

Old Gods 411

Chapter 411: Ran Sect's number one protector?

Deng Yuxiang's trembling body gradually calmed down.

Inside the Immortal Worship Hall, it was quiet.

Lu Ran took a step back, observing the silent Big Nightmare.

Speaking of which, should the Night Charm Clan consider renaming themselves the Nightmare Clan?

"Phew~"

A sudden energy fluctuation awakened Lu Ran.

Deng Yuxiang opened her palm, and above her palm, a Wind Blade took shape, slowly rotating.

Night Charm Evil Technique·Night Charm Blade!

Seeing this scene, a smile appeared on Lu Ran's face.

It was quite brilliant.

"Whish~ whish~"

One Night Charm Blade after another appeared out of thin air, slowly rotating around Deng Yuxiang.

Lu Ran couldn't help but secretly exclaim: The person who understands you best is indeed your opponent!

Look at Deng Yuxiang!

The way she wielded those blades was truly at her whim.

A total of 16 blades, each could be looked after. They revolved around Deng Yuxiang without a single hitch.

"Phew~"

Another slight energy fluctuation.

Deng Yuxiang donned a black night outfit.

Tight-fitting, the night outfit perfectly outlined her impressive body curves.

"Tsk." Lu Ran clicked his tongue.

Indeed, women's clothing is best worn by women.

How can a man achieve this effect?

A wide bamboo hat and a soft black veil covered Deng Yuxiang's true face.

How is this different from a Night Charm?

Upon closer inspection, there was a difference.

Deng Yuxiang was a few centimeters taller than the Night Charm Clan.

"Buzz!"

Deng Yuxiang's body suddenly trembled, splitting into three.

Lu Ran's eyesight was excellent, and he could immediately tell which two were Night Charms and which one was a Nightmare.

"Why can't I transform?" Deng Yuxiang asked.

"Because those two Night Charm clones are essentially Energy Bodies, while you are a flesh-and-blood body."

"Oh." Deng Yuxiang gently nodded.

Though she thought it was a pity, she was not discouraged.

She cast spells several times consecutively, confirming her suspicion:

She could still achieve a flashing effect at the moment her body "split into three".

Suddenly, a transmission fell and imprinted into Deng Yuxiang's mind: "It will be better later."

Deng Yuxiang abruptly looked up at Lu Ran.

However, the black veil of the bamboo hat obscured her view.

Deng Yuxiang was very certain that Lu Ran's voice did not enter through her ears but was imprinted in her mind!

She lifted the black veil and looked at Lu Ran.

Lu Ran pursed his lips and smiled, also looking at her.

When Deng Yuxiang signed the "Inheritance Contract" with the Night Charm Evil Sculpture in Lu Ran's mind, she effectively became equivalent to the Night Charm Evil Sculpture.

In other words, when Lu Ran and the Night Charm Evil Sculpture were closely connected...

He was spiritually connected with Deng Yuxiang!

Lu Ran sent another transmission: "You will gradually replace the Night Charm Evil Sculpture.

When that day comes, you will be able to freely transform between your main body and the other two clones once you split into three again."

"Oh?" Deng Yuxiang raised an eyebrow, "You're saying that by following you in cultivation, I will gradually become an Energy Body?"

Lu Ran shrugged: "Just like the Human-shaped Demons we encountered on the night of the fifteenth.

Most of them have flesh and blood, but after they die, they turn into mist and dissipate into the world.

In the future, when you completely succeed, you can appear as a flesh-and-blood being.

But in essence, you will be a formidable energy entity."

Lu Ran paused, then continued: "Moreover, the term Energy Body does not adequately describe the heights you will reach in the future."

Deng Yuxiang was intrigued: "Then what should it be called?"

This time, Lu Ran did not speak, but quietly looked at her.

However, his words were clearly imprinted in her mind: "A god."

Deng Yuxiang's eyes narrowed slightly.

That seductive and beautiful face was aggressively beautiful under the Night Charm outfit.

Lu Ran stepped forward and lowered the black veil hanging from the bamboo hat, covering her face:

"You will gradually become a deity."

The process of Deng Yuxiang continuously aligning with the Night Charm Evil Sculpture is the process of becoming an 'Evil God.'

This is also the advantage of being an 'Inheritor.'

Other Human Clan cultivators also ascend step by step on the path to becoming a god.

But everyone grows savagely.

After reaching a certain height, the Human Clan will be barred from the halls of the All Gods, making further progress nearly impossible.

What god would be willing to let a believer under their door replace them?

Ridiculous!

They wouldn't even let you get close to the hall doors!

Once you climb too high, the gods can easily employ some tricks to make human believers fall.

Deng Yuxiang is completely different!

No constraints three feet above her head!

The Night Charm led her directly into the Evil God Hall.

The Fake God-Night Charm in Lu Ran's Sculpture Garden will give everything to support Deng Yuxiang, giving her everything!

Until Deng Yuxiang completes the feat of replacing and surpassing...

Then she can raise the butcher's knife against the Evil Demon True Form-Night Charm Evil Sculpture within the Evil God Hall!

Ultimately replacing it!

"I understand now." Behind the black veil, Deng Yuxiang eagerly licked her lips.

Becoming a god?

She loves a challenge.

And she is more than willing to follow Lu Ran to meet his every expectation for her.

In the end, to help him accomplish that grand goal!

Lu Ran nodded in satisfaction: "You should know better than I do that the Night Charm Clan doesn't have an Evil Technique for Sound Positioning.

The reason this clan is sensitive to wind comes from their racial traits.

Now that you're masked with the black veil, it might be inconvenient during battle.

However, as your compatibility with the Night Charm Evil Sculpture deepens, you'll become increasingly sensitive to the wind."

Speaking, Lu Ran pinched the soft black veil: "You can pay attention to this aspect.

It's also a way to tangibly experience your fusion process with the Night Charm Evil Sculpture."

From behind the black veil, Deng Yuxiang spoke in a light voice: "What should I call you now?"

"Eh?"

"Evil Demon Lord?"

"No need for that between us, it's unnecessary and could easily expose us," Lu Ran declined.

Deng Yuxiang slowly kneeled on one knee, bowing her head respectfully.

Without saying a word, her demeanor resembled that of a Night Charm!

It even made Lu Ran a bit dazed.

No!

No need for titles, let alone formalities!

Well... it's okay, at least she's only kneeling on one knee, not trying to shorten my lifespan.

Lu Ran immediately helped her up: "What's this for?"

Deng Yuxiang said: "Without rules, a square can't be formed."

Lu Ran was a bit numb: "Sis, don't mess with me..."

"Phew~"

Deng Yuxiang's clothes changed, and the bamboo hat and night outfit vanished quietly.

She casually straightened the creases on her collar: "In the future, more and more people will follow you and look up to you.

Little Lu Ran, you're about to embark on a big endeavor, and I hope those under your command..."

Lu Ran interrupted her, his expression becoming serious: "I hope our relationship doesn't change."

Deng Yuxiang paused in her words.

Her gaze softened slightly, and she gently patted his shoulder: "It won't."

Seeing her like this, Lu Ran felt a bit more at ease.

He said, "You should keep practicing here, Ruyi is advancing over there, I'll go accompany her."

"Yes." Deng Yuxiang gently nodded.

Lu Ran: "..."

He hesitated for a moment but ultimately didn't say anything, turning around to leave.

However, just as Lu Ran reached the hall doors, he suddenly sensed something.

Faintly, it seemed like someone was calling out to him?

Lu Ran stopped, his expression puzzled, and turned to look into the depths of the hall.

Deng Yuxiang was looking at him from afar.

Lu Ran asked, "Is it you calling me?"

Upon hearing this, Deng Yuxiang thoughtfully said: "It seems I'm not devout enough to let you hear my voice."

Lu Ran explained: "I must be closely connected with the Night Charm Evil Sculpture in my mind to communicate with you spiritually."

Just now, my attention wasn't even on the Night Charm statue."

Clearly, it's an unequal situation.

Lu Ran can contact Deng Yuxiang anytime, anywhere, clearly transmitting messages into her mind.

Whereas she needs to work very hard and focus intently to possibly catch Lu Ran's attention.

[Now, speak.] Lu Ran activated transmission mode, connecting with the Night Charm Evil Sculpture.

[Tomorrow, I plan to find a Heavenly Star believer and fix the Night-cutting Blade before the fifteenth.] Deng Yuxiang gazed at Lu Ran from afar.

[Tianchen Steel isn't easy to buy, and powerful Heavenly Star believers aren't easy to find. Do you have any leads?]

[I do.] Deng Yuxiang's response was crisp and decisive.

Lu Ran nodded.

Deng Yuxiang is indeed a wealthy heiress, not lacking money.

She was also once a disciple of the North Wind Sect, a sect specializing in weapons, closely connected with the "blacksmiths" of the Heavenly Star Sect. She likely has the resources.

[Don't expose the Night Charm Evil Technique, stay safe, go quickly and return quickly.] Lu Ran pushed open the hall door and walked out.

[Yes!]

Listening to the respectful response in his mind, Lu Ran shook his head helplessly, closed the hall door behind him.

"Phew..."

Lu Ran took a deep breath.

Finally, he had accomplished a major task!

Recalling all that had happened in the past two days, it truly felt like a dream.

Who would have thought the first general under the Ran Sect would be the Big Nightmare!

Should I introduce some prestigious titles in the Ran Sect?

The gods in this world have titles like "One Immortal, One Saint, Two Martial Heroes," "The Four War Heroes," "The Eight Demon Lords," "The Twelve Earthly Fiends."

We can create our own version!

Maybe the Four Protectors, Eight Divine Generals, and Twenty Celestial Lords?

First Protector of the Ran Sect·Nightmare!

Second Protector of the Ran Sect·Mad Immortal!

Tsk tsk~

Sounds pretty good, right?

Lu Ran was in high spirits, dreaming sweetly as he walked to Luoxian Pavilion.

Oh, and soon I will challenge the Divine Ruins!

There's still a bit of preparation to do.

Lu Ran took out his phone, scrolled through his contacts for a while, and dialed a number.

Soon, a surprised voice came from the other end: "Ran... Ran Shen?"

Lu Ran smiled amiably, his voice even more amiable: "Brother Hao!"

Hao Tian, a friend from Qiantang River.

The question is, how did he earn a place in Ran Shen's phone contacts?

Because Hao Tian has a wonderful sister—Wang Quan Believer·Li Rouyin!

"Happy New Year, Ran Shen." Hao Tian was a bit confused, unsure if Lu Ran had called the wrong number.

Ever since they exchanged contacts, not even a message was exchanged.

Hao Tian had been silently following, watching Lu Ran ascend to the pinnacle of Heavenly Pride.

Knowing someone like Lu Ran was a great source of pride for Hao Tian.

He never imagined that one day, he would receive a call from Lu Ran!

Lu Ran showed concern: "Brother Hao, has our sister been eating well lately?"

Hao Tian: "..."

You don't even want to say 'Happy New Year' to me...

Chapter 412: not giggling

Jiang Ruyi finally advanced successfully, and it happened on the fifth night of the first lunar month.

That night, the evening breeze was gentle, and the stars were twinkling.

"Whoosh!!"

A sudden gust of wind erupted inside Luoxian Pavilion, breaking the original tranquility.

Lu Ran sat on the bench inside the pavilion, shielding his face with one hand, looking through his fingers at the fairy in the center of the pavilion.

