World Sect Masters passed by each other.

Following the end of the negotiations between the two Sect Masters, Hu Jiaojiao rushed over, "Let's go, to the infirmary, I've already contacted the doctors!"

Lu Ran shook his head, "I can't stay here, we must leave now."

Understanding the gist, Hu Jiaojiao anxiously suggested, "Then I'll call the doctor to the city gates!"

Lu Ran shook his head again, "Her body is of the River Grade, the River Realm's Moonlight Spell is sufficient.

It's enough if the bleeding stops, and the Moonlight has already started replenishing her life force, her body can recuperate later."

As he spoke, Lu Ran turned to Deng Yutang who had come over: "Go to your sister's residence, take out our luggage.

Also, book the tickets along the way.

Train, plane, anything is fine, head for the nearest province, the soonest available."

When Lu Ran mentioned "neighboring province," everyone understood the implications behind those words.

Deng Yutang's eyes reddened but raised no objections, nodding repeatedly, "Alright, I'll book right away..."

As he left, Lu Ran turned his head, looking at the worried and anxious Hu Jiaojiao and gave a slight nod: "Miss Hu."

"Ah?"

"I'm deeply grateful, go back, don't follow me too close."

Lu Ran left half the sentence unsaid: This wouldn't be good for you.

"I..." Hu Jiaojiao opened her mouth, disregarding much, only hearing the words of thanks.

It seemed she hadn't done much.

Even resorting to her grandfather hadn't been enough to save her best friend's life.

And Lu Ran...

Hu Jiaojiao watched Lu Ran's face, now congealed with blood, and she recalled his chuckling from the night before in the grove.

He had laughed and said, "I bet your best friend won't die."

At that moment, Hu Jiaojiao had been quite irritated by Lu Ran's attitude!

But today, Lu Ran had turned those joking words into a promise.

And he fulfilled it to the extreme!

He did everything possible – and impossible...

Lu Ran stepped in to save Deng Yuxiang, bearing the weight of his wounded body, lowering his proud head to admit his sins to the Beifeng Sect.

But that path led nowhere.

Thwarted once, Lu Ran revealed his identity as the Sect Master of the Immortal Sheep Sect-Human World

Once more, he lowered his head, apologizing to the Beifeng City Lord, all to safeguard Deng Yuxiang's life.

But that path, too, was cut off.

When Divine-Beifeng appeared, Hu Jiaojiao had already lost all hope.

This was the deity she worshipped, and she had never like now wished not to witness a divine manifestation.

But North Wind came to advocate for Liao Wushuang.

Her best friend's death was a foregone conclusion.

There was no hope left.

But in the very next moment, she saw a deity's phantom emerge above Lu Ran!

At that time, Hu Jiaojiao's mind echoed with Lu Ran's words again:

"I bet your best friend won't die!"

The man who had spoken so casually and laughingly last night...

Now carried the critically injured and unconscious Deng Yuxiang out of the Martial Arts Arena.

Beneath everyone's gaze,

He made his exit from Beifeng City.

Chapter 405: Hmm, Evil Technique

Two hours later, Xidu in Changbai Mountain Province.

In this city, known as the "Spring City of North Country", Lu Ran and three others set foot.

Near the high-speed rail station, inside a high-end hotel, in the top-floor suite.

The sound of the shower kept coming from the bathroom inside the bedroom.

In the living room, Deng Yutang sat on the sofa, occasionally glancing at Lu Ran standing by the window.

"Relax a bit, we're in Mountain Lord's territory here," Lu Ran suddenly spoke.

In Da Xia, it's rare for strong gods and their territories to border each other directly.

It somewhat implies a 'king does not see the king' situation.

Generally, between strong gods, there will exist the territories of lesser gods, serving somewhat as a buffer zone.

However, Second-class God·North Wind and Second-class God·Mountain Lord were fiercely territorial!

Though both were divine beings, they stood with Da Xia Province as their border, neither yielding to the other.

North Wind stood in Ice City, his numerous effigies stretching north.

Mountain Lord stood in Xidu, his territory extending south.

The effigies of both gods, mere 300 kilometers apart in a straight line, formed quite the spectacle.

"In any case, Lord Immortal Goat has already negotiated on our behalf, and since North Wind agreed to let us go, he won't easily go back on his word," Lu Ran said softly.

Deng Yutang suddenly stood up and knelt towards the figure not far away.

Lu Ran frowned slightly and turned his head toward Deng Yutang, "Get up!"

"Brother Lu..." Deng Yutang's eyes reddened, his voice choked.

He did not know how much Lu Ran had sacrificed.

He only saw with his own eyes how Lu Ran, drenched in blood, had snatched his sister from the clutches of death.

He also saw how Lu Ran repeatedly invoked divine possession to retrieve his sister from North Wind.

Names like 'First Heavenly Pride of Da Xia', 'incumbent Mountain Master of Luo Xian Mountain of the Immortal Sheep Sect'...

Even the godly entity Lord Immortal Goat himself had to lower his voice and accompany them with a smile to finally resolve the matter.

Did Lu Ran save Deng Yuxiang's life?

No!

Lu Ran saved her time and again, life after life!

Setting aside the derogatory names and stains it would bring upon Lu Ran's life, how would he explain it to Lord Immortal Goat?

What kind of divine fury would Lu Ran face when he returned?

Today, in Beifeng City, Lord Immortal Goat had utterly lost face!

"Brother Lu! I owe you a great debt of gratitude that I can never repay in this lifetime..."

"Stand up!" Lu Ran's voice was firm, interrupting Deng Yutang.

Deng Yutang, with tears streaming down his face, looked up at Lu Ran.

Lu Ran locked eyes with Deng Yutang, "Stand up on your own."

Deng Yutang was silent for a long time but finally chose to follow the order and silently stood up.

Lu Ran turned his head toward the window, his voice low, "We're all brothers here, don't put on such an act with me."

Deng Yutang's nose felt sour, and tears streamed down his face.

Lu Ran looked down at the city below, slightly sighing in his heart.

Well, it would be more convenient to take in Deng Yutang into Ran Sect later.

Though, Lu Ran's initial intention was purely to save Deng Yuxiang.

But objectively, Ran Sect gained another pair of siblings.

Two loyal, deeply grateful companions.

"Ha ha," Lu Ran suddenly laughed, jokingly saying, "I thought you and your sister weren't close."

Deng Yutang plopped back onto the sofa, his head drooping, one hand covering his eyes, "I used to think so too."

This brave and fearless believer of the Red Scarf was especially vulnerable today.

Growing up, Deng Yutang had always lived in his sister's shadow.

It wasn't tragic, just endlessly frustrating.

The "painful" memories of his childhood remained vivid.

But today, as Deng Yuxiang lay at death's door, Deng Yutang recalled many childhood memories he had overlooked.

Like how Deng Yuxiang used to hold his hand on the way to school.

How she protected him from bullies, fiercely fighting with older students.

Or how she had given him his first weapon, a wooden spear with a red tassel.

And the repeated nights of the 15th.

During his childhood years, Deng Yuxiang seemed always to be by his side.

Those nights, which should have filled him with dread, didn't scare Deng Yutang much as he didn't have time to fear.

Because he was too busy being teased by his sister.

Looking back now, was that a kind of unconventional protection and love?

Who knows, maybe it was.

"She is a Jiang Pin," Lu Ran consoled, "Don't worry, she won't die."

"Mm," Deng Yutang nodded firmly.

Lu Ran looked at the snowflakes outside the window, "Book the tickets later. Tonight, I'll take your sister back to Luoxian Mountain."

"Can I come with you?" Deng Yutang asked.

"Sure, she'll need consoling after she wakes up," Lu Ran said, slightly tilting his head as the sound of the shower stopped.

Soon after, the sounds of drying off and clothing rustling followed.

After listening for a while, Lu Ran said, "Let's go see her."

Deng Yutang immediately stood up and followed Lu Ran to the bedroom door, gently knocking.

"Click."

Bai Manni quickly opened the door, then immediately stepped aside.

It was evident that her mind was entirely on Deng Yuxiang; she wore a bathrobe, her long hair still dripping wet, having had no time to dry it.

On the large bedroom bed, Deng Yuxiang was still unconscious.

She too was in a white bathrobe, her hair wrapped in a large white towel, several 'moon' characters floating above her.

The pearly light, like gentle moonlight, fell on Deng Yuxiang's pale face.

"Thank you," Lu Ran nodded.

Bai Manni lowered her eyelids, "It's only right."

On the high-speed train coming here, Bai Manni's Moonlight Spell had never ceased, continuously replenishing life force to Deng Yuxiang.

Because of this, several of their Divine Power Pearls were drained.

The trio came to the window and quietly observed the unconscious woman on the bed.

After such a long time of healing, her face remained colorless, her lips white, which was enough to imagine how severe her injuries were.

This also implied another aspect: the body of Jiang Realm is truly tenacious!

Hard to die.

And hard to fully recover.

Her health bar is just too long...

"You guys go to the living room and rest," Lu Ran said.

"Huh?" Bai Manni, puzzled, looked at Lu Ran.

She was the only one among them with a healing technique.

What does that mean?

Are we not healing anymore?

Deng Yutang was equally puzzled and turned to Lu Ran.

Lu Ran looked at Bai Manni, "Pamper your boyfriend a bit; he's nearly shattered."

Bai Manni: "..."

Deng Yutang: "..."

Is it really important if I'm shattered or not?

The urgent matter is to continue feeding my sister life force!

"Go on then, leave this to me," Lu Ran urged.

Deng Yutang and Bai Manni exchanged a look.

Swallowing all their questions, they left.

For Lu Ran, they naturally had absolute trust.

Since Lu Ran wanted to stay here alone, there must be his reasons!

Reluctantly glancing at Deng Yuxiang one last time, Deng Yutang finally let Bai Manni lead him away by the arm.

"Book the tickets and text me, don't come over and interrupt," Lu Ran said as he saw them to the door, then closed and locked it.

On the other side of the door, they looked at each other, reading the same thought in each other's eyes: Since Ran Shen wants us not to look, then we won't.

Uh... adult matters, best not to meddle.

The young couple obediently listened and stayed in the living room.

Inside the bedroom, however, Lu Ran turned off the lights and drew the curtains.

The room was instantly plunged into darkness.

Lu Ran activated Evil Technique·Evil Recognition, carefully inspecting the bedroom.

In a proper hotel, there was nothing disorderly or messy.

Then, Lu Ran grabbed a chair and sat by the bed, observing the woman who looked sickly and asleep.

"Sigh..."

Lu Ran's eyes brimmed with pity as he slowly reached out and held her cold hand.

"Hu~"

A streak of Black Fire ignited from the warmth of Lu Ran's palm and also on hers.

Black Lamp Evil Technique·Caged Fire (Bath)!

The warm and gentle black flames could heal the target's injuries.

This fire had no destructive properties, there was no possibility of burning down the house, and the caster could control the extent of the flames.

Otherwise, Lu Ran wouldn't have initially used it on a small marten, lighting its little head on fire...

At River Grade, this method could infuse life force into the target.

But now, the Caged Fire (Bath) that Lu Ran deployed was genuinely a Jiang Grade Evil Technique!

"Hu~"

The gentle black fire spread from Deng Yuxiang's palm, along her arms, body, face, legs...

In no time, her entire body was bathed in black fire.

Lu Ran controlled the fire well, burning only her body with the black fire without igniting the entire bed.

With each passing second, Deng Yuxiang's physical condition visibly improved!

Jiang Grade·Caged Fire was much more effective than River Grade·Moonlight Spell.

Lu Ran also basked in the black fire, nourishing his mind and body.

The burning continued for nearly two hours.

"Gurgle, gurgle, gurgle..."

Lu Ran sat by the bed, holding the Blazing Phoenix Pattern Gourd, gulping down Divine Power.

The liquid Divine Power continuously flowed from the gourd's spout into someone's belly.

Technically, Lu Ran could directly absorb Divine Power, but he still preferred to drink it voraciously.

Suddenly, Lu Ran felt the woman's hand move.

Quickly setting down the gourd, he wiped his mouth with the back of his hand, catching sight of the sleeping beauty on the bed opening her eyes.

"What is... this?" The woman's voice was hoarse as she struggled to raise her hand.

She observed the black fire burning on her hand, illuminated by the golden phoenix pattern glow on the gourd.

"Sister, you're awake."

Lu Ran's voice, unexpectedly, trembled a bit.

In front of gods, in front of the North Wind Sect, in front of Deng Yutang and Bai Manni, Lu Ran had always shown another façade.

Composed and unflappable.

But now, as Deng Yuxiang genuinely opened her eyes, Lu Ran almost followed Deng Yutang's earlier emotional response.

Deng Yuxiang's hoarse voice was accompanied by a slight cough:

"Black... Black Lamp Evil Technique... cough cough, Caged... Fire?"

Lu Ran increased the intensity of his casting, transferring more black fire into her hands.

His voice became increasingly gentle, "I call it Caged Fire."

Deng Yuxiang's eyes still looked somewhat unfocused as she observed the golden phoenix pattern glow, looking into Lu Ran's eyes, which were a mix of light and shadow:

"Evil... Evil Technique?"

"Yes, Evil Technique."

Chapter 406: Showdown!

"Heh." Deng Yuxiang suddenly laughed.

The smile was somewhat bitter, and then it seemed to be somewhat relieved.

Lu Ran cautiously asked, "What's wrong?"

Deng Yuxiang slowly closed her eyes.

No wonder she felt so warm all over, no wonder she saw Little Lu Ran...

It turned out she was already dead.

Was this the place people went after they died?

A pitch-black world.

And a warm figure from her memories.

How nice.

She had fought for so long and was tired.

To lie here forever, with him from memories by her side.

How nice.

Lu Ran looked at Deng Yuxiang with some concern, involuntarily tightening his grip on her palm, sending more Black Fire to her.

Deng Yuxiang suddenly opened her eyes.

The real sensation from her palm left her a bit puzzled.

But when she opened her eyes again, the entire world was pitch black.

After all, the Blazing Phoenix Pattern Gourd was not always lit.

"Little Lu Ran." In the darkness, the woman's hoarse voice came again.

"Do you want some water?" Lu Ran asked softly.

As he spoke, Lu Ran felt his hand being grasped in return.

She held tightly, as if she wanted to crush his bones, "You... are you really real?"

Lu Ran slightly raised an eyebrow, his thoughts stirred.

Not far off, the Dawn Blade quietly unsheathed itself, a faint golden-red sheen arising on its icy blade.

But under Lu Ran's direction, the light on the blade was faint.

Lu Ran smiled, "Why, did you think you died?"

Deng Yuxiang stared at Lu Ran blankly.

One second, two seconds, three seconds...

Her gaze fell again to their hands, watching the faintly burning Black Fire.

"You?" Deng Yuxiang was exceedingly shocked, raising her eyes to look at Lu Ran again.

Lu Ran gently nodded, "Yes, Evil Technique·Bath Fire Cage."

"You, who are you?"

"I am Lu Ran." Lu Ran gently freed his palm from hers.

He got up and walked to the side, taking a bottle of water from the table.

With the Dawn Blade's faint glow, Deng Yuxiang looked at the familiar silhouette, coming and going.

In the dim environment, she habitually wanted to listen to everything.

But Deng Yuxiang found that she no longer had the qualification to cast spells.

It wasn't that she couldn't mobilize the Divine Power within her, nor that the God didn't allow it.

It was because the path to report upward had been severed!

"Drink some water." Lu Ran supported the dazed Deng Yuxiang, letting her sit leaning against the bedhead.

As the clear water entered her throat, she finally sobered up a bit.

"My Divine Technique?" Deng Yuxiang asked tremulously.

Whether intentional or not, she ignored the fact that Lu Ran used the Evil Technique.

Lu Ran: "You are no longer a North Wind believer."

"I, I was expelled..."

"No, it's that the North Wind wants your life."

"Lord Beifeng... wants my life?"

Lu Ran sat by the bedside, looking directly into her eyes, "Repeat after me: North Wind."

Deng Yuxiang was stunned for a long while, softly saying, "North Wind."

Is there any difference?

Yes.

Without the words "Lord," it became a direct address.

Disrespectful.

Lu Ran asked, "Where does your last memory linger?"

Deng Yuxiang pondered for a moment, her gaze gradually dimming.

It seemed she remembered the broken Night-slaying Great Saber.

Lu Ran sighed inwardly and recounted everything to her in detail.

Deng Yuxiang sat leaning against the bedhead, the flames on her long dispersed, and the towel wrapped around her head had fallen off from the earlier movement.

Her jet-black long hair had been made smooth by Bai Manni, now loose.

That drooping eyelid, gloomy expression bore a kind of broken beauty.

Lu Ran picked up the water bottle, offering it forward again, "Beifeng wants your life.

He wants to collect your soul to nourish the Stone Sculpture."

The eternally bright and dazzling Deng Yuxiang now seemed like a soulless puppet, allowing Lu Ran to maneuver her, tilting her head to drink water.

Lu Ran said in a low voice, "Coincidentally, I also want your life."

The broken puppet finally showed a trace of a reaction.

She slowly raised her eyes to look at Lu Ran.

Yet her gaze was still somewhat vacant.

Lu Ran said solemnly, "You and I are fortunate to be sheltered by Lord Immortal Sheep, who tore up the contract between you and Beifeng."

A bitter smile appeared on Deng Yuxiang's pallid face, "Is it worth it?"

"What?"

"It was all my doing," Deng Yuxiang's voice was so small and light that it was heartbreakingly fragile, "yet you took on everything for me.