Her robes fluttered, and her long hair waved through the air.

And there was that noble, cold aura that made others feel inferior.

A line of poetry flashed through his mind:

Drifting like a separate existence, ascended to immortality.

Lu Ran sat quietly, waiting for his girlfriend to adjust her state.

Of course, if she wanted to stand in the pavilion for another night, Lu Ran would accompany her.

Admitting fault requires an attitude of admitting fault.

If Lu Ran could stand upright in Beifeng City, how much more in front of his fiancée?

He didn't know how much time had passed when Jiang Fairy slowly opened her eyes and turned to look at him.

Lu Ran immediately returned to his senses, their eyes meeting.

"What are you thinking about?" Jiang Fairy spoke softly.

Lu Ran's expression was a bit unnatural, and he shook his head.

Even though they were close, Lu Ran felt his answer might offend her at this moment.

"Hmm?" Jiang Ruyi wouldn't let it go.

Looking at the aloof fairy, Lu Ran hesitated for a moment before biting the bullet and stomping his foot:

"You."

Jiang Ruyi rolled her eyes at Lu Ran teasingly, "Smooth talker."

She took a few steps forward to the pavilion post and gazed into the distance.

She turned her back to Lu Ran, the corners of her lips slightly curled up.

Hmm, it's the answer I like.

The bright moon hung high, with brilliant stars.

Under the night sky, Erhai Lake sparkled with unparalleled beauty.

"I'm standing right next to you, why would you think?" A faint voice, carried by the evening breeze, reached Lu Ran's ears.

"Oh, then I won't think."

Lu Ran leaned back, resting against the pavilion post, watching her graceful silhouette.

Jiang Ruyi frowned slightly.

Even the gentle evening breeze seemed a bit colder.

"Think!" Lu Ran said decisively.

Women truly are strange creatures.

Who makes sense anymore?

Jiang Ruyi: "..."

Her immense power came with one downside; it was difficult for her to hide her emotions.

Especially since she had just advanced, the special stage was not yet over, and her connection with the world was still quite close.

This also caused the atmosphere in the pavilion to fluctuate with her emotions.

"I'm one small rank higher than you now." Jiang Ruyi said softly.

"I'm getting there too." Lu Ran's expression was peculiar, and he added, "Getting there soon."

"Hehe~" Jiang Ruyi couldn't help but laugh.

Her laughter made the evening breeze much lighter.

Lu Ran's deliberately imitated tone reminded her of that red cloth young master.

"Really soon." Lu Ran said earnestly.

"These days, I neglected Yutang and the others, let's take them out to play tomorrow."

"They went down the mountain yesterday." Lu Ran replied, "The Big Nightmare went to repair the Night-cutting Blade, and Deng Shao and Manni went with her."

Jiang Ruyi nodded lightly, her body leaning, shoulder resting against the pavilion post, chewing over a word:

"Big Nightmare..."

Lu Ran advised, "Don't be mad at her, she didn't know what I was going to do, she was unaware of everything."

She came without hesitation, prideful even in face of death.

It was I who forcibly intervened in her fate and disrupted the situation."

Jiang Ruyi remained silent, giving no response.

Lu Ran continued, "In the future, she will be a strong ally for us, our most loyal comrade."

Upon hearing this, Jiang Ruyi gave a faint "Hmm."

Lu Ran thought for a moment, then changed the subject: "On the fifteenth of this month, my mom will take one evening to come home and celebrate little Yuanxi's birthday.

Do you want to come back to Beijing with me?"

Jiang Ruyi nodded lightly, "Okay."

Lu Ran continued, "Before going home, I need to go to Qiantang River and visit the Bamboo Sea."

Jiang Ruyi was somewhat surprised, "Bamboo Sea?"

"To see an old friend, do you want to go?"

"When?"

"Within these two days... how about the day after tomorrow?"

Jiang Ruyi said softly, "The day after tomorrow, the seventh, is your birthday."

"I don't..." Lu Ran paused, feeling moved, "You want to celebrate my birthday?"

"You always celebrate together with little Yuanxi." Jiang Ruyi's tone was devoid of specific emotion.

Lu Ran, however, smiled, "You want to pamper your own boyfriend, right?"

Jiang Ruyi finally took the trouble to look at Lu Ran.

She turned to see Lu Ran's bright smile under the moonlight.

Out of place with the night, exceptionally contagious.

Both powerful in the River Realm, both blessed by the divine.

Lu Ran's influence on the environment and atmosphere was undoubtedly impressive, but he had always been particularly introverted.

The evening breeze brushed against his face, his shirt collar gently swaying in the breeze.

At this moment, Jiang Ruyi felt as if she had returned to those midsummer days in high school.

Seeing the boy standing by the window.

The bright sunshine, clean shirt and face, and those clear eyes.

Jiang Ruyi suddenly understood what Lu Ran meant when he said "thinking of you" earlier.

After all this time, he really hadn't changed.

Jiang Ruyi turned away, no longer looking at Lu Ran.

And with that turn of a glance, the sunny scene was gone; she was back in the night-shrouded Luoxian Pavilion.

She calmed her mind and said softly, "What birthday gift do you want?"

Lu Ran rested the back of his head against the pavilion post, thinking seriously for a moment, "Accompany me for a stroll through the Bamboo Sea."

"Choose another, I was already going to accompany you."

"Then... spend a couple more days with me in the Bamboo Sea?"

Jiang Ruyi turned with a smile, folding her hands before her, leaning languidly against the pavilion post:

"Nothing else you want?"

"I have everything already." Lu Ran extended his hand towards her.

Jiang Ruyi looked at Lu Ran with an amused yet helpless expression.

Such audacity.

Or perhaps he's just so easily satisfied?

Lu Ran stubbornly beckoned until warmth and softness filled his embrace.

He took a deep breath, savoring the fragrance of her hair.

Under the moonlit Luoxian Pavilion, silence returned, the sporadic sound of insects enhancing Luoxian Mountain's tranquility.

In his arms, the lofty Jiang Fairy gradually shed her cold exterior.

No longer a powerhouse in the human world,

She returned to being a gentle and lovable girl.

After a while, Lu Ran picked her up horizontally and walked towards Luoxian Residence.

Jiang Ruyi's face grew increasingly red, seemingly aware of his mischievous intentions.

A night of indulgence.

The stars and moon turned.

The next day, Lu Ran and the others booked their tickets.

Si Xianxian's choice again surprised Lu Ran; she decided to stay on the mountain.

It seemed she had become completely immersed in this paradise, unable to extricate herself.

A few months ago, Lu Ran would still have worried, wondering if Xian'er, left unchecked, might cause trouble.

But now it's different.

Jiang Ruyi also assured him that Xian'er wouldn't cause any issues on her own, so Lu Ran didn't insist further.

On the seventh, around noon, the trio of Lu Jiang and Qiao landed in Anji City, Qiantang River Province.

Fully armed, the three of them met the tall young man, Hao Tian, who came to pick them up at the airport.

"Shh!"

Lu Ran approached, and before Hao Tian could react, he issued a silence command.

"Huh?" Hao Tian finally realized.

The young man before him, wearing a fisherman's hat and mask, was Brother Lu whom he hadn't seen for a long time.

Hao Tian was thinking of shaking hands, but Lu Ran immediately enveloped him in a hug, slapping his back soundly.

"Brother Hao! Long time no see!" Lu Ran said with a smile, "Sorry for troubling you to pick me up."

"No problem, no trouble at all." Hao Tian responded, overwhelmed with unexpected happiness.

Behind them, Qiao Yuanxi clung to Jiang Ruyi's arm, curiously observing this young man.

Hao Tian's eyes were bright and spirited, his posture upright and commanding, exuding the demeanor of a martial artist.

Qiao Yuanxi nodded to herself.

As expected from a disciple of the Second-class God of the Dongting Sect, truly a dragon among men.

Though, still far off compared to my brother~

Lu Ran provided a simple introduction for everyone.

Both Jiang Ruyi and Qiao Yuanxi had been featured on "Heavenly Pride," so Hao Tian naturally knew of them and repeatedly expressed his admiration.

On the way to the parking lot, Hao Tian couldn't help but sigh, "The last time we met, I remember Brother Lu was still at Stream Realm Fourth Rank?"

"Seems like it." Lu Ran nodded with a smile, "Thinking back, those were truly youthful days."

Hao Tian couldn't help but laugh, "Brother Lu is still youthful now; after all, it's only been a year."

Mentioning time, Hao Tian's eyes were full of admiration and a sense of wonder, "Only a year, and Brother Lu has advanced to the River Realm, truly..."

Lu Ran sized up Hao Tian, "Brother Hao isn't far off either, also at River Realm First Rank, right?"

Hao Tian rarely felt a bit of self-assurance; though older than Lu Ran, being in the River Realm meant leaving the ranks of ordinary folk.

He had ample reason to be proud.

Except maybe for Jiang Ruyi...

Hao Tian thought he might be mistaken in his judgment.

Why did he feel that Brother Lu's girlfriend was stronger than Lu Ran?

Hao Tian shook his head, tossing aside the unrealistic thought completely.

Hao Tian drove and took the three towards the western suburbs of Anji City.

Lu Ran sat in the passenger seat, casually asking, "How's your sister been lately?"

"Don't mention it." Hao Tian sighed, full of helplessness, "Since Rouyin advanced to the River Realm, she doesn't need to eat.

Her temperament has become increasingly hard to deal with.

The last two times I went to visit her, she refused to see any guests, I stood outside Youhuang Ferry and didn't even catch a glimpse of her."

Lu Ran laughed, "You truly are being the humblest of brothers."

Suddenly, a small hand reached from the back seat, pulling on Lu Ran's ear.

"Hey?" Lu Ran said in pain, leaning his head back.

Qiao Yuanxi pinched Lu Ran's earlobe, her tone tinged with jealousy, "How come I didn't know you had a sister?"

I thought you were on vacation with Sister Ruyi, but you're actually looking for your sister?"

Lu Ran: "..."

Jiang Ruyi watched this scene with a smile, without intervening.

Lu Ran quickly clarified, "She's Brother Hao's sister, not mine, we're just friends."

Qiao Yuanxi still sounded envious, "Why are you looking for her? Coming all this way?"

Lu Ran rolled up his sleeve, shaking his wrist with ancient coins.

Qiao Yuanxi questioned, "What about it?"

Lu Ran explained, "This was a gift from Lady Li Rouyin, worshipped by her god."

Hao Tian held back his laughter, Lady such a title was used?

He had thought that after not seeing Lu Ran for a year, he had matured into a renowned Da Xia genius, becoming more domineering and strong-willed.

Unexpectedly, not so!

Brother Lu was also obediently tamed by his sister!

Hao Tian felt deeply empathetic.

Lu Ran internally apologized, speaking half-seriously, "With the fifteenth approaching, I'm thinking before doing something big, I should try to give this Magic Artifact Fragment a blessing again.

At least to try my luck and enhance my combat power as much as possible."

"I see." Qiao Yuanxi released her grip, "Okay, I wrongly accused you!"

Her gentle little hand softly massaged Lu Ran's earlobe, murmuring, "Does it hurt?"

Originally, Hao Tian was smiling widely.

But now he wasn't smiling.

Really!

Kicking, yelling, sulking, giving the cold shoulder... they should be directed at your brother!

How did it come with apologizing, concern, and ear massages?