You put yourself on the line."

Lu Ran suddenly said, "Do you remember where we first met?"

Deng Yuxiang was indeed diverted.

She thought for a moment, recalling that rainy day, "By the Wu Lie River, on the rooftop."

Lu Ran laughed, "You were the first to beat me in front of my dad.

You used a knife on my butt.

At that time, I thought, thirty years east of the river, thirty years west of the river, I'd get my revenge eventually.

So far, I've yet to succeed, so..."

Lu Ran shrugged.

Deng Yuxiang forced a smile at the corner of her mouth, bowing her head silently.

Lu Ran changed the topic, "The Night-cutting Blade, I brought back half of it."

With that, he reached to the side.

Accompanied by a surge of energy, a delicate Ancient Bronze Mirror appeared before his palm.

Deng Yuxiang slightly turned her eyes, staring at the mirror.

Lu Ran swiped up and down on it, the oval-shaped Ancient Bronze Mirror gradually enlarged, transforming into a Landing Mirror.

A similar Landing Mirror appeared by the table not far away in the room.

Lu Ran reached into the Ancient Bronze Mirror at his side.

When he withdrew his hand from the mirror, he brought back a broken blade.

Deng Yuxiang silently held the broken blade with both hands.

She deliberately ignored the ancient and elegant Copper Mirror.

Self-deception.

Deng Yuxiang was once a believer of the God and an enforcer of divine law for Da Xia.

Even if she lost all her identities, at her core, she was human.

And Lu Ran was performing Evil Techniques right in front of her.

Deng Yuxiang dared not think deeply.

In the forty years since the descent of the God Demon, the number of humans who fell into the Demon Path, though small, did objectively exist.

In all likelihood, Lu Ran was one of them.

Moreover, he hid very deep.

To think, how ironic.

The Pride of Da Xia, actually an Evil Demon believer?

Had the Evil Demon Camp infiltrated to such an extent?

Moreover, Lu Ran's identity was more terrifying!

If he only used the Evil Technique of the Black Light clan, Deng Yuxiang would have thought Lu Ran was bewitched into the Demon Path by the Illusion Technique of the Black Light clan while training at the Black Grave Mound.

But now, Lu Ran used the Evil Technique·Mirror Flower Moon of the Evil Mirror Demon clan!

This...?

What kind of existence was Lu Ran within the Evil Demon Camp?

Deng Yuxiang's heart trembled.

This day, she had experienced too much.

And at this moment, the only one with her, the one who provided her warmth...

Was an Evil Demon believer.

Lu Ran said softly, "The blade body is broken, the Sword Spirit shattered.

But this broken blade is still a Divine Weapon Seed."

Returning home, Lu Ran already noticed the possibility of this broken blade to shine again.

At least, it was more advanced compared to other ordinary blades.

Deng Yuxiang gripped the broken handle with one slender hand, gently brushing the shattered blade with her long fingers.

Her eyes gradually reddened...

Lu Ran: "We can ask the Heavenly Star Sect to have their believers help repair it."

Deng Yuxiang paused her movement.

Lu Ran thought for a moment, "Or we could just repair the fractures in the blade."

Deng Yuxiang suddenly asked, "Am I your sister?"

"Huh?" Lu Ran looked up at the woman.

Deng Yuxiang looked at Lu Ran, "Can we coexist?"

Lu Ran nodded as a matter of course.

Deng Yuxiang painfully closed her eyes, "You are an Evil Demon believer, and I can coexist with you.

So, you want to take me into your camp."

Indeed, he severed her contract with the God.

What could be the next step?

Lu Ran looked odd, "You misunderstood."

Yet Deng Yuxiang didn't hear him, already immersed in their memories.

Went through life and death together, being mutually both mentors and friends, companions to this day.

Today, he sacrificed everything, saving her life repeatedly.

But... Little Lu Ran.

I am a person, a member of the Human Clan.

I cannot betray my race and cannot draw my blade against my kindred.

"Pa!"

Lu Ran suddenly reached out and grabbed her wrist.

Deng Yuxiang was holding the broken blade, edge directed toward her own neck.

Lu Ran frowned, "What are you doing?"

Deng Yuxiang said nothing, exuding a forceful determination as if she was intent on dying.

Lu Ran firmly gripped her wrist, not budging an inch.

Jiang Grade-Soul Splitting Power wasn't to be trifled with.

After several futile attempts, Deng Yuxiang's smile was tragic, tears wetting her eyes, her voice full of apology, "I'm sorry, Lu Ran, I can't.

This life, I return to you."

As the words fell, silence enveloped the room.

In the shadowy environment, only the hovering Dawn Blade emitted a faint glow.

Nevertheless, this faint golden-red hue was reflected in Lu Ran's pitch-black eyes, sparking an unusual gleam.

Deng Yuxiang looked at Lu Ran's beautiful yet eerie eyes.

And saw him, slowly shaking his head.

Deng Yuxiang's heart gradually sank.

Indeed,

how could he possibly allow that?

He would force her to comply or beguile and control her, wouldn't he?

Lu Ran, both angry and amused, "Where has your calmness and composure gone... hmm, indeed."

Deng Yuxiang had been through too many blows and shocks.

Her state was so poor that surely her mind was still in disarray.

Lu Ran pried open her fingers, seizing the broken blade, tossing it casually on the carpet, "I'm not an Evil Demon believer.

Don't you remember? I am an Immortal Sheep believer."

With these words, Deng Yuxiang looked even harsher.

So, did the Immortal Sheep of the God Camp join the Evil Demon Camp already?

Lu Ran solemnly replied, "I am not an Evil Demon believer!"

"Hm?" Deng Yuxiang looked at Lu Ran, her heart a bit bewildered.

Since she woke up, what Lu Ran had done had repeatedly surpassed her understanding.

Lu Ran took a deep breath, saying, "Big Nightmare, sister, Deng Yuxiang.

Trust me.

At least hear me out, give me a chance to explain."

Deng Yuxiang looked at Lu Ran in silence, her tense body softening in resignation.

Lu Ran reached to the side again, energy surging once more.

Deng Yuxiang's breathing gradually became labored, seeing a Night Charm form right before her eyes.

What kind of existence was Lu Ran, truly?

How could he... how could he create an Evil Demon?

"Kneel." Lu Ran pressed his hand downward.

The Night Charm fell to its knees, bowing its head to Lu Ran in submission.

Deng Yuxiang's pupils contracted, watching a former mortal enemy bow its head to Lu Ran.

When facing humans, Evil Demons would outdo themselves in cruelty.

But right now,

the Night Charm knelt so obediently, bowing in submission.

Deng Yuxiang only felt as though she was in an unrealistic dream.

Lu Ran: "Seeing is believing, I am not an Evil Demon believer, I am not under their control.

On the contrary, my goal is to invade the Evil Demon Camp and enslave them.

I,

am the Evil Demon Lord!"

Deng Yuxiang's mouth slightly agape, the final brief four words leaving her spirit somewhat dazed.

Lu Ran paused briefly before continuing, "However, as the Evil Demon Lord, my power is still insufficient, and I can only act with authority within my small territory.

I fantasize about one day breaking into the depths of Demon Cave, replacing the Evil Demon's true sculpture!

By then, I would be the true Evil Demon Lord.

By then, we should be able to completely resolve the scourge of the Human World."

Lu Ran reached out, gently brushing aside a strand of hair from her forehead, tucking it tenderly behind her ear.

He gazed directly into Deng Yuxiang's eyes, smiling, "So what do you say, sister?

Join me in overthrowing this world?"

Deng Yuxiang stared at Lu Ran blankly.

Even in the dim room, with the Dawn Blade emitting faint light.

His smile was so radiant.

Chapter 407: Night Charm and Nightmare

In the dimly lit room, Lu Ran spoke at length with the Big Nightmare.

Deng Yuxiang's eyes were filled with complex emotions.

She felt as if she had opened the door to a new world, gazing at its bizarre scenes, unable to snap back to reality for a long time.

Only when Lu Ran stopped speaking did the room fall into silence.

Lu Ran knew he had provided too much information, and he gave Deng Yuxiang ample time to think and accept it.

"Hoo..."

Lu Ran took a deep breath, leaned back, and slumped into the chair.

Finally being able to share the secrets he had held for so long gave Lu Ran a sense of relief and ease.

Who knows how much time passed.

In the dim room, her hoarse voice broke the silence: "So, your ability to position by sound like the North Wind believers was never due to some extraordinary talent.

That was the Evil Technique of the Evil Dog Clan, Evil Sense?"

Lu Ran: "Hehe~"

Deng Yuxiang couldn't help but laugh.

Even now, her thoughts were still in disarray.

Lu Ran's sudden laugh also amused her.

Oh, you little Lu Ran...

You really can deceive!

Speaking of which, Lord Immortal Sheep is even more deceptive.

For forty years since descending, He spun a colossal lie, deceiving the whole world.