Hao Tian was feeling a bit rattled.

How was he supposed to empathize with this?

Chapter 413: Little Beggar

Outside the seventh Bamboo Village in the Bamboo Sea of the Demon Cave.

A group of people were walking on a bamboo forest path.

The young Yuanxi was in a great mood, walking briskly, holding a spicy duck wing in her hand.

She ate while inhaling sharply, her little face turning red from the spiciness.

"Almost there," Lu Ran indicated toward the distant fork in the road.

There was a sign there that read: Private Estate, No Trespassing.

"Wow!" exclaimed Qiao Yuansi, "Rouyin sister... is really rich, hissing..."

The Bamboo Sea of the Demon Cave is a famous retreat in Da Xia.

Renting a standalone courtyard here is expensive enough, and yet Li Rouyin has a private residence?

Lu Ran patted the head of young Yuanxi: "Mind your address, Miss Li Rouyin is older than me."

"Oh." Qiao Yuansi sucked her fingertips, "Brother, get me another duck wing."

Lu Ran looked towards the bamboo basket in Hao Tian's hands.

Hao Tian: "..."

Sister Qiao has a gluttonous little mouth, Brother Lu has a mischievous little hand.

Hao Tian had a heart full of unexpressed anger.

The delicious food was indeed bought by Lu Ran on the way, and he bought quite a lot.

But little Yuanxi just couldn't stop eating!

Along the way, her little mouth just never stopped...

It was only when Jiang Ruyi softly spoke that little Yuanxi reluctantly gave up.

A few minutes later, when they saw Youhuangdu, Qiao Yuansi was stunned!

Is this a noble residence?

"Youhuangdu."

Jiang Ruyi looked at the plaque on the gate of the mansion.

Thinking of Lu Ran's mention of Lord Wang Quan's abilities, and the artifact fragment gifted to Lu Ran by the deity, Jiang Ruyi couldn't help but be moved.

The word 'Du' is truly expressive.

A mysterious and specially capable deity, who has under him only one believer.

This unique Li Rouyin, would she be on Lu Ran's recruitment list?

As for Deng Yuxiang's matter, Jiang Ruyi had long since figured it out.

Lu Ran has an incredibly grand vision, and on such a long journey, of course, he needs many strong allies who share his ideals.

"Knock knock knock~"

Hao Tian knocked on the mansion gate, then quietly waited.

The estate was silent, with only the rustling of the wind through the bamboo forest.

Lu Ran said, "Is it possible she can't hear us?"

Hao Tian shook his head: "Perhaps she can't hear, but she definitely knows."

Lu Ran was a bit puzzled: "Does the Forget Spring Sect have a technique to enhance hearing?"

Hao Tian truthfully said: "I don't know about that, but as long as she is in the range of Youhuangdu, she knows everything."

Lu Ran looked at the big gate: "Was this gate closed last time we came?"

Hao Tian looked a bit embarrassed: "Maybe I came too often, and she's annoyed."

Lu Ran came to the gate, placing a hand on it: "We're here to visit, walking right in isn't very polite... eh?"

The gate suddenly opened.

Qiao Yuansi giggled, covering her little mouth quickly.

Lu Ran looked at the others: "The wind blew it open."

Hao Tian: "..."

Qiao Yuansi curiously peeked into the estate.

In the center of the courtyard stood a cluster of gigantic evil bamboo, and on either side could be seen intricately constructed East and West wings.

"This?" Hao Tian stood at the entrance, hesitating.

"Brother Hao!" Lu Ran put his arm around Hao Tian's shoulder, "There's an old saying in Da Xia: Since we're here..."

Qiao Yuansi giggled: "And there's another one! It's the grand holiday~"

Hao Tian smiled helplessly.

Acting rashly and impolitely was true, but so was the longing for his sister. So taking advantage of Brother Lu's visit, he'll be bold just this once!

Hao Tian stepped in, the others followed suit.

Going around the central evil bamboo cluster of the courtyard, Hao Tian paused. In front of them, on the second floor window of the main house, stood a graceful silhouette.

Her skin was snow-white, her appearance exceedingly beautiful.

She wore a long black dress with an antiquated flair, her long hair tied simply with a wooden hairpin.

She stood silently by the window, her temperament was unique, like an ancient beauty that walked out of a painting.

The only unhandsome thing was her lackluster eyes.

Empty, listless.

Completely devoid of human emotions!

She was naturally fit to be a Sword Cultivator!

Unfortunately, Lord Jian Yi had failed to recruit this cold and emotionless girl of the Human Clan.

"Rouyin."

Hao Tian spoke up, forcing himself to break the silence.

Qiao Yuansi couldn't remember how many times she had been astonished.

Ever since she saw the woman in the black dress, she had been enraptured by her unique charm and aura.

Is there really someone in this world who can compare with sister Ruyi?

Must be joking...

Seeing his little sister remain silent, Hao Tian forced himself to continue: "It's the new year, we haven't seen each other in a long time."

Li Rouyin finally spoke but ignored Hao Tian, uttering only two words:

"Lu Ran."

"Uh?" Lu Ran immediately waved his hand, "Happy New Year."

Li Rouyin's cold words were like a freezing spring, chilling to the bone:

"You intruded into Youhuangdu, do you know your guilt?"

"Oof." Qiao Yuansi shivered from the cold, hiding behind Jiang Ruyi.

"I said the gate was blown open by the wind, believe it... uh, never mind." Lu Ran said awkwardly, "It's been over a year, I came to offer incense to Lord Wang Quan, to give you New Year's greetings."

Li Rouyin looked down with hollow eyes over Lu Ran: "Offering incense? New Year's greetings?

Do you really think I don't know why you came?"

Lu Ran's expression was serious: "I'm not sure what you think of me, I must clear up!"

Your thoughts are probably correct."

Li Rouyin: ???

"Pfft... cough." Qiao Yuansi hurriedly covered her little mouth.

The sudden twist almost made Hao Tian twist his waist.

Lu Ran requested: "Allow me in to offer incense to Lord Wang Quan?"

"Ha." Li Rouyin was directly angered to laughter.

That damn guy!

Relying on the favor of the deity, he's simply reckless!

Last time, Lord Wang Quan wanted to give Lu Ran a sweet candy, and Li Rouyin thought Lu Ran would be a bit more sensible.

But not at all!

Lu Ran deliberately picked the precious one, choosing the copper coin string of the Night Charm Clan!

Li Rouyin's heart bled.

Every illusionary copper coin on that red line contained a soul she painstakingly captured.

And this time when Lu Ran came again, it seemed he wanted to enjoy freebies again...

She bit her lower lip, wanting to directly issue an expulsion order.

But Li Rouyin hesitated.

After all, Lord Wang Quan had expressed hope for her to be on good terms with Lu Ran.

Hao Tian stared blankly at the window.

When had he ever seen his ice-cold sister with such a rich expression?

Jiang Ruyi frowned slightly, looking suspiciously at Lu Ran.

What had he done to make this believer of Wang Quan so upset, yet so conflicted?

Lu Ran cupped his hands: "Be kind, let me offer incense to Lord Wang Quan."

Li Rouyin's cool hand pressed on the window frame: "You..."

She uttered a single lonely word, then fell silent.

Within a few seconds, Li Rouyin laughed again.

A helpless laugh.

Lu Ran: "What's wrong?"

Li Rouyin was silent for a long time, her voice returning to its previous coldness: "Get up here."

Jiang Ruyi: "..."

Qiao Yuansi: "..."

Lu Ran was overjoyed, but didn't become complacent!

He quickly went to Jiang Ruyi's side, picking up his fiancée's delicate hand, and kissed the back: "Shall I go up and see?"

Jiang Ruyi glared at Lu Ran with a smile: "Go ahead."

"I'll be right back!" Lu Ran turned and left.

On the way, Hao Tian handed over the bamboo basket familiarly.

Lu Ran took it readily, striding toward the main house.

Once again, he climbed to the second floor and saw the woman seated by the bamboo table at the window.

"Changed quite a bit." Lu Ran said.

"Is that so?" Li Rouyin deftly held a bamboo cup, gently playing with it, adjusting her mood.

When the message from the deity was transmitted, she knew she would bleed again.

Since there was no power to resist, she might as well face it with a smile.

"Your condition has improved a lot." Lu Ran placed the bamboo basket with spicy duck neck on the table.

Li Rouyin had already advanced to the River Realm, needing only to absorb the energy between heaven and earth to maintain life.

Thus, though she didn't like eating, she had gained weight.

However, compared to normal women, she was still on the slim side, with thin arms and legs...

"Oh." Li Rouyin turned her head towards Lu Ran.

Though clearly a blind person, her beautiful eyes squinted slightly.

The more she looked at Lu Ran, the more startled she became: "This year, you certainly haven't wasted your time."

Lu Ran modestly said: "It's alright! You're not bad either, quite imposing."

Just now, a single sentence from Li Rouyin could make Qiao Yuansi shiver.

Others might not know, but Lu Ran knew well: That wasn't because Li Rouyin's aura was cold, her words icy, but from another dimension's chill!

"Eat something?" Lu Ran took out the dish and placed it before Li Rouyin.

"Why did you suddenly think to visit me?" Li Rouyin didn't pay attention to the spicy duck wing.

Lu Ran sighed in his heart, advancing to the River Realm really made a difference, huh?

Originally, beneath Li Rouyin's elegant and aloof exterior, was a mischievous heart.

Quite enjoyable.

But now, it seemed hard to find.

Lu Ran lamented the erosion of humanity, saying: "In a few days, Lord Immortal Sheep will open up a Divine Ruin for me.

I want to adjust myself to the peak state before the challenge."

"Divine Ruin?"

"Yes, Divine Ruin."

Li Rouyin was contemplative, and it was unclear if she was communicating with the deity.

Lu Ran waited for a while, then tentatively said:

"So I thought I'd try my luck, see if I could get something good to eat..."

Li Rouyin suddenly smiled slightly, her tone playful: "Didn't you just say you were here to offer incense and New Year's greetings?"

"Hm?" Lu Ran was momentarily stunned.

This girl still had some humanity?

Li Rouyin looked displeased: "What kind of reaction is that?"

Lu Ran shrugged: "I thought since you became so strong and always spent time with dead souls, you might have lost the joys and sorrows of the human world."

Li Rouyin pouted: "Alright, tell me, what good stuff do you want to eat."

This little expression finally brought Lu Ran back to her lively and playful demeanor from a year ago in the Rebirth Hall.

He tentatively asked: "Got any Barbaric She-Demon?"

Li Rouyin's expression stiffened a bit.

The Barbaric She-Demon, the rival of the Second-class God-West Desolate Axe.

As precious as the souls from the Night Charm!

Recently, with the intensifying strength of evil demon invasions and frequent special events, Li Rouyin indeed obtained a copper coin string of the Barbaric She-Demon.

"Little Rouyin?" Li Ran attempted to invoke their limited friendship using the nickname from a year ago.

"I do, dear brother." Li Rouyin countered with the address Lu Ran disliked from a year ago.

Lu Ran was overjoyed!

As a beggar, he dared not harbor a bit of dissatisfaction?

He pushed the duck wing forward: "Have some, spicy, your favorite."

Li Rouyin finally did not refuse, reaching for a duck wing.

As she brought the tip to her mouth, Lu Ran thick-skinnedly, softly said: "Um... besides the Barbaric She-Demon, do you have Tangled Silk Shadow?"

"Thud!"

The unexpected sound of her slamming the table startled those downstairs.

Following that, they heard upstairs, a woman's voice seething:

"Lu! Ran!!!"

Chapter 414: Scoundrel and Chef Li

Inside the Rebirth Hall, red silk rained down like a shower.

In the depths of the grand hall, Lu Ran stood before the Divine Sculpture of Wang Quan, dutifully offering incense.

Beside him, Li Rouyin leaned on her bamboo staff, quietly standing there.

Her eyes could see ghosts below and gods above, yet oddly couldn't see humans.

Conveniently enough, Lu Ran was the farthest thing from human!

So, Li Rouyin saw him crystal clear.

When Li Rouyin saw Lu Ran simply bowing to offer incense, she couldn't help but purse her lips.

Dog of a person!

Just like last time, facing my deity, he still doesn't kneel?

With such an attitude, he still wants to take the copper coin string from me?

Yet Lord Wang Quan favors him, not fussing over whether he kneels and bows.

Hmm... truly infuriating.

"Little Rouyin?" After offering incense, Lu Ran clasped his hands together in prayer for a long while before turning to the young woman.

Li Rouyin: "I'm not little, you're the little one."

Lu Ran: "..."

What kind of talk is that!

She raised her blind bamboo staff, casually waved it, indicating the countless red silk threads falling from the sky: "Pick one."

"Oh no!" Lu Ran quickly said, "Didn't we agree on the Barbaric Lady Yaba and the Tangled Silk Shadow?"

Li Rouyin's heart started to bleed again.

But thinking of Lu Ran's upcoming challenge at the Divine Ruins, she felt a twinge of sentiment.

Her hollow eyes looked at Lu Ran, her expression growing more complex.

As if silently saying farewell.

Lu Ran almost thought he saw wrong!

Her expression seemed a bit sad?

Of course, Lu Ran wouldn't overthink it!

Their friendship was pitifully scant.

More of Wang Quan's care for Lu Ran, and a bit of "entrustment."

If it was private companionship, the cold-hearted Li Rouyin wouldn't have such emotional fluctuations for Lu Ran.

Moreover, by now, Li Rouyin should outright hate him, hoping he would scram.

Lu Ran waited a moment, softly calling out: "Li Rouyin?"

"Hmm." She slowly lifted her blind bamboo staff and pointed in a direction, "That string."

Lu Ran hesitated for a moment, still asked: "What were you thinking just now?"

Li Rouyin opened her mouth, wanting to speak but stopped.

Seeing Lu Ran's curious expression, Li Rouyin gradually tightened her grip on the blind bamboo staff, yet her voice remained calm: "Are you eating or not?"

"Eating!" Lu Ran stopped talking and walked in the direction pointed by her staff.

"Is it this one?"

"Or this one?" Lu Ran asked in succession.

Finally, within the dense rain of red silk, he found the Barbaric Lady Yaba's copper coin string.

"Hey, about that..." Lu Ran turned to the girl, "Can you help me release the souls captured in the copper coins?"

Li Rouyin showed no expression: "The food you wanted is served."

What, do I have to feed it to your mouth too?"

Lu Ran, looking embarrassed, said: "You forgot, last time you fed me the same way."

Li Rouyin: "..."

Recalling it, it was indeed true!

This damn guy!

Unskilled in anything other than eating.

Cannot even open a lunchbox?!

"Heh." Li Rouyin softly held her forehead with her delicate hand, rubbing her temple with her thumb and middle finger, appearing quite exhausted.

Lu Ran, looking all innocent, waited for the "cafeteria lady" to provide a full-service meal.

Li Rouyin finally stepped forward.

Her slender figure moved through the "rain of silk threads," the silk never touching her.

She approached Lu Ran, her fingertips gently passing over a few illusionary copper coins.

Lu Ran suppressed his excited emotions.

It was time for another blind draw!

This time, another six or seven hundred draws, let's go~

Mist Realm, River Realm, Stream Realm, River Realm...

Lu Ran's Barbaric Lady Yaba Evil Sculpture was originally at River Realm-Second Rank, and soon enough, the Evil Sculpture started trembling excitedly!

River Realm Third Rank, River Realm Fourth Rank, River Realm Fifth Rank...

"Wow, Golden Legend!" Lu Ran suddenly muttered softly.

River Realm Dead Soul!

Lu Ran stared with a pair of Dead Sheep Eyes, which were supposed to appear lifeless.

Yet his expression now was quite lively and expressive!

Li Rouyin paused for a moment, strongly tempted to pick up the bamboo staff and whack him twice.

Damn guy!

She couldn't tell how many times she'd cursed him in her heart.

Not even eating could shut your mouth?

Dog of a person!

Eat, I'll let you eat!

Li Rouyin gently brushed her fingers along the silk thread, and with a stroke, the illusionary copper coins shattered.

The souls, tortured beyond endurance, groaned and screamed in agony, finally escaping the boundless hell.

They had thought Li Rouyin had tired of her game, showing great mercy by no longer tormenting them.

Unexpectedly, just out of the tiger's den, they entered the wolf's lair!

Many Barbaric Lady Yaba souls didn't even have time to express their emotions before being captured by Lu Ran's Pupil of the Dead World.

River Realm, Mist Realm, Stream Realm, River Realm...

Just like last time, the River Realm souls equaled the total number of Mist Realm and Stream Realm souls in a 1:1 ratio.

"Wait, wait a second!" Lu Ran swayed and quickly spoke up.

Li Rouyin was quite surprised, noticing Lu Ran's unsteady steps and labored breathing.

What's going on?

Is he overeaten?

Gradually, Li Rouyin's face showed a schadenfreude smile.

Serves you right!

Dog of a person...

Eat till you're bloated with daemon's milk!

"Buzz!!"

Within Lu Ran's Sculpture Garden, the Barbaric Lady Yaba Evil Sculpture quivered violently, expanding inch by inch.

Li Rouyin, smiling faintly: "Choked?"

Lu Ran: "Huh?"

"Do you need a drink of water? I'll wait for you."

Lu Ran: "..."

Boom!

Barbaric Lady Yaba Evil Sculpture, River Realm-First Rank!

"Come on, let's continue." Lu Ran shook his head hard, seeing that there weren't many copper coins left on the red silk thread.

"Hmph." Li Rouyin, like her brother, immediately stopped being playful.

It wasn't long before there were no copper coins left on that thread.

Lu Ran took a deep breath, calming his excited emotions.

Li Rouyin silently stood by, also settling her emotions.

One was excited, the other gloomy.

"So... ahem." Lu Ran whispered, "Where's the Tangled Silk Shadow string?"

Li Rouyin pursed her lips.

Do you really want to eat that!

Do you want more?

The usually cold-as-ice woman showed a pitiful expression.

Like she was about to cry.

How sly was Lu Ran?

He pretended not to notice, softly calling: "Little Rouyin?"

Suddenly, Li Rouyin started to walk away.

Lu Ran quickly stepped aside, afraid she might bump into him.

"Whack!"

Her guiding blind staff brushed against Lu Ran.

After hitting Lu Ran, Li Rouyin stopped and muttered:

"Hmm? Seems like I went the wrong way."

Lu Ran: "..."

No, you didn't go wrong.

You were headed straight for me!

"Whack! Whack..."

The blind lady paced back and forth in the rain of red threads.

After repeatedly going the wrong way and hitting Lu Ran several times, she finally found the right path.

Li Rouyin picked up a red thread with one hand, "I accidentally hit you just now, does it hurt?"

Lu Ran shook his head repeatedly: "How could you call it hitting? You were just normally using your blind staff to find your way!"

Clearly, it was my fault for constantly blocking your path."

Li Rouyin: "..."

This actually works?

Lu Ran didn't mind at all.

It's just eating!

Nothing embarrassing~

"Here we go." Li Rouyin gently picked up a red thread, her fingertips brushing over the illusionary copper coins.

As the illusionary copper coins shattered one by one, the souls emerged once again.

This time, it was the alluring Tangled Silk Shadow.

But, they had been tormented by Li Rouyin for so long, they'd lost their charming appearances, each more sorrowful than the last.

Come on, come on!

Lu Ran eagerly licked his lips.

Come, nourish my Evil Sculpture so that I may bring you back to your peak, showcasing myriad forms of allure once more.

Lu Ran's Tangled Silk Shadow Evil Sculpture was at River Realm·First Rank.

He was a bit worried about whether Li Rouyin had gathered enough souls, whether it was enough for the Tangled Silk Shadow Evil Sculpture to advance to River Realm.

What one feared always seems to happen!

After a total of eight hundred draws, Lu Ran's Tangled Silk Shadow Evil Sculpture's strength level stagnated at River Realm·Fifth Rank.

Quite frustrating!

Just a little more, and Lu Ran could create Tangled Silk Shadow minions.

Just a little more, and Lu Ran could equip the River Realm grand moves of the Tangled Silk Shadow clan!

"Alright, you may leave now." Li Rouyin casually picked up the lone remaining copper coin, her fingertips slightly pinching it.

Lu Ran hesitated for a while before saying: "Are there any more souls of Tangled Silk Shadow?"

Li Rouyin's face stiffened, turning her head toward Lu Ran, gritting her teeth: "What did you say?"

Lu Ran looked a bit embarrassed: "Just a bit more would be fine, just a tiny bit."

"Heh heh." Li Rouyin was truly annoyed, turning to leave for the depths of the grand hall, speaking icily, "Leave."

The way she walked with such vigor, none of it seemed typical for a blind person, did it?

She knelt on the prayer mat, bowing her head toward the Stone Sculpture of Lord Wang Quan.

It seemed she had no intention of dealing with Lu Ran any longer.

"Many thanks!" Lu Ran shouted in gratitude, turning to leave.

But when he reached the front of the Rebirth Hall door, his actions stalled.

Thinking it over, Lu Ran turned around once more.

His gaze swept over the endless strands of red thread, looking toward the slender figure kneeling deeply in the grand hall.

For a long time, Lu Ran called out: "Li Rouyin."

Li Rouyin remained motionless, keeping silent.

Lu Ran continued: "I can understand if you're upset or annoyed, but for a moment, you looked very sad. Why?"

Upon hearing this, Li Rouyin's brows slightly knitted.

Lu Ran continued: "Just now, you were on the verge of speaking. Was there something you wanted to say to me?"

Li Rouyin remained facing away from Lu Ran, not moving at all.

Lu Ran organized his words and said seriously: "Lord Wang Quan and Lord Immortal Sheep are old acquaintances, and your sect has taken great care of me."

If there's something you wish to remind me of, I appreciate your kindness for that.

If there's something troubling you, anything I can do..."

Lord Immortal Sheep had clearly expressed that the Forget Spring Sect is quite unique, and Li Rouyin, a powerful believer of the Human Clan, could join the Ran Sect.

However, Lu Ran and Li Rouyin had little interaction.

Moreover, each time Lu Ran visited, it was all about eating and drinking, naturally making Li Rouyin dislike him even more.

This wasn't good!

Lu Ran waited for a long while, but Li Rouyin only silently knelt in prayer, with no response.

"Sigh." Lu Ran sighed helplessly, turning to open the hall door.

Suddenly, a cold voice came through: "You are going to challenge the Divine Ruins."

"Yes." Lu Ran turned back to look.

Inside the Rebirth Hall, red threads rained like rain, swaying in the wind.