In this light, little Lu Ran really takes after Him.

Deng Yuxiang whispered: "Who else knows this secret?"

Lu Ran: "Only you."

Deng Yuxiang's face was surprised: "Your little girlfriend doesn't know?"

"Not the right time yet."

"Ha, yet it's the right time for me?"

Lu Ran shrugged: "You are free now."

Upon hearing this, Deng Yuxiang lowered her gaze.

Speaking of freedom, she recalled how Lord Beifeng wanted to take her soul and her life.

Reluctantly, Lu Ran pleaded with Divine-Immortal Goat to forcibly sever the human-divine contract.

She tidied her disheveled long hair and whispered: "Are you so certain that I will go with you?"

Lu Ran lay back in the chair, looking at the ceiling, with a slight smile: "Yes, I am certain.

The contract between you and Beifeng can be cut loose.

The bond between you and me cannot be cut."

Deng Yuxiang turned her eyes to Lu Ran, and through the dim glow, she saw him looking confident.

For some reason, a stubbornness rose in her heart, glaring discontentedly at Lu Ran.

But as she gazed...

Through this face, Deng Yuxiang recalled all that Lu Ran had done for her, putting everything on the line.

The stubbornness in her heart gradually faded, leaving only a tenderness.

Lu Ran spoke again: "Putting aside our past, let's talk about my goal.

For someone like you, it should be quite attractive, right?"

Deng Yuxiang instinctively nodded, a barely noticeable gesture, but it betrayed her inner thoughts.

Eliminate all evils in the world!

It sounds like a cause worth pouring blood and life into.

Lu Ran: "While you were unconscious, Lord Immortal Sheep sent me a message.

After the fifteenth of this month, I will dispatch a party to open a Divine Ruins.

Lord Immortal Sheep wants me to take you along to explore the world after the Divine Ruins."

Deng Yuxiang lowered her head and chuckled: "Immortal Sheep Believer..."

Proud as she is, she never imagined she would one day become an Immortal Sheep Believer.

Of course, Deng Yuxiang also never imagined how terrifying Lord Immortal Sheep truly is.

Lord Immortal Sheep even gifted Lu Ran an Evil Demon Sculpture Garden!

Deng Yuxiang didn't think any other deities had such power.

So, is Lord Immortal Sheep a being above all gods?

Hmm... this deity has so many secrets.

Lu Ran suddenly said: "On the surface, you are an Immortal Sheep Believer."

"On the surface?"

Lu Ran's smile was somewhat enigmatic, and he tilted his head, gesturing at the Night Charm kneeling by the bed: "What do you think of her?"

Deng Yuxiang pursed her lips.

She was well aware that Lu Ran had a Sculpture Garden in his mind.

Of course, Lu Ran still held some back; during the earlier explanations, he only mentioned having an "Evil Demon Sculpture Garden."

He was planning to reveal everything once he discerned the nature of the world.

If he were to say now that the Sculpture Garden also contained Divine Sculptures...

Deng Yuxiang would probably find it really hard to accept!

"What do you mean by 'what do you think'?" Deng Yuxiang had a vague premonition.

Through the faint glow, she saw an expression on Lu Ran's face she had never seen before.

Unrestrained, bold.

After laying the cards on the table, he was indeed somewhat different.

Lu Ran smiled: "Night Charm Clan, of course."

Deng Yuxiang, suppressing her unease, softly replied: "She is my mortal enemy."

Lu Ran corrected: "Was."

Five years of life as a North Wind believer isn't something easily severed.

Under the influence of the deities, Deng Yuxiang harbored deep hatred toward the Night Charm Clan for five years, and it will take some time for her mindset to change.

Lu Ran continued to smile: "The Night Charm before you, along with the Evil Demon Sculpture behind her, are not our enemies.

They belong to me; they are my servants."

Deng Yuxiang moved to the bedside, stepping onto the soft carpet with one foot, elegantly and naturally crossing her legs.

She rested her hands on the edge of the bed, gazing down at the docile and obedient Night Charm, still finding it incredible.

It's been five years.

Every encounter resulted in death, and there had never been such a peaceful moment.

Deng Yuxiang's expression turned peculiar: "You want me to sign a contract with the Night Charm Clan."

She thought she would have some resistance to Lu Ran's proposal.

But in reality... there was none!

The Deng Yuxiang of today had fallen from the clouds into the deep abyss.

Previously, when she had calmly accepted death, she was stunned to find Lu Ran in this abyss.

Lu Ran wouldn't let her die, nor would he let her sink into despair.

He dragged her out of the mire and led her onto a brand-new path.

Resistance?

No!

Endless gratitude!

Lu Ran said: "The abilities of the North Wind Clan and the Night Charm Clan are similar.

At the moment, I can't give you the North Wind, so I can only give you the Night Charm."

As soon as he finished speaking, Lu Ran's heart tightened.

Oops, he slipped up!

Lu Ran, keeping his composure, looked down at the Night Charm.

However, Deng Yuxiang's eyes were fixed intently on Lu Ran's face: "At the moment?"

Lu Ran: "..."

I preferred you when your thoughts were disordered and unclear.

Deng Yuxiang let out a nasal sound, seemingly questioning and probing: "Hmm?"

Lu Ran assumed a resigned expression and said directly: "Beifeng wants your life, wants your soul to scatter.

Simply put, I really hate him."

Deng Yuxiang's expression was very complex.

After a long while, she gently stroked Lu Ran's head, looking at him with exceptionally tender eyes:

"Be mindful, don't say such things in the future."

"Okay." Lu Ran responded softly.

His mind was racing, preparing what to say next.

Unexpectedly, Deng Yuxiang didn't press further.

After hearing Lu Ran's words, she simply lowered her head to look at the Night Charm, deliberately ignoring certain information once more.

For some reason, it's unclear what her mentality was this time.

Lu Ran smoothly changed the topic: "As long as we take each step cautiously, one day, you will replace the Night Charm Evil Sculpture.

You will inherit all the Night Charm's powers!

Replace her, surpass her!"

Deng Yuxiang was visibly taken aback, turning her gaze to Lu Ran.

Lu Ran smiled with pursed lips.

This time, he hadn't slipped up.

Lord Immortal Sheep primarily wanted to see Deng Yuxiang, in the identity of the Evil God·Night Charm, replace the position of Divine·North Wind.

Now that would be interesting.

"Hmm..." Deng Yuxiang finally came to her senses, her expression becoming increasingly complex.

She lightly nudged with her toes, knocking off the bamboo hat on the Night Charm's head.

Freed from the constraints of the hat, the Night Charm's jet-black long hair cascaded down like a waterfall.

And without the veil's concealment, the Night Charm's dazzling true face was revealed.

Deng Yuxiang still kept her legs crossed, one white jade-like foot, suspended, propping up the Night Charm's chin, surveying up and down.

In her view was a face that was ghostly pale but beautiful.

Beautiful, thanks to those bewitching violet eyes.

Lu Ran: "..."

Weren't they mortal enemies?

Why are you rewarding her?

Deng Yuxiang admired the Night Charm's captivating visage and softly commented: "If I replace the position of the Night Charm Evil Sculpture, will you create more Night Charms in the future, and those you summon will all be me?"

"Eh?" Lu Ran blinked.

I don't know!

I haven't even thought about it yet.

Deng Yuxiang turned her head to look at Lu Ran, finally revealing a smile after so long:

"Fine, I'll sign a contract with the Night Charm Sculpture."

Earlier, when Lu Ran was explaining his identity, he began by summoning Night Charm.

Presumably, the Night Charm is his first general under his command.

Deng Yuxiang silently pondered.

Considering the abilities of the Night Charm Clan and the minds and temperaments of this clan, it isn't hard to guess.

All this time, when he went alone to various places to train, he must have always kept the Night Charm by his side...

Lu Ran nodded: "Alright, when we go back to Luoxian Mountain tonight, we'll sign the contract with the help of Lord Immortal Goat."

Deng Yuxiang suddenly thought of something: "Can I also sign a contract with the Evil Dog Sculpture?"

The Evil Technique of the Evil Dog Clan is truly explosive!

Evil Sense, Evil Sensitivity.

And Instant Teleportation Technique like the Evil Shadow Flash!

It's unbelievably formidable!

Lu Ran shook his head: "When you were asleep, Lord Immortal Sheep and I discussed a lot.

The contract you will sign with the Night Charm Evil Sculpture in my mind is not a regular master-servant contract, but a higher-level contract."

"Oh?" Deng Yuxiang raised an eyebrow slightly.

In this world, contracts are divided into many types?

Lu Ran explained: "Lord Immortal Sheep clearly stated that your positioning is as an Inheritor, not a Servant.

This type of contract relationship allows you to gradually replace and even surpass the Night Charm.

From the moment you sign the contract, you and the Night Charm Evil Sculpture in my mind, in some sense, are already equivalent.