In the beautiful red rain, a devoutly kneeling woman whispered softly:

"I had a childhood friend, who vanished without a trace after challenging the Divine Ruins a few years ago."

Only then did Lu Ran realize why Li Rouyin was stunned when he mentioned challenging the Divine Ruins in the main hall.

He couldn't help feeling a stirring in his heart!

Was this his chance to bring the cafeteria lady into the Ran Sect?

Was this his chance to turn the Forget Spring Sect into the Ran Sect's logistics supply department, his personal kitchen?

Lu Ran didn't hesitate: "Name."

"Qin Yanzhi."

"What deity is he a believer of? What does he look like?"

Li Rouyin slowly stood up, walking gracefully in the red rain, eventually stopping before a silk thread.

She parted her soft lips: "Come."

"Huh?"

Li Rouyin played with the silk thread, saying faintly: "Didn't you say you wanted to eat more Tangled Silk Shadow?"

Lu Ran's eyes lit up, and he rushed straight to Li's private kitchen!

...

It's snowing over here at my place.

Heh heh, looks nice~

What about over there?

Chapter 415: I have two Immortal jasmines

Yu Huan Ferry, inside the reception room on the first floor.

Hao Tian sat at a bamboo table, looking rather preoccupied, occasionally pouring tea for Jiang and Qiao.

Qiao Yuansi was very interested in the followers of Wang Quan, asking many questions, but Hao Tian didn't know much, which left Qiao Yuansi quite speechless.

"Are you really siblings?"

"How can you not know any techniques or how powerful your kin is?"

Qiao Yuansi was extremely disappointed and pulled Jiang Ruyi away to chat.

With that, Hao Tian gazed toward the backyard, longing deeply.

"Brother Lu!" Suddenly, Hao Tian stood up.

Jiang and Qiao also turned their heads, seeing a tall figure approaching in the serene backyard.

It was only Lu Ran.

"Brother Lu, where's Rouyin?" Hao Tian hurriedly went to meet him.

"She's paying respects to Lord Wang Quan."

"This..." Hao Tian was a bit exasperated.

Lu Ran looked at the two ladies: "Miss Li Rouyin has given me the order to leave, let's go."

Hao Tian quickly said, "I'll send you off."

"No need, Brother Hao," Lu Ran refused, "once you go out, it will be hard to come back in.

Just sit here, she will have to come back at some point. Without us outsiders, you siblings might even find time to chat."

Hao Tian's expression showed hesitation.

Clearly, he was tempted by the suggestion, but didn't want to neglect Lu Ran.

"Sit down." Lu Ran said with a smile, "Don't worry about us, we'll roam around and be gone before the tenth."

"Brother Lu..." Hao Tian was very grateful.

No exaggeration to say, he was fortunate to enter Yu Huan Ferry thanks to Lu Ran.

Lu Ran patted Hao Tian on the shoulder and left with Jiang and Qiao.

"See you next time, Brother Lu." Hao Tian still escorted them to the gate but didn't dare to step outside.

It seemed like, if he stepped out, this grand mansion door would automatically close...

The trio said goodbye and walked along the bamboo forest path.

Qiao Yuansi clung to Lu Ran's arm, whispering, "He appears so humble."

Lu Ran didn't know what to say.

Qiao Yuansi's eyes twinkled mischievously: "How about you turn like him?"

"Ah?"

"I ignore you, I throw a tantrum, then you keep caring for me, pampering me, taking care of me."

Lu Ran: "..."

Jiang Ruyi had a subtle smile at the corner of her mouth: "Don't make things difficult for your brother.

Once he gets busy, he doesn't want to care about anyone."

Qiao Yuansi pouted: "True! If I don't find him, he doesn't find me either."

With that, Qiao Yuansi begrudgingly let go of Lu Ran's arm and turned to hug Jiang Ruyi.

Lu Ran was stunned!

Little Ruyi, learned to tease?

Hmm... she needs some discipline.

"Did you get what you wanted?" Jiang Ruyi's inquiry broke Lu Ran's thoughts.

"Yes, it's okay."

Some seemed calm but were actually ecstatic inside!

Barbaric Woman Clan's Evil Sculpture, Jiang Realm·First Rank!

Tangled Silk Shadow's Evil Sculpture, Jiang Realm·First Rank!

And these two Evil Demons both have grand moves of the Jiang Realm!

The grand move of the Barbaric Woman Clan, called the Barbaric Evil Axe.

Lu Ran can summon a hundred-meter grand battle axe to cleave through everything!

And this method has a second-layer damage.

The moment the battle axe strikes the ground, a sand sea will surge from both sides of the blade, swallowing everything around.

Buildings will be destroyed by the brutal sand waves, and creatures will be buried alive.

Instead of suffocating to death, people should worry more about being crushed by the sand!

The Barbaric Woman Clan is truly terrifying!

As for the Jiang Realm grand move of the Tangled Silk Shadow Clan, it should not be underestimated either.

This Evil Technique has a romantic name—Rain of Red Silk.

The name sounds beautiful,

but it's actually extremely cruel!

Once activated, it's a spectacle of red silk filling the sky, fine as raindrops, with countless red threads weaving through.

The Tangled Silk Shadow Clan is an earthly marvel.

But more so, a poison!

Now, Lu Ran is already filled with the poison of the "Tangled Silk Shadow".

It is unknown who in the future will have the honor to taste the poison Lu Ran dishes out.

Jiang Ruyi suddenly picked up Lu Ran's wrist, studying the Rebirth Money closely: "It doesn't seem to have changed?"

Lu Ran looked at the slender jade hand, watching her fingertips lightly brush the ancient copper coin.

He also saw her serious face and those clear, bright eyes.

His heart rate gradually accelerated.

Lu Ran felt he was becoming more and more spineless.

Today, she did such intimate little gestures, he should have been used to it by now.

Yet actual circumstances are different!

Hmm...

Blame it on Jiang Fairy's increasing power and increasingly noble and cold demeanor.

Special treatment, a huge contrast, always gives a different feeling.

Or perhaps, it has nothing to do with any of this.

It's simply because the person who amazed your youthful years will continue to move your heart in the years to come.

Time after time.

Lu Ran mumbled vaguely as he turned to look aside, pretending to survey the scenery.

Little Yuanxi is still here.

As an elder brother, he still needs to appear composed.

Pretending, that's what we're best at.

Lu Ran and the others stayed in the Bamboo Sea for three days.

They enjoyed the scenery, cultivated their minds and bodies in the exquisite Bamboo Village, and occasionally played with the silly Bamboo Wood Demons.

Life was quite pleasant.

Jiang Ruyi's company was considered Lu Ran's birthday gift.

On the tenth, the three of them left the Demon Cave and flew to Beijing.

This time, the Lu family siblings didn't bother Chen Jingjing, choosing to sneak back home instead.

Fortunately, it was also on the tenth day that Lu Ran realized his cultivation had reached a bottleneck!

He could break through and advance at any time!

If he could challenge the Divine Ruins at the Jiang Realm·Second Rank, wouldn't that be wonderful?

Returning to their home at Immortal Scenic Garden, Lu Ran immediately took out the Blazing Phoenix Patterned Gourd from his suitcase and handed it to Qiao Yuansi.

"What for?" Qiao Yuansi held the gourd, admiring the exquisite phoenix pattern.

"Place it beside the shrine to absorb more Divine Power." Lu Ran patted his sister's head.

With this Magic Artifact, Lu Ran wouldn't need a large amount of Demon Crystals or high-grade Demon Crystals when breaking through and advancing.

"Alright~" Qiao Yuansi ran to the bedroom with the gourd.

Jiang Ruyi whispered, "Do you really not need to return to Luoxian Mountain?"

The best environment for believers to break through and advance is, of course, at the feet of the deities.

"No need." Lu Ran was quite confident, "With the Blazing Phoenix Patterned Gourd, it's enough!"

Jiang Ruyi pondered for a moment, then said nothing more.

If Lu Ran went back to the mountain to advance, he might not make it back in time to reunite with his mother and celebrate Qiao Yuansi's birthday together.

"By the way, I have something good to show you." Lu Ran looked mysterious as he stepped toward the study.

Jiang Ruyi curiously followed, seeing Lu Ran standing at the study door, actually knocking.

"Knock knock knock~"

"We won't go in, just open the door and take a look, no more than half a minute." Lu Ran said, gently turning the doorknob.

As the door opened, a faint jasmine fragrance wafted in.

"Whoa?" Lu Ran looked at the peculiar flowers on the desk.

How did so many flowers grow?

In just a couple of months, the change is this big?

It seems the Jade-faced Snake Clan doesn't know how to cherish beauty.

The exotic flowers and plants in Lingyun Mountain never fully flourish before being picked and spoiled.

Jiang Ruyi's bright eyes lit up: "Dangling Silk Immortal Jasmine?"

Lu Ran nodded repeatedly: "Only a top student like you would recognize it!"

When I saw it for the first time while training in Lingyun Mountain, I wanted to call you to ask about it."

Jiang Ruyi carefully observed the "miniature trees" in the flowerpot, the small trees with branches and leaves, and slender branches hanging down.

On each dangling branch bloomed a series of beautiful jasmine flowers.

Jiang Ruyi's eyes flickered: "You picked this and brought it back?"

Lu Ran nodded: "Yeah, smell the Immortal Jasmine fragrance, doesn't it feel familiar?"

And look at this grace, this demeanor, ethereal as a fairy...

Gosh, it's simply the same tune as you."

Lu Ran looked at Jiang Ruyi and suggested: "Why don't we give you a nickname, just call you 'Immortal Jasmine'?"

Jiang Ruyi didn't react much, just smiled faintly.

After all, Lu Ran had given the flowers to his mother, and Jiang Ruyi had nothing much to say.

Lu Ran said: "In the future, when Mom writes in the study and smells this Immortal Jasmine fragrance, she'll think of you."

"Think of me?"

"Yes." Lu Ran nodded naturally.

Jiang Ruyi was a bit puzzled: "Think of... me why?"

Lu Ran laughed: "Immortal Jasmine is so beautiful, Mom will definitely like it. Additionally, she'll love you more and more out of fondness for it."

"Hehe~" Jiang Ruyi couldn't help but chuckle.

Any lingering thoughts she had earlier vanished, leaving only sweetness.

"After all, Mom is a Jianyi believer, with a rather cold disposition." Lu Ran gently closed the study door,
"What about my clever tactic?"

Jiang Ruyi's lips slightly curled as she turned to leave: "So many little schemes."

Lu Ran's face was puzzled: "Are you complimenting or criticizing me?"

"Guess~" Jiang Fairy's charming face was radiant as she turned to leave, quick-stepped.

No need to guess?

Qiao Yuansi chased after Jiang Ruyi, running swiftly into Lu Ran's bedroom: "Sister Ruyi, are you going to live with Brother?"

Jiang Ruyi laughed and asked: "Why?"

For the past few days in the Bamboo Sea, little Yuanxi had been sharing a room with Jiang Ruyi.

Qiao Yuansi blinked: "Brother has to prepare for his advancement, right? Being solitary is more conducive to breaking through and progressing~

Sister Ruyi, sleep with me, I have a big bed!"

Looking at Qiao Yuansi's expectant little face, a tinge of indulgence flashed in Jiang Ruyi's eyes.

Though only a year apart between the two of them...

"Okay then." Jiang Ruyi gently nodded.

Aside from what Yuanxi said, another point: this was Lu's mother Qiao Wanju's home.

Here, it's better to sleep apart from Lu Ran.

"Yuanxi!" Outside the door, came Lu Ran's voice.

"Ah?" Qiao Yuansi was startled, looking guilty as if caught doing something wrong.

"Come over, I have something to tell you." Lu Ran gestured.

Qiao Yuansi hesitated for a moment, then curiously walked out of the bedroom: "What is it?"

But Lu Ran just brushed past her into the bedroom, even closing the door behind him.

Qiao Yuansi: ???

Lu Ran shouted to the door: "Alright, nothing now."

It's been three days, little Yuanxi stuck with Jiang Ruyi for three days!

In her words, Sister Ruyi's body was soft and fragrant, making it very comfortable to sleep with her.

Lu Ran was almost about to explode!

Do I need you to tell me that?

Don't I know how fragrant it is to sleep with her?

No wonder she's a Lantern Believer!

Born to be a perfect foil!

"You!" Jiang Ruyi's face showed a teasing annoyance, stepping forward to open the door, "Yuanxi is right, you should focus on advancing... um."

Before the words were finished, she was pressed against the door by Lu Ran and kissed on the lips.

Today was already the tenth.

For the past few days, Lu Ran had been counting the days!

No more!

Can't give in any longer.

After a long time, Lu Ran finally let go of his fiancée.

Jiang Ruyi's cheeks were flushed, even her earlobes were tinged with a light pink.

She slightly lowered her head, lightly panting, as if still not fully present.

Lu Ran whispered: "We're home now, you don't need to take care of her anymore.

Later, tell her to stay with me tonight."

Jiang Ruyi hooked her arms around his neck, slightly tip-toeing, forehead to forehead, their eyes meeting.

Her beautiful eyes shimmered, soft-spoken:

"Mm, okay."

The casual grace she had maintained these few days simply vanished.

Regarding the looming separation...

Who isn't counting the days?

Chapter 416: The last tenderness?

No matter how Lu Ran counted the days, the fifteenth day of the first lunar month arrived as expected, neither early nor late.

As dusk approached, snowflakes began to fall, fluttering gently in the air.

Outside the Immortal Scenic Garden, everything was covered in a blanket of white, while inside the Qiao residence, the atmosphere was very warm and cozy.

Qiao Yuansi was extremely happy!

Her eyes were laughing, curving into two beautiful crescent moons as she sat at the dining table like a supervisor, watching the two of them prepare dishes, cook soup, and simmer rice.

For so many years, this spacious apartment had been luxurious enough, but it lacked the warmth of life.

Now, with her brother and Sister Ruyi, this finally felt like a home.

"Hey! No sneaking food!" Qiao Yuansi's eyebrows shot up as she suddenly shouted.

Over at the kitchen counter, Jiang Ruyi had just sliced some sauced beef, and Lu Ran came over, ready to inspect his girlfriend's knife skills.

But Jiang Ruyi misunderstood and casually picked up a thin slice of beef, stuffing it into Lu Ran's mouth.

"Mmm!" Lu Ran immediately forgot why he came over and went back to washing vegetables.

"Ohhh~~~" Qiao Yuansi stomped her foot in disapproval.

Jiang Ruyi picked up another slice of beef and offered it to the side: "Here you go."

Supervisor Qiao, lacking any principles, immediately broke into a wide smile.

She happily trotted over, opening her little mouth to receive Sister Ruyi's offering.

Jiang Ruyi pampered her with a smile and handed the plate to Qiao Yuansi: "Put it on the table."

"Okay." Qiao Yuansi carried the plate away.

Lu Ran suddenly tilted his head, listening: "Mom's back."

"So early?" Qiao Yuansi, of course, believed in her brother's ability, and she quickly ran out.

Qiao Wanjun, covered in frost and snow, had just turned to close the door when she heard a "thud!"

She saw her precious daughter slide in on her knees with a gesture like a football player celebrating a goal on the field, extremely happy.

Qiao Wanjun laughed helplessly.

Whose 17-year-old... no, it's Yuanxi's birthday today, so she's already 18.

Not a trace of the reserve a girl should have.

Then again, to make a high-cold sword disciple laugh, little Yuanxi must have some skills.

"Mom, you're finally home!"

Qiao Yuansi looked up and smiled sweetly, her eyes filled with longing.

The words of reprimand Qiao Wanjun had prepared swallowed back down.

Forget it, today is her daughter's birthday.

"Mm." Qiao Wanjun responded softly.

Qiao Yuansi hurried to help her mother change shoes.

To the side, Lu Ran and Jiang Ruyi also walked out, greeting simultaneously:

"Mom."

"Aunt Qiao."

Qiao Wanju smiled and nodded, her gaze falling on Jiang Ruyi.

Rarely, a hint of surprise flickered in Qiao Wanju's eyes.

Jiang Ruyi's stunning beauty wasn't just talk; she was truly breathtaking.

After observing for a moment, Qiao Wanju asked, "Received a Divine Blessing?"

Jiang Ruyi moved slightly closer to Lu Ran, her smile a bit shy: "Lu Ran sought the Immortal Sheep for me."

Qiao Yuansi muttered quietly: "He really did forget about his mom once he got a wife~"

Lu Ran: "..."

Jiang Ruyi's heart tightened immediately.

Qiao Wanju, in rare good humor, lowered her head to look at her daughter: "Seems like he forgot about you as a sister too?"

"Exactly!" Qiao Yuansi nodded repeatedly, like a pecking chicken, "Mom, you should scold my brother!"

Qiao Wanju gently knocked Qiao Yuansi on the head with her finger: "Later."

Having said that, her gaze roved over Lu Ran and Jiang Ruyi, growing more satisfied.

They really are a good match.

Qiao Wanju was genuinely in a good mood, or perhaps, she was consciously blending into the warm family atmosphere.

She looked at Lu Ran and teased: "Your eyesight, if nothing else, is truly first-class."

Jiang Ruyi's face flushed red, and she lowered her head, silent.

Lu Ran smiled: "Maybe I take after my dad in this regard."

Qiao Wanjun's face froze for a moment.

After a full two seconds, she burst out laughing and stepped into the living room.

As she passed by her son, Qiao Wanjun lightly rubbed his head and then headed to the master bedroom.

Next to them, Qiao Yuansi's mouth formed an 'o' shape!

Not until her mother's figure disappeared did Qiao Yuansi lower her voice: "Brother, have you eaten a bear's heart and a leopard's gall?"

Lu Ran wasn't as composed as he'd have liked; he turned his head and went to the kitchen.

Father,

the very mention of him brought a tinge of sadness to Lu Ran, a perpetual worry...

Yet, amidst the joking, Lu Ran managed to mention him with a smile.

It's a curious feeling.

Perhaps, this is what's called growing up.

Ever since Qiao Wanju entered the master bedroom, she hadn't reappeared, and little Yuansi had checked multiple times, only to find the door tightly closed.

She didn't dare to disturb her, so she had to wait in the dining room.

She waited until just before dinner began.

Qiao Wanju changed into a white home nightgown. Although it was a simple style, on her, it looked extraordinarily elegant and graceful.

The woman's overall temperament was clearly not supported by her clothes but by her gentle face.

She looked at her children in the dining room, and the heart soaked in ice and snow had indeed softened considerably.

"Mom, come quickly; we're just about to start eating." Qiao Yuansi hastily called out.

Qiao Wanju looked at the table full of dishes, her gaze falling on a bottle of red wine. Next to it, there was even a hangover pot.

This kind of item had never appeared in the Qiao residence before.

Perhaps it was because the three children hadn't gained the head of the household's permission, so the wine was unopened, and the decanter became merely an ornament.

Qiao Wanju asked, "Want to drink?"

Qiao Yuansi was a little nervous, carefully asking: "May I?"

To increase her odds of success, she added: "I'm an adult today."

Lu Ran looked at his mother, seeing her smile and nod: "Yes, but just a little."

"Hurry, hurry, brother!" Qiao Yuansi beamed with joy, urging Lu Ran to open the wine, "This was given by Skull, so it must be good stuff~"

Chapter 417: The Last Tenderness?_2

Upon talking about this, Qiao Yuansi opened up, proudly announcing, "By the way, Mom. I have two teammates who were selected for the second 'Heavenly Pride'!"

The success of her teammates was naturally also due to Qiao Yuansi's efforts, and she felt honored by it.

At the same time, Qiao Yuansi was very grateful to her mother, as her mother had personally arranged this small team for her.

Although Wang Ling joined later, Guan Yiren was an original teammate, and now being graced with the name 'Heavenly Pride', it was a testament to her mother's discerning eye.

Qiao Wanju came to the main seat and casually remarked, "Yiren and Wang Ling?"

Qiao Yuansi was quite surprised, "How did you know, Mom?"

Qiao Wanju smiled wryly, "Your two teammates have great potential."

With your brother paving the way for them, coupled with the operations from their families, it's normal for them to be selected."

Qiao Yuansi looked at Lu Ran, who was not far away, her heart sweet with joy, "My brother takes good care of us and has really built a strong momentum for them!"

Beijing University is the top academic institution in Da Xia, and naturally, it's brimming with talent.

Everyone is at the River Realm·Fifth Rank, with first-class talent and combat strength, so who advances and who doesn't...

That depends on how one exerts effort 'outside the field'.

Qiao Wanju reminded her daughter, "You should also focus and think about the way to advance.

Your teammates won't be stuck at the River Realm, you need to keep pace with them."

"Got it." Suddenly thinking of something, Qiao Yuansi got up and ran out of the dining room.

Lu Ran returned with a hangover pot and placed it in a corner of the dining table, "Hasn't mom been in seclusion? How did she pay attention to this?"

Qiao Wanju looked up at her son, "I had Jingjing bring over your combat footage, and then I saw them."

Lu Ran asked with some anxiety, "My performance... was it okay?"

Qiao Wanju's eyes were smiling, "The Pride of Da Xia, feeling so insecure?"

Those eyes, which ought to resemble a deep cold pool, at this moment seemed like a clear stream, bright and soothing.

Lu Ran didn't say anything, merely sat smiling beside Jiang Ruyi.

Qiao Wanju's tone was playful, "That speech you gave at the award ceremony was indeed quite confident."

Lu Ran remained silent.

In front of the world, he's in the limelight, perhaps seen as a once-in-a-generation figure in people's hearts.

But to Qiao Wanjun, might those words seem somewhat naive?

Well... it doesn't matter, whether naive or not, he's still walking this path.

Watching her son with lowered eyes not speaking, Qiao Wanjun gently said, "Having ambition is a good thing."

"Brother!" Before Lu Ran could respond, Qiao Yuansi ran over, also holding a long box.

"What's this?"

"A gift!" Qiao Yuansi stuffed the box into Lu Ran's arms, "This is our team's gift for your birthday!"

Without opening it, Lu Ran already knew what was inside.

Could it be that Heavenly Star Saber he had refused to accept last time at the doorway?

Sure enough!

Lu Ran opened the box and saw a Heavenly Star Saber, along with the matching scabbard beside it.

This scabbard was the same style as his previous three, also in black and gold color scheme.

The only difference was that this scabbard had no square characters representing the blade's name.

This time, Lu Ran accepted it with a smile and looked at Qiao Yuansi, "I didn't prepare a birthday gift for you, what should I do?"