In other words, you and the other Evil Sculptures in the Sculpture Garden are equal entities.

In terms of identity, there is exclusivity among you."

Deng Yuxiang pondered: "In that case, can I still sign a contract with Lord Immortal Sheep?"

Lu Ran immediately nodded: "Lord Immortal Sheep is the True God in the mortal world, not these Fake Gods in my mind and in the Sculpture Garden."

Hmm... at least for now, they are still Fake Gods.

The contract Lord Immortal Sheep will soon sign with you is a conventional master-servant contract."

Deng Yuxiang nodded thoughtfully.

Lu Ran thought for a moment and then said: "Sis, the Inheritance Contract with the Night Charm Evil Sculpture is greatly beneficial to you."

Every moment you live is spent continuously resonating with the Night Charm Sculpture.

But if you really like Evil Sense and Evil Sensitivity, like Instant Teleportation, we can also switch to the Evil Dog Sculpture!"

Deng Yuxiang looked down at the Night Charm kneeling at her feet and softly said:

"No, let's go with her."

After speaking, Deng Yuxiang turned her head to look at Lu Ran, her gaze determined: "I like the wind more."

Do I really like the wind?

Perhaps.

Or maybe it's just a habit, it doesn't matter.

What matters is, you pulled me out of the abyss.

From now on,

wherever you want to take me, I'll go with you.

Chapter 408: shattered stars all over the ground

Late at night, Yeyu City.

The airport arrival hall was bustling with people, and at the baggage claim area, a group of four quietly waited.

Judging from their attire, it was clear these four had traveled across the entirety of Da Xia, from the snow-covered North Country to the spring-like Cai Nan.

Two of them were clearly a couple.

The young man was tall and handsome, the young woman fair-skinned and beautiful, a perfect golden couple, but the two had a heavy "sense of discretion"!

It was a bit funny.

From time to time, the couple would sneak glances at the woman beside them to check her mood.

Deng Yuxiang wore a dark woolen coat, standing 1.78 meters tall, her expressionless and beautiful face exuding an overwhelming presence.

Only her slightly curly shoulder-length hair softened her whole aura, giving her a bit of a lazy elegance.

This kind of beauty should indeed be the center of attention, but she was tired of being stared at.

Deng Yuxiang slightly turned her head, coldly scanning those beside her.

Deng Yutang and Bai Manni looked like two children who did something wrong, lowering their heads meekly.

"Don't scare the kids," Lu Ran said softly.

The mask muffled his voice somewhat.

Deng Yuxiang had been about to warn the distant onlookers, but upon hearing Lu Ran's words, her gaze softened slightly, and she did not take further action.

Deng Yutang and Bai Manni exchanged a look, their eyes filled with complexity.

They had long noticed something was off!

Earlier in the day, at the hotel suite, when Deng Yuxiang and Lu Ran came out of the bedroom, Deng Yutang was stunned!

He had expected his sister to be in a terrible state.

Despondent and utterly dejected...

After all, Deng Yuxiang had endured unimaginable torment and blow.

She lost completely, was severely injured and on the brink of death, with her Divine Weapon shattered, and its Artifact Spirit dissipated...

Deng Yutang had prepared for the worst, intending to comfort and encourage his sister as much as he could, accompanying her through this dark time.

He never expected it!

Deng Yuxiang... was fine!

Fine?

Was Deng Yuxiang's inner strength really that formidable?

Deng Yutang was overjoyed!

Bai Manni felt ashamed.

Inwardly asking herself, if it had been her, her spirit and will might have been completely shattered.

Unable even to stand up.

Deng Yuxiang stood up, and even said coldly to Deng Yutang, who had red eyes, "Why are you crying?"

After the surprise, Deng Yutang and Bai Manni imagined a lot, thinking that Deng Yuxiang was likely pretending, wrapping herself in a thick shell.

Thus, the two were cautious, not daring to comfort or encourage her, afraid that any word might provoke Deng Yuxiang.

However, Deng Yuxiang seemed truly unaffected!

She inquired about the flight details and instructed the young couple to buy clothes.

After a day of interactions, Deng Yutang realized another issue.

Deng Yuxiang was overly compliant toward Lu Ran!

This wasn't right!

Very wrong!

How could my proud and assertive sister become so gentle?

Did Brother Lu change my sister's 'core'?

Of course, this was a joke.

Deng Yutang wanted to ask but didn't dare to, he was genuinely puzzled about what had transpired between Lu Ran and Deng Yuxiang in the bedroom for several hours.

Well... love is what it is.

Since Deng Yuxiang hadn't fallen into despair, what more could he ask for?

"Let's go." Lu Ran picked up the luggage from the conveyor belt and said casually.

Deng Yutang snapped back to reality, and they immediately followed.

Just as they stepped out of the hall, a figure rushed toward them.

"Brother!!"

Qiao Yuansi ran up and threw herself into Lu Ran's arms.

"Oh." Lu Ran was jolted backward, his chest aching.

Was this a hug?

Or a rocket headbutt...

"Are your injuries healed?" Qiao Yuansi quickly broke away and examined Lu Ran from head to toe.

"They're healed, healed long ago." Lu Ran reassured softly.

Qiao Yuansi pouted her lips, her small fists pounding on his shoulder, "You scared me to death!"

Lu Ran accompanied her with a smile, constantly soothing his sister.

This look of accompanying with a smile somewhat mirrored the demeanor of Lord Immortal Sheep.

Qiao Yuansi's eyes were full of heartache, "I saw your photos online, all covered in wounds, and your clothes soaked in blood!"

Behind Lu Ran, Deng Yuxiang lowered her eyes in silence.

She was the culprit.

All the injuries Lu Ran suffered, all the reputations he bore, were because of her.

"Alright, alright." Lu Ran quickly said, "Let's not talk about this."

Lu Ran coaxed and comforted, walking with Qiao Yuansi for a few steps before stopping.

In the distance stood two tall figures.

Lu Ran automatically ignored a certain Xian'er and looked at the true mortal fairy.

The simple white knit sweater highlighted her cool and ethereal aura.

Under the peaked cap, her beautiful eyes were like cold stars, bright and beautiful, but not moving.

Because her gaze was cold.

So cold that Lu Ran felt apprehensive...

"Gulp." Lu Ran's Adam's apple moved slightly, silently pushing Qiao Yuansi forward as he walked.

"Eh? Eh?" Qiao Yuansi realized she was being used as a human shield.

She twisted and wriggled, eventually running away.

"It's so late, and you came to meet us?" Lu Ran said with an awkward smile, "We can go up the mountain ourselves."

Jiang Ruyi quietly looked at Lu Ran without a word.

Strangely, the tall girl beside her, Lietian Dniao, was standing properly too.

Si Xianxian held a handbag with both hands placed in front of her, showing a meek and gentle demeanor.

Weren't you supposed to be unruly and unrestrained?

Have you really become a well-behaved little maid?

"Class monitor!"

"Class monitor Jiang." Deng Yutang and Bai Manni spoke up in succession, trying to break the awkward atmosphere.

Of which, Deng Yutang carried a hint of apology, a hint of trying to gain favor.

After all, Lu Ran endured everything because of Deng Yuxiang.

Jiang Ruyi's gaze swept over them, gently nodding.

Her eyes finally fell on Deng Yuxiang.

The entire day, the internet had exploded!

Videos and photos from Beifeng City were spreading wildly online.

Especially the scene of Lord Immortal Sheep smiling apologetically, making onlookers jaw-drop in amazement!

And pictures near the Martial Arts Arena in Beifeng City were scarce online.

However, one photo showed Lu Ran full of wounds, holding the bloodied Deng Yuxiang.

"This is my fiancée, Jiang Ruyi." Lu Ran immediately introduced, "This is my comrade, Deng Yuxiang."

Jiang Ruyi and Deng Yuxiang knew each other.

They also both knew the other's relationship with Lu Ran.

But all along, they had almost no interaction.

Deng Yuxiang sized up Jiang Ruyi, marveling at the girl's growth.

More than just demure and graceful?

She was nearly an ethereal fairy.

Her cold aura and strong presence demonstrated the Vast River's majesty, making those around tremble in fear.

Meanwhile, Jiang Ruyi was also observing Deng Yuxiang.

The proud and radiant woman in her impression seemed dimmed now.

No longer as brilliant as in her memory.

Jiang Ruyi knew Deng Yuxiang was severely injured, possibly on the verge of death.

But...

Jiang Ruyi cared more about Lu Ran!

In the morning, when Xiao Yuanxi ran over in a hurry, showing Jiang Ruyi the phone, her mind went blank with a buzz!

She almost couldn't stand upright.

Lu Ran had fought in countless battles, be it Night of Ghosts or the Demon Lord's advent, having faced the most dangerous battlefields.

Never before had he been as miserable as today.

Covered in bruises, dripping with blood.

In all this time, the steady mental state Jiang Ruyi maintained was surprisingly fragile.