Qiao Yuansi pouted, "When have you ever given one? I'm used to it now!"

Lu Ran: "..."

The siblings never exchanged birthday gifts.

For the two of them, reuniting after a year and their mother's company was the best gift.

Yet this time, Lu Ran really did prepare a gift.

He glanced over at Jiang Ruyi, who understood and took out a small square box from her pocket.

"Whoa?" Qiao Yuansi was surprised and delighted, "For me?"

Jiang Ruyi nodded, "Your brother is giving it to you."

Lu Ran immediately corrected, "It's a gift from Ruyi and me together."

Inside the box was a thin gold necklace, with a pendant of a small white jade bead.

The jade bead was procured by Lu Ran, while the necklace was matched by Jiang Ruyi.

"Wow!" Qiao Yuansi was overjoyed, taking out the jade bead necklace to carefully examine it, smiling sweetly, "Thank you, brother and sister-in-law!"

Jiang Ruyi's cheeks immediately flushed red.

This little Yuansi, really...

Usually calling her "Ruyi sister" so affectionately, but with the family around today, Qiao Yuansi switched to calling her sister-in-law.

"Sister-in-law, help me put it on?" Qiao Yuansi giggled and winked at Jiang Ruyi.

From the main seat, Qiao Wanjun's eyes narrowed slightly, almost imperceptibly.

Her gaze remained on that tiny jade bead, obviously noticing something.

At Lu Ran's suggestion, Jiang Ruyi took the jade bead necklace and moved to Qiao Yuansi's side, "It's called the No-Event Chain."

Qiao Yuansi asked puzzled, "No-Event Chain? That's a strange name."

Jiang Ruyi sighed slightly in her heart, striving to suppress the sadness she felt, "It will protect you and keep you safe. If ever in danger, you can shatter this jade bead."

"Huh?" Qiao Yuansi was a bit bewildered.

She originally thought the name of this necklace bore a beautiful meaning.

But... does it really possess this genuine ability?

After fastening the necklace for Yuansi, Jiang Ruyi gently patted her shoulder, her tone stern, "Yuansi, remember, it can only be used once."

Only when you are facing absolute danger, with no chance of survival, should you shatter this jade bead."

Qiao Yuansi turned her head and looked at Lu Ran with astonishment.

Lu Ran had anticipated receiving his sister's thanks, imagining her jubilant and treasuring the gift.

Unexpectedly, Qiao Yuansi's eyes turned red and tears quickly welled up.

Suddenly, she remembered why this jade bead seemed so familiar to her.

On the red bean bracelet on Ruyi's wrist, there was also a jade bead like this!

Qiao Yuansi didn't know where her necklace came from.

She also didn't know how it worked.

But Qiao Yuansi was sure that the necklace indeed possessed the ability to keep her safe.

Receiving such a necklace from her brother at this moment...

It felt as if he was leaving final instructions!

After tonight, Lu Ran would be gone, everyone knew it.

He might never return, his life and death unknown, with no foreseeable news.

And this No-Event Chain was Lu Ran's last kindness bestowed upon Qiao Yuansi.

Once he left, it would be one last instance of being able to look after her.

Perhaps the last time.

Some emotions are never realized all at once.

It could be in a moment when a dam breaks open, something irretrievable occurs from thereon.

"Oh!" The chair Lu Ran sat on slid half a length back.

With his sister suddenly in his arms, Lu Ran embraced her gently and patted her back, laughing softly, "Already eighteen, and still crying like this?"

Qiao Yuansi pouted, pressing her face against Lu Ran's shoulder, saying nothing.

Lu Ran was somewhat at a loss, casting an embarrassed glance at their mother.

Qiao Wanjun watched this scene with a gentle smile on her face.

"Get up now." Lu Ran softly said, "Mom's watching."

"Promise me you'll definitely come back." Qiao Yuansi murmured.

"Alright." Remarkably, Lu Ran's response was straightforward.

Qiao Yuansi lifted her charming face, her big eyes glistening with tears, "Pinky promise?"

Lu Ran: "..."

Little kids, still making pinky promises?

Qiao Yuansi stubbornly gazed at Lu Ran, unwilling to let go.

"Okay, okay." Willing to humor Little Yuansi, as he always had.

"Pinky promise to hang..."

The eighteen-year-old girl, with swollen eyes, speaking childish words—it was somewhat amusing to hear.

As if by doing this, she could find some peace at heart.

Jiang Ruyi's heart fluttered slightly.

While others may be able to call Qiao Yuansi childish, she herself couldn't.

Not long before, Jiang Ruyi had also persistently asked Lu Ran to carry her up the mountain, accompanying her pilgrimage.

Step by step, stone by stone, step by step, every promise made.

What essentially is the difference between her and Little Yuansi?

Qiao Wanju's soft voice awakened the others: "Let's eat."

Reluctantly, Qiao Yuansi moved away from her brother's embrace and suddenly asked: "Can we have cake first?"

Qiao Wanju looked at the table full of delicious dishes, which were meticulously prepared by Lu Ran and Jiang Ruyi.

But seeing Little Yuansi's tear-streaked face, Qiao Wanju ultimately softened her heart.

"Alright." Lu Ran, observing their expressions, got up and went to the refrigerator, taking out a six-inch cake.

Eighteen candles were lit one by one, and the lights in the dining room were turned off.

When Qiao Yuansi closed her eyes, clasped her hands together over the cake, and silently made her wish for a long time...

Only then did they realize one thing.

More than eating the cake, Little Yuansi wanted to make a wish.

This birthday wish seemed rather significant.

Given that those candles had burned halfway, Little Yuansi was still wishing.

In the flickering candlelight,

her face was so devout.

Chapter 418: Human World Maximum Limit

Not long after, a smear of cake cream was placed on Qiao Yuansi's little face by Lu Ran.

The atmosphere of the birthday party gradually improved.

The family of four chatted and laughed, talking about anything and everything.

When Lu Ran's birthday gift was mentioned, Qiao Yuansi couldn't contain his excitement: "Brother, let's give that Heavenly Star Saber a name!"

Lu Ran felt an instant headache!

Qiao Yuansi was full of anticipation: "Should I pick a name for you, brother?"

Lu Ran quickly begged for mercy: "Please don't! The names you pick for the saber are too grand; I can't handle them."

"Hmph," Qiao Yuansi pouted displeased, "And you call yourself a Heavenly Pride, but you have no confidence at all."

Lu Ran peeled a shrimp and placed it on his mother's plate, suddenly inspired:

"How about letting Mom name the saber for me?"

Qiao Wanju looked at her son with a half-smile: "Sure."

Lu Ran instantly felt something was off!

Wait a minute!

If Mom names it, will I even be able to handle it?

It's over, something big is going to happen!

It's my fault for not wanting Qiao Yuansi to name it, after all, most of her names are inspired by fantasy novels.

Each name seemed like it wanted to pierce the sky!

Bear in mind, a saber's name is likely to be connected to its future Divine Weapon Domain.

It's almost like a training direction.

Mom's chosen name definitely won't be as flashy as those from fantasy novels.

But it will certainly be top-notch in the Human World!

Yet Lu Ran, in a moment of heat, blurted out his words.

He hesitated for a moment and whispered, "Actually, forget it. I'll think about it myself."

Qiao Wanju picked up a piece of shrimp with her chopsticks: "Hmm?"

The slight nasal sound carried a hint of skepticism, along with a unique sense of parental authority.

Lu Ran promptly changed his words, astonishingly cowardly: "Please grant me a name!"

As she savored the boiled shrimp, Qiao Wanju nodded in satisfaction: "Not bad."

It was unclear whether she was praising the food or her son for having the courage to face difficulties.

"Aunt Qiao, how have you been lately?" Jiang Ruyi asked at the right moment. "Has your cultivation been going smoothly?"

"It's okay," Qiao Wanju responded gently to the girl's words, her eyebrows softening a bit.

The young girl was full of fairy-like elegance and gentle charm, and her mind was entirely on Lu Ran.

Qiao Wanju was indeed increasingly satisfied every time she looked.

She turned to Lu Ran, her words sounding like a reminder: "Cherish her well."

Lu Ran nodded seriously: "Once this phase of my life settles down, Mom should have completed her seclusion.

Then, Ruyi and I will have our wedding!"

"Yes, yes! A wedding!" Qiao Yuansi ignored many things automatically, her eyes sparkling, already fantasizing.

Those two short words seemed particularly touching.

Jiang Ruyi picked up the red wine beside her, took a gentle sip, with elegance and grace.

Only the reddening cheeks and her glances secretly shot at Lu Ran betrayed her thoughts.

"This matter is settled," Qiao Wanju made the decision, ratifying Lu Ran's words.

"Settled!" Lu Ran nodded heavily, picked up the wine glass beside him, and drank it in one go.

As the night wore on, everyone was fully enjoying themselves.

Qiao Wanju stood up and left, while Lu Ran and the others cleared the table in the dining room.

Perhaps because she had a little wine, Jiang Ruyi's cheeks were flushed, like a tempting peach, incredibly beautiful.

Lu Ran was enamored, but a certain faithful Flower Lantern disciple was diligently hanging around like a bulb...

It was quite aggravating~

He had been seeking an opportunity to kiss that mischievous face, but before he got the chance, he heard a call.

"Ranran."

"Mom?" All of Lu Ran's mischievous thoughts disappeared.

Jiang Ruyi and Qiao Yuansi both seemed puzzled, looking at Lu Ran.

"Come to the study."

This time, Jiang and Qiao vaguely heard the woman's voice.

"The study?" Lu Ran was a bit shocked.

Is that where I'm supposed to go?

"Here." Just in time, Jiang Tea was freshly brewed, and Jiang Ruyi immediately poured a cup for Lu Ran.

Lu Ran took the Ginger Tea and hurried toward the study.

As always, the door was tightly closed.

"Knock, knock~"

Even though he was invited, Lu Ran still politely knocked on the door.

"Enter." A faint voice came from inside the room.

Lu Ran suddenly felt a bit dazed, remembering that night a few years ago.

He recalled himself holding hot milk, sensitive and cautious.

"Ranran?"

The person inside spoke again, voice much gentler.

Qiao Wanju was like an omnipotent deity, guiding Lu Ran out of that dark night with her gentle words.

"Click."

Lu Ran opened the door, and the fragrance of jasmine enveloped him.

The woman was kneeling in front of the desk, putting down the brush in her hand.

She turned her head to admire the beautiful drooping thread-like Immortal jasmine in the corner of the desk: "Is this the gift you gave me?"

"Yes, doesn't the temperament of this flower resemble Ruyi?" Lu Ran said with a smile.

Qiao Wanju looked up at Lu Ran, those eyes seemed capable of discerning everything.

They could see through his little thoughts at a glance.

"Heh," Lu Ran chuckled awkwardly.

"Come in."

"Oh." Lu Ran entered, closing the door, kneeling in front of the desk, directly facing his mother.

"I really like it." Qiao Wanju's eyes softened, taking the tea cup from her son.

Far more gentle than when she was at the birthday banquet earlier.

Even the Immortal jasmine in the corner of the desk seemed to have grown more delicate.

Lu Ran's gaze fell on the desk, noticing a piece of calligraphy she had just completed: "What's this?"

Suddenly, a long sword flew by, the tip hooking the silk string from the hanging scroll, slowly floating toward the wall.

Moments later, next to the scroll bearing the word "Sword," a new ink work appeared.