Merely one photograph completely unsettled her.

There were too few photos from inside Beifeng City, she couldn't ascertain the details.

The most terrifying was the footage captured outside the city showing the confrontation between Divine·Immortal Goat and Divine·Beifeng.

Jiang Ruyi's heart almost jumped out.

If Lord Immortal Sheep came to the rescue, he should be able to save Lu Ran, right?

But the manifestation of Divine means the situation is more severe!

Luckily, Qiao Yuansi got through on the phone.

That was on the train from Ice City to Xidu.

And at that time, Jiang Ruyi had already booked her flight and was preparing to board...

"Let's go back to the mountain first," Lu Ran suddenly said, breaking the silence.

Deng Yuxiang suddenly spoke, gently nodding, "Hello, Ruyi."

Jiang Ruyi was silent for a moment, her voice very light, "Hello."

"Let's go." Lu Ran held Jiang Ruyi's hand, leading her outside.

The Immortal Sheep Sect dispatched three cars, and Lu Ran took Jiang Ruyi into Wen Yang's vehicle.

Xiao Yuansi also wanted to ride with her brother but was intercepted by Si Xianxian, coaxed into another car.

The vehicles slowly started, heading north of Yeyu City.

Lu Ran and Jiang Ruyi sat in the back seat.

He looked at her; she gazed at the dark night outside the window.

"Are you mad?" Lu Ran squeezed her palm.

Jiang Ruyi remained silent, with no response.

For the first time, the girl who was always gentle in front of Lu Ran made him feel a trace of coldness.

Lu Ran toyed with her slender fingers, "You know I was always in her patrol team.

She saved me too, I couldn't just watch her die in front of me."

Jiang Ruyi still said nothing.

In the driver's seat, Wen Yang drove silently, containing his nervousness, with his hands slightly trembling on the steering wheel.

This world is truly harsh.

The realms remind every living person at every moment that there are differences in the status of people.

The emotions of a Great Power in the River Realm can indeed affect the surrounding environment.

"With Lord Immortal Sheep present, I couldn't possibly be in harm's way..." Lu Ran's words suddenly stopped.

Jiang Ruyi turned her head, her eyes red, with a layer of mist lightly covering her eyes, her trembling eyelashes visibly heart-wrenching.

"I'm sorry, I'm wrong." Lu Ran immediately hugged Jiang Ruyi, coaxing softly.

Was it wrong?

Right, or not wrong.

Even if given ten thousand chances to choose again, Lu Ran would still step up ten thousand times.

Of course, Jiang Ruyi would worry and hurt ten thousand times; they don't contradict.

"Look on the bright side, I gained a strong Immortal Sheep Believer." Lu Ran said softly, "Sister Yuxiang has been expelled from North Wind Sect.

Tonight, she'll join our Immortal Sheep Sect.

From tomorrow, every time she sees you, she'll have to greet you respectfully..."

"Go!" Jiang Ruyi finally spoke, lightly scoffing a sound.

Lu Ran: "Don't be angry, don't be mad at a newly joined little rookie.

How about this, first thing in the morning, I'll have her come and pay respects to you."

Jiang Ruyi looked up at Lu Ran, her eyebrows which were supposed to display her cool temperament slightly furrowed.

The neon lights flashing by the streets, reflected in the girl's eyes.

Like scattered stars across the ground.

Both the gaze and seemingly her heart.

The term "sense of fragmentation," Lu Ran found the most beautiful explanation.

Who can stand this!

Lu Ran embraced her, inhaling the faint jasmine fragrance, gently planting a kiss on her hat:

"I'm sorry."

The words sincere, full of guilt.

He took off her hat, gently smoothing the jet-black hair.

Jiang Ruyi felt his gentle comforting, after a long time, she slowly closed her eyes.

As if finally at ease.

Or as if resigning to fate.

What can she do?

Him returning safely is already a blessing, isn't it?

Chapter 409: people in the Divine Temple

"I was too obsessed with advancing."

The girl's words broke the silence inside the car.

Lu Ran was about to say something when Jiang Ruyi said, "I should have gone with you."

Lu Ran softly replied, "I can make mistakes, you cannot."

In his arms, the girl lifted her head, "Do you think I care?"

Lu Ran remained silent.

Jiang Ruyi looked directly into Lu Ran's eyes, "Lu Ran, tell me, what exactly do I care about?"

Lu Ran let out a deep sigh in his heart.

He knew better than anyone that Jiang Ruyi's "Dao" was just two words—Lu Ran.

This was a strong bond!

Setting aside the ridiculous human emotions, just talking about the path to ascend to heaven, talking about career prospects...

Once Lu Ran died, everything for Jiang Ruyi would collapse completely.

"If I fail to advance this time, it will be because of you," Jiang Ruyi softly spoke.

She, who had always been gentle and composed, had never spoken so sharply before.

It was clear that Jiang Ruyi was genuinely anxious.

She used another way, against her will, to achieve her own purposes.

Lu Ran spoke up, "I promise, from now on, I'll be more careful and ensure my safety."

Jiang Ruyi commanded, "Look me in the eyes and say it."

But Lu Ran removed their masks and lowered his head to press against her tender lips.

Jiang Ruyi didn't dodge; she stubbornly kept her eyes open, staring at the hateful face so close.

In the driver's seat, Wen Yang hurriedly retracted his gaze from the rearview mirror.

He sat upright, gripping the steering wheel tightly, focusing his attention on the road ahead.

Meanwhile, in another vehicle.

Qiao Yuansi looked at Si Xianxian beside him and worriedly asked, "Will Sister Ruyi and Brother have a fight?"

Si Xianxian let out a laugh, "Your Sister Ruyi only keeps a cold face for outsiders.

For your brother?

Softens in three minutes."

Qiao Yuansi blinked and softly muttered, "Seeing Sister Ruyi again this New Year, I found her changed so much.

She used to be gentle and kind to everyone."

Si Xianxian pursed her lips, "After all, it's the Jiang Realm. The higher you cultivate, the less of a person you become.

That she still has us in her eyes, still willing to pamper us, is already good."

Qiao Yuansi quietly muttered, "I won't change after advancing to Jiang Realm."

Si Xianxian smiled slightly, reaching over to poke at the girl's ponytail, "Sister, don't speak too confidently."

Qiao Yuansi suddenly hugged Si Xianxian's arm, her cute face snuggling up:

"When you become Jiang Realm, you must still pamper me and play with me like this!"

Si Xianxian turned to look out the window and awkwardly said, "I'll try my best."

Qiao Yuansi pouted, "Pah, scoundrel!"

Si Xianxian: ???

You little girl, how are you talking?

You think just because you're Lu Ran's sister, I dare not smack you?

Hmm, forget it, forget it...

The vehicles gradually slowed down and came to a gentle stop at the base of Luoxian Mountain.

Everyone got out of the two cars in front, but Wen Yang's car remained closed.

Wen Yang sat in the driver's seat, quite torn inside.

He wasn't sure whether to remind the Mountain Master and the Lady to get out, or if he should get out himself to leave the two some privacy.

It wasn't until Jiang Ruyi's command came from the back seat, "You take them up the mountain first and arrange their accommodations."

"Yes, Lady." Relieved, Wen Yang quickly opened the door and left.

Lu Ran looked at Jiang Ruyi, who was snuggling beside him, marveling at her transformation.

People do change.

They change with experiences, mental states, strength, and shifts in status.

And Jiang Ruyi, with her eyes closed and clinging closely to Lu Ran, also signified a fact:

There is one thing that never changes.

The car was quiet, and Lu Ran breathed in the faint jasmine fragrance, feeling his mind gradually calm down.

Jiang Ruyi's soft lips parted, "You just said, Immortal Sheep agreed to let Deng Yuxiang challenge the Divine Ruins."

"Yes."

"Because she's about to become an Immortal Sheep Believer?"

Lu Ran pondered for a while, then changed the topic, "The world beyond the Divine Ruins, to me, is bound to have heavy challenges.

We both know how strong the Big Nightmare is. With her there, my life is more secured."

Jiang Ruyi asked, "If I were an Immortal Sheep Believer, could I accompany you in challenging the Immortal Sheep Sect's Divine Ruins?"

Lu Ran pondered for a moment, then replied softly, "You have no reason to leave the Jade Talisman Sect."

Jiang Ruyi lifted her gaze to meet Lu Ran's eyes, "No reason?

For anything concerning you, I have every reason."

Tonight, Jiang Ruyi was somewhat different.

There must be a reason.

It seems that what happened in Beifeng City really scared her.

The words she spoke sharply before now became bold and direct.

Lu Ran was unaware of Jiang Ruyi's exact state when she saw that photo.

Worry, panic.

Almost suffocating!

"Ruyi," Lu Ran said gently.

Jiang Ruyi lifted her incredibly charming face and stubbornly gazed at Lu Ran.

Lu Ran gently pinched her palm, "North Wind wanted Deng Yuxiang's life, to seize her soul, hence she left the North Wind Sect.

The Jade Talisman Sect has given you much; the Jade Talisman Divine Skill helped you get here.

You're not someone cold and unfeeling."

Lu Ran paused, then continued, "I know, every day after your nap, Sister Xian'er always accompanies you to that small house a few kilometers down the mountain.

You pray before the small Divine Sculpture of the Jade Talisman, offering the Power of Faith.

You only return to the mountain to watch the sunset before dusk.

Whether it's gratitude or not wanting to owe anything, that is you.

If you leave the Jade Talisman Sect now, in the future, this might become an obstacle in your cultivation path."

The higher one ascends in cultivation, the more rigorous the requirements for one's Mental Realm.

Jiang Ruyi remained silent for a long time, then softly said, "I once thought that having an undistracted mind, focusing solely on harsh cultivation, was the right answer to accompany you on the journey.

Because of that, I even caused you to misunderstand.

On that New Year's Eve, you persuaded and pleaded with me to treat you as a person.

But what happened today..."

Lu Ran suddenly interrupted, "You weren't wrong, that was the right answer."

Jiang Ruyi lowered her eyelids, her long eyelashes gently trembling.

Seeing this made Lu Ran's heart ache again.

Sometimes, having too strong of senses is not a good thing.

Lu Ran spoke gently, "You're troubled by what happened in Beifeng City, so let me tell you another version.

The wounds on me, they were intentional."

Jiang Ruyi furrowed her brows, staring at the face before her, trying to find traces of lies.

Lu Ran nodded to confirm, "I admit, some sword energy was unavoidable.

But to tell you the truth, some injuries, I inflicted intentionally, like the cut on my face."

Jiang Ruyi pressed her lips together.

Lu Ran continued, answering himself, "Did I have any fatal wounds? No!

Acknowledging mistakes requires an attitude, and taking a beating requires standing firm.

I was at fault first; my more miserable I was, the happier North Wind Sect was, and my issue was easier to resolve."

Jiang Ruyi raised her hand and gently brushed her fingertip against Lu Ran's cheek.

There was once a deep cut here, visible to the cheekbone, oozing blood.

Lu Ran sighed softly, "I showed my remorseful attitude, and the City Lord of Beifeng understood too; the matter was on its way to being resolved through negotiation.

Then Liao Wushuang flipped the table... forget it, let's not talk about this.

What I mean is, in the Martial Arts Arena this morning, I wasn't desperately struggling; I'm much stronger than you think!"

Lu Ran held her hand that rested on his cheek, looking serious, "The Divine Ruins can't defeat me.

No matter what's behind the Divine Ruins, even River Realm-Fifth Rank North Wind Disciples can enter, then after I enter, I can slay a thousand times."

"Be modest, maintain a sense of reverence." Jiang Ruyi looked displeased.

Such an attitude from Fairy Jiang actually made Lu Ran breathe a sigh of relief.

It seems explaining what happened in Beifeng City was indeed necessary.

Lu Ran's face turned serious, "I will complete the task assigned by the Immortal Sheep Lord, and I will return from the Divine Ruins!"

I hope when I return, I'll see you equally strong.

There are still many goals waiting for us to achieve together..."

Lu Ran's inner determination was unwavering.

Ruyi, you will be pure and untainted.

Once I understand the essence of this world, I'll lead you away from the Jade Talisman Sect.

Your Dao Heart, your path, won't have the slightest blemish.

Only then can you go further, climb the higher peaks.

"Ruyi, the road ahead of us is long, very long, you cannot for the moment..." Hmm?" Lu Ran paused in surprise.

Energy surged violently.

The mist outside the car thickened, flowing into the car, rushing into the girl's body.

Is she about to advance?

Jiang Realm·Second Rank?

Lu Ran's face lit up with joy, but Jiang Ruyi seemed oblivious.

Her beautiful eyes quietly watched Lu Ran.

As if seeing him as a distant star in the night sky over Galaxy Bay;

As if seeing him as the distant sunset on Luoxian Mountain;

As if wanting to fully absorb this man destined to journey afar.

"Quick, fly back to the mountain." Lu Ran immediately opened the car door to get out.

Don't underestimate this as just a minor rank advancement, but this is the Jiang Realm!

Breaking through is enormously difficult!

Whether Jiang Ruyi can break through the shackles depends on fortune.

The closer to the Divine Sculpture of the Immortal Sheep deity, the denser the Divine Power, the more it aids Jiang Ruyi's improvement.

"I will strive to grow strong, as you wish." Jiang Ruyi's gaze blazed, "You also remember your promise to me."

"Hmm?"

"You said, you would definitely return from the Divine Ruins."

"Definitely!" Lu Ran stood outside the car, leaning into it.

He lifted her out with a princess carry, "Fly up, I'll follow right away."

But Jiang Ruyi said, "Carry me up the mountain, step by step."

Lu Ran was a bit bewildered, "Uh?"

After being together for so long, the beauty Ruyi was always gentle and considerate, almost never willful.

And now, being willful, she does it to such an extent?

You are in the middle of advancing...

This day, Jiang Ruyi showed Lu Ran too many different sides.

Lu Ran wanted to say something, but seeing Jiang Ruyi in his arms keeping her eyes closed, seemingly focused on advancing.

As if sensing Lu Ran's gaze, she softly said, "Step by step."

Lu Ran couldn't help but laugh, indeed he wanted to summon the Divine Weapon and fly up the mountain.

Hmm... alright.

You're advancing, you're the most important now.

Compared to the difference in Divine Power concentration between the mountain top and foot, her mood and state while advancing are more important.

As the surrounding fog grew denser, Lu Ran carried his fiancée and headed towards the stone steps leading up the mountain.

Suddenly, Jiang Ruyi spoke, murmuring softly, "With each step up, silently recite your promise to me in your heart."

Lu Ran paused briefly, stepping onto the first stone stair, "Alright."

Everlasting tranquility.

The god seated atop the Celestial Mountain cannot grant her that.

Deep in her heart's path, a Divine Temple is built.

The temple enshrines a single person.

Jiang Ruyi nestled against Lu Ran's shoulder, her cheek gently rubbing against his neck.

She must plead to him.

Chapter 410: Gorgeous Purple

On the fourth day of the first lunar month, the red sun was rising.

Inside the Luoxian Pavilion, a tall, graceful figure stood with hands behind her back, greeting the mystical mist that flowed between heaven and earth.

On the long bench inside the pavilion, Lu Ran sat quietly, having accompanied her the whole night.

The advancement of a Great Power in the River Realm was not as easy as it had been in the Sea Realm.

Just a minor breakthrough on this level could take 1 to 2 days.

Lu Ran didn't find the time dull.

He kept staring into the elusive mist, at the figure that sometimes appeared, silently lost in thought.

Lu Ran felt old.

Like an elder, sitting in his courtyard daydreaming, able to sit motionless for an entire afternoon.

Because everywhere he looked, memories flooded his mind.

Hmm...

Lu Ran suddenly had a strange expression.

After a lifetime of military service, reaching the pinnacle of Da Xia... returning to find he was still nineteen?

No, that's not right!

Today was the fourth day of the first lunar month; by the seventh, he would turn nineteen.

Lu Ran smirked.

Ever since the success of the Immortal Worship, life had been so damn exciting!

A year's experiences could fill a lifetime.

"Ruyi." Lu Ran stood up and called softly.

"Hmm?"

"Your uncle and aunt booked today's flight back home. While you advance, I will see them off."

"Hmm." Jiang Ruyi softly responded with closed eyes.

Lu Ran wanted to say more, but seeing Jiang the Immortal's cold demeanor, he dared not act rashly.

He had to turn and leave.

Jiang Ruyi heard the footsteps gradually fade away and pursed her lips, feeling a sense of loss.

But for some reason, the footsteps returned.

Smooch~

A gentle kiss landed on her fair cheek.

The Mountain Master Lu couldn't help himself!

He returned to tease his lady!

Jiang Ruyi bowed her head slightly. Though she knew it was a coincidence, she felt a little embarrassed, as if her thoughts had been seen through, and a blush appeared on her face.

The wicked man.

Go away, go away!

Lu Ran was quite surprised, as he expected to be scolded but instead saw the girl's blushing face.

She had stood all night, always cold as ice, with a daunting aura.

However, his sneak attack seemed to have worked?

Had she returned to her gentle and shy demeanor?

Ha,

Women.

Lu Ran left Luoxian Pavilion in a cheerful mood and walked down the mountain.

"A brief visit to the mortal world, storms and hell, yet there's your radiant face~"

Lu Ran hummed a little tune, inhaling the fragrance of flowers and grass on Luoxian Mountain.

It seemed that the sky had become a little bluer.

The residence where Jiang's parents temporarily stayed was on the easternmost side of Luoxian Village.

When Lu Ran arrived, he saw Deng Yuxiang lazily basking in the sun in the neighboring courtyard.

"Here you are."

Deng Yuxiang wore a white ladies' shirt and fitted trousers, standing by the fence wall overgrown with flowers and leaves.

The sunlight gave a beautiful sheen to the contours of her body.

There was a ruby earring shining brightly on her earlobe.

Making her proud visage even more charming and elegant.

Lu Ran smiled.

He's easygoing in dealing with others, but he also has his pride.

After all, being the Pride of Da Xia, he seldom feels inferior.

But at this moment, seeing Deng Yuxiang's demeanor, admiration surged in Lu Ran's heart!

She indeed is a powerful martial artist.

With an indomitable soul and a strong heart!

"What's up?" Deng Yuxiang was twirling a leaf between her fingers, looking toward the figure outside the fence.

"Up so early?" Lu Ran snapped back to reality, "Are you comfortable living here?"

Deng Yuxiang casually picked a leaf, changing the topic: "Last night, when I went up the mountain, the Immortal Sheep Lord kept me at the Luoxian Temple."

"Congratulations then?"

"Same to you." Deng Yuxiang looked at Lu Ran with a half-smile, "And you? When do you plan to keep me?"

Lu Ran gestured to the standalone courtyard in front of him: "Ruyi's parents are heading back home, I'll take them to the airport, then come back to you."

Deng Yuxiang nodded lightly, suddenly remembering something: "Should I offer incense for you?"

Lu Ran almost laughed in disbelief, is that incense offering to me?

That's equivalent to wishing me an early death!

Lu Ran snorted: "After all the effort I put in to save you, yet you want to send me off?"

Deng Yuxiang's lips curled slightly: "Not even a bow?"

Lu Ran looked at Deng Yuxiang helplessly.

Deng Yuxiang appeared matter-of-fact: "I just want to follow the rules.

"Before, I saw with my own eyes, the moment you made someone kneel."

The so-called someone naturally referred to Night Charm.

"That's true, I should have my own majesty too." Lu Ran nodded earnestly, as if seriously considering it.

But unexpectedly, Deng Yuxiang still wore a subtle smile.

Her words carried a teasing tone, but she was indeed willing to bow down.

Last night, when she offered incense at Luoxian Temple, the Immortal Sheep Lord was particularly merciful, leaving her a few words of transmission.

Deng Yuxiang knew she would be Lu Ran's first "human clan believer" under his command.

She was willing to set an example and lead by action.

In the future, everyone who followed Lu Ran should naturally follow her lead.

To give absolute loyalty to Lu Ran, always with utmost respect.

"You..." Lu Ran was dumbfounded.

He thought he was merely joking, and though Deng Yuxiang was smiling, her gaze seemed serious?

"Later, wait for me at the Immortal Worship Hall." Lu Ran simply bypassed the topic, stepping into Jiang's residence.

"Okay." Deng Yuxiang watched Lu Ran leave, then she looked up at the rising sun.

In just one day, her identity had transformed completely.

From the heights to the abyss, then from the abyss to the clouds.

At this moment, Deng Yuxiang still found the world somewhat unreal.

Lu Ran seemed somewhat unreal.

When Lu Ran entered the residence, he saw them packing up.

"Xiao Ran is here?" Jiang's mother, Zhuang Jingyi, quickly approached, holding Lu Ran's arm, scrutinizing him closely.

Her face was full of concern, her eyes reddened instantly.

"I'm fine, Aunt Zhuang." Lu Ran smiled and said, "Ruyi is in the critical moment of her advancement, she can't come, so I'll take you to the airport."

"No need." Zhuang Jingyi swallowed many words, "Xianxian has already arranged a car for us, you should go back and rest."

Jiang's father also approached, looking at the unharmed Lu Ran, feeling a mix of emotions.

It's hard to imagine, the Lu Ran yesterday was the one in the photo.

Even harder to imagine, after enduring such intense pain, Lu Ran still stood before them, with a warm smile.

Lu Ran: "Uncle Jiang."

Jiang Zheng also advised: "Go back and rest, or keep Ruyi company."

Lu Ran naturally refused. After some persuasion, he still sent his future in-laws to the airport.

Since Lu Ran was back, Qiao Yuanxi didn't leave with the couple.

When he returned to the mountain, it was only half-past nine.

Lu Ran temporarily let the maid accompany little Yuanxi to play, while he headed straight for the Immortal Worship Hall.

Unexpectedly, Grandfather Cheng Yi was standing at the entrance of the main hall. Kneeling inside was the new disciple, Deng Yuxiang.

"Grandpa Cheng, Happy New Year." Lu Ran cupped his fist in greeting.

"Mountain Master, Happy New Year." Cheng Yi's smile was full of gratitude.

Since Cheng Yi was taken by Lu Ran to receive the Divine Blessing together, he had entered a state of seclusion.

A few days before the new year, Cheng Yi finally advanced to the Sea Realm!

Cheng Yi, who had pursued this all his life, now realized his dream, how could he not be grateful to Lu Ran?

"Mountain Master, please go in." Cheng Yi gestured inside the hall, "She's been waiting for you for a long time."

Originally, Grandfather Cheng called Lu Ran "little friend."

After Lu Ran returned to the mountain this time, Cheng Yi changed to calling Lu Ran "Mountain Master."

"Sorry to trouble Grandpa Cheng, I have some private matters to discuss with Deng Yuxiang."

"Yes!" Cheng Yi responded respectfully.

It's hard to believe, this was a Great Power of the Sea Realm.

Lu Ran took steady steps into the hall, and Cheng Yi, remaining outside, closed the vast door behind him.

"Sister?" Lu Ran inhaled the incense aroma, walking step by step deeper into the hall.

The walls on both sides of the hall were adorned with a thousand varied White Sheep Jade Carvings.

Every small Divine Sculpture seemed to be staring at Lu Ran.

Deng Yuxiang knelt on a cushion, turning slightly to see Lu Ran approach.

For a moment, she felt a bit dazed.

This scene made her realize one long-overlooked thing.

They had known each other for so long.

It seemed that he had always been the one approaching her?

That day at Wu Lie Bridge Head, it was he who took the initiative to help her forge the Night-cutting Blade's Artifact Spirit.

Before his arrival, she had been troubled for a long time.

That day on the abandoned rooftop, it was he who came to her side to impart knowledge and guidance, assisting her in advancing to the River Realm.

Before his arrival, she was trapped in the Fifth Rank of the Sea Realm, unable to comprehend for a long, long time.

It was also he who said he would go to Beifeng City to support her with his hometown, with the night sky's crescent moon, with the waters of the Wu Lie River.

It was also he who took the field to save her life repeatedly.

From her opponents, from the hands of the divine.

Afterwards, he pulled her out of the mire and gave her a new life.

All of it, she had never actively requested, and some things she didn't even know about.

He had taken care of everything privately for her.

"What are you daydreaming about?" Lu Ran arrived at Deng Yuxiang's side and knelt down as well.

Proper and respectful.

"Ha." Suddenly, a cold laugh echoed in Lu Ran's mind.

Lu Ran was startled: "Immortal Sheep Lord, what's the matter?"

The deep voice echoed in his mind, with a hint of teasing: "You are truly grateful.

Looks like I saved her life, and it was the right choice."

Lu Ran: "..."

No, no, no.

I always express gratitude to you as well! You're my domineering Sheep-CEO...

"Buzz!"

Lu Ran's mind shuddered, and then everything went black.

When he regained consciousness, he had entered the spiritual world, finding himself in the God Demon Sculpture Garden.

In front of him stood a towering stone sculpture—the Night Charm Evil Sculpture!

"This sculpture belongs to you."

Lu Ran immediately turned around, facing the quietly burning Black Fire Sheep Head.

"Yes, Immortal Sheep Lord." Lu Ran clasped his hands in gratitude.

"You can command the Evil Sculpture to do anything."

"Yes, Immortal Sheep Lord."

"Now, connect closely with the Night Charm Evil Sculpture, command it, control it, act as its full representative."

"Yes..."

Inside the Immortal Worship Hall, Deng Yuxiang quietly looked at Lu Ran.

Clearly events had already transpired, yet she seemed belatedly aware.

The talk of mutual care, mutual support...

Mutual?

Such nonsense, even she had been fooled by it.

"Ha."

Deng Yuxiang laughed silently, lowering her gaze.

His Night Charm,

the first sharp blade under his command, indeed should be hers to bear.

"Hoo~" Lu Ran's body surged with energy.

In the human form, a demonic phantom suddenly emerged!

Evil Demon-Night Charm!

Lu Ran slowly stood, reaching a hand down.

From above and behind, the phantom of Night Charm also reached down a pale hand.

One person, one demon, their hands, one large, one small, one phantom, one real.

Overlap together, pressing down on Deng Yuxiang's head.

Deng Yuxiang's body slightly trembled.

A fleeting, enchanting purple glimmer passed through her eyes...