On the vertically hanging scroll, four large characters were written from top to bottom - "Cloud Sea Dust Clear."

It didn't have the sharpness of the word "Sword," yet Lu Ran was silently impressed.

Graceful and flowing, skillfully executed.

Gradually, Lu Ran became entranced.

Qiao Wanjun sipped some tea quietly, not disturbing Lu Ran, letting him revel in his realization.

After a while, Lu Ran asked: "Mom, what does this phrase mean?"

Qiao Wanjun held the warm tea cup in both hands, her brows warm and gentle: "It's the name of your saber."

Lu Ran: "..."

What does this mean?

All his questions were written on his face.

Qiao Wanjun couldn't suppress her laughter, speaking softly: "What is the Cloud Sea?"

Lu Ran: "The Cloud Sea in the sky?"

Qiao Wanjun nodded gently, uttering eight words: "Unpredictable, enveloping the mountains and rivers."

Lu Ran quietly pondered, not thinking his mother was simply describing a natural phenomenon.

Qiao Wanjun took another sip of Ginger Tea, looking at the light-colored tea, she calmly said:

"The Cloud Sea is vast and lofty, always towering above all life."

Lu Ran finally realized the seriousness of the situation.

Qiao Wanju looked at Lu Ran: "It never disperses, always existing."

Lu Ran suddenly spoke: "Is it?"

Qiao Wanju sighed gently: "In this world, there has never been true equality.

To ordinary people, the powerful are like the Cloud Sea hanging overhead.

There are thousands of disciples on Jinghong Peak, to them, I am the Cloud Sea."

Lu Ran nodded silently, understanding his mother's point.

The "Cloud Sea" she referred to is an objective existence, and indeed cannot be dispelled.

Wherever there are people, there will be high and low, distinguished and humble.

There will always be a ruling class and a ruled class.

Qiao Wanju smiled faintly: "Similarly, to the believers, and even the entire Human Clan, All Gods are the Cloud Sea that covers the Human World."

"Gulp," Lu Ran's Adam's apple moved.

Dear Mom!

What are you implying?

Qiao Wanjun shifted the topic: "Cloud Sea Dust Clear, but the key lies in Dust Clear."

Lu Ran suppressed the turbulent emotions in his heart, softly repeating: "Dust Clear."

Qiao Wanjun's brows were gentle, yet she spoke words that were shocking: "The Cloud Sea cannot be scattered, but you can use your saber to wash away the dust within it.

Let the clouds above become purer.

Until... spotless."

Lu Ran: !!!

As for what constitutes "Dust," he didn't need his mother to explain further.

Goodness~

This saber name...

Just now at the dinner table, I shouldn't have asked that question!

"Mom."

"Hmm?"

"It seems like you don't want me to cultivate a Divine Weapon."

"Hehe~" Qiao Wanjun chuckled softly, "I still remember your speech at the awards ceremony.

Were your ambitions not grand?"

Lu Ran paused for a moment, saying, "I wish to eradicate all demons in the world."

Implying he intended to eliminate demons, his focus was not aimed at the Gods' faction.

Yet Qiao Wanju's "Cloud Sea" had nothing to do with the Evil Demons' faction!

Instead, it pointed directly at the Gods' faction!

Or rather, the "Cloud Sea of All Gods" and its dust particles.

This...

"Oh." Qiao Wanju neither confirmed nor denied.

Her deep and profound eyes gazed directly at Lu Ran, holding multiple layers of meaning.

Lu Ran's body was tense, under such scrutiny from a Great Power, it was truly difficult to remain calm.

Even knowing she would not harm him, Lu Ran shifted his gaze, looking at the writing hanging on the wall: "Mom."

Qiao Wanju did not respond, she merely watched Lu Ran silently.

Lu Ran continued: "Look at the ink dripping from that writing."

Due to Qiao Wanju just finishing the piece, then using the Divine Weapon to hang it up, there were still traces of ink running down the paper from the imperfectly dried brush strokes.

Lu Ran spoke softly: "Doesn't it resemble the blood your son is about to shed?"

Qiao Wanju chuckled silently, picking up the warm Ginger Tea: "Do you like this name?"

The room fell into a quiet silence, with only the faint sound of the woman sipping tea.

Lu Ran gazed at the ink dripping down the writing, wordless for a good while.

If I say I like it,

does that mean I'm taking a stance?

Or should it be interpreted that way, is this journey to the Divine Ruins going to reveal some secrets?

Is Mother prepping me in advance?

"Pick one," Qiao Wanju finally suggested, seeing her son's reluctance to speak further.

Two Divine Weapons, swords from the study, flew over, floating in front of Lu Ran.

Lu Ran was unsure: "Pick one?"

Qiao Wanju nodded slightly: "To ensure your safety during this journey."

Protect me?

Her Divine Weapons are spiritually connected to her.

And Lu Ran had many secrets, which mustn't be revealed for now.

He contemplated for a moment and refused: "Thanks, Mom, but no."

"Hmm?" Qiao Wanjun's eyebrows furrowed slightly.

She tried to remain kind and gentle towards Lu Ran.

But at this moment, she was slightly puzzled, even a bit dissatisfied.

A son on a distant journey, armed with a Divine Weapon, would be safer, and it would allow Qiao Wanjun and Lu Ran to maintain a thread of connection.

Even though such a connection would be incredibly weak, there would at least be a trace of it.

Lu Ran couldn't fail to understand this, hence Qiao Wanjun's dissatisfaction.

Lu Ran shook his head: "No, Mom, I still need to grow on my own."

Ultimately, I need to rely on myself; I can't always think about having a fallback or your protection."

Qiao Wanjun picked up the Ginger Tea, speaking quietly: "Is that so?"

Lu Ran fell silent for a long time, then he looked at the woman: "I have my own Divine Weapon, Dawn Silence Night, and my own combat system.

This journey, I also need to cultivate my Eight Desolate Annihilation.

And cultivate my Cloud Sea Dust Clear."

Qiao Wanjun paused momentarily with her hand holding the Ginger Tea.

He accepted the name.

She took a light sip of the tea, looking at Lu Ran: "Have you thought it through?"

Lu Ran nodded lightly: "I have."

In truth... I decided long ago!

Since joining the Immortal Goat Sect, all I see is a pile of stones, no longer any Gods in my eyes.

My goal has never been limited to the Evil Demon faction.

"Buzz!!"

Suddenly, a surge of energy erupted from within Lu Ran.

Chapter 419: Double Happiness at the Door

The 18th of the first month, evening.

The vast Qiao residence was like an Immortal Realm, filled with a faint Immortal Fog.

The closer one got to the study, the denser the white fog became.

Inside, at the writing desk, Lu Ran, who had been striving for a breakthrough for two days, suddenly stood up.

"Crack."

Holding the Blazing Phoenix Patterned Gourd in one hand, he opened the door with the other and staggered outside.

"Lu Ran?"

"Brother?" Jiang Qiao rushed to him immediately.

They were quite surprised and couldn't hide their worry.

What was Lu Ran doing?

He was still in the process of advancing, why was he moving on his own?

"Whoo!!"

Just as Lu Ran reached back to close the door, a gale suddenly rose.

Jiang Realm-Second Rank!

"Eh?" Caught off guard, Qiao Yuansi shielded his face with one hand and stepped back.

Jiang Ruyi, however, felt relieved.

"Hmm~" Lu Ran was extremely comfortable.

The Divine Power inside him surged and flowed like great rivers.

Turbulent and powerful!

With such grandeur, supported by an almost explosive sense of strength, Lu Ran was deeply intoxicated.

"Buzz~"

The Blazing Phoenix Patterned Gourd gently vibrated, its golden phoenix pattern dazzling.

It felt comfortable too.

Originally, Lu Ran intended to use the gourd's abilities to break through his physical limitations and initiate the advancement process.

But unexpectedly, he didn't even need to use the treasured gourd.

Qiao Wanju, with her skillful brush, directly helped Lu Ran break through his bottleneck by writing four big characters.

On the night of the 15th, when the Blazing Phoenix Patterned Gourd arrived in the study, all that was left was sheer enjoyment.

Yes, as a finished Magic Artifact, the gourd could fly on its own.

It nestled into its master's arms, enjoying the nurturing energy and eagerly seeking benefits.

Lu Ran, of course, wouldn't be stingy.

What's wrong with letting his precious treasure eat and drink a bit?

Over three full days, Lu Ran felt increasingly close to the Blazing Phoenix Patterned Gourd.

Not just emotionally, but there was also a slight mental connection.

Could this mean that the Blazing Phoenix Patterned Gourd was about to truly become his Magic Artifact?

Like Xiaguang and Jiye, ultimately reaching a spiritual connection?

"Brother?" Qiao Yuansi called softly.

"Shh!" Jiang Ruyi pressed a finger to her lips, unusually stern towards the young Yuansi.

Qiao Yuansi stuck out her tongue and dared not speak again, curiously watching her brother.

In a dazed yet satisfied demeanor, Lu Ran finally opened his eyes after a long while, still appearing slightly drunk.

"What happened?" Jiang Ruyi finally asked.

"What do you mean what happened?" Lu Ran looked puzzled.

"You're at a crucial stage of your advancement. Why did you move on your own?"

"Ah... there are mom's paintings and pendant Immortal Jasmine inside. I'm afraid the wind might damage them."

Jiang Ruyi: "..."

Qiao Yuansi remarked sarcastically, "And yet you are just fine!

Are you not afraid of ruining your breakthrough just as you're about to succeed?"

Lu Ran snorted, "Who do you think your brother is? I'm definitely..."

Before the boast was fully voiced, it halted abruptly.

Because Lu Ran noticed his fiancée's cold face nearby.

Feeling awkward, Lu Ran looked at Jiang Fairy: "Mainly, whenever I see that pendant Immortal Jasmine, I think of you.

I'm truly afraid of blowing those strings of Immortal Jasmine flowers away."

Qiao Yuansi rolled her eyes, "Oh, oh, oh, oh~"

She mimicked with her head bobbing, "I'm afraid of blowing away the Immortal Jasmine Flowers~"

With a darkened expression, Lu Ran looked at his sister.

Do I have no dignity?

After all, I've reached the Jiang Realm·Second Rank! And here you are, a mere River Realm lackey...

"Ah." Little Yuanxi was startled and turned to run away immediately.

Jiang Ruyi sternly said, "That's not me, and even if it was, your advancement is what's most important."

Lu Ran was serious too, "If I weren't completely confident, I wouldn't have done it."

But Jiang Ruyi said, "In cultivation, you can never have too much certainty with even a twelvefold assurance... mm."

Suddenly, Lu Ran kissed her tender lips, silencing her words.

Jiang Fairy pushed Lu Ran twice without success.

Her slightly annoyed look gradually turned to shy annoyance, her cheeks growing redder.

A little head peeked out from around the corner of the distant living room.

Qiao Yuansi's big eyes, like a camera, captured a beautiful picture with each blink.

The two of them were really a perfect match!

To stand next to Sister Ruyi without being overshadowed...

Tsk, tsk~

My brother indeed has something going for him.

"Mm... mm!" Jiang Ruyi finally managed to push Lu Ran away, giving him a light smack.

"I'm going to take a bath." Lu Ran hurried away, carrying the gourd.

Run away after a kiss.

Thrilling~

Jiang Ruyi looked angrily at Lu Ran's back and sharply sensed a gaze.

She turned, but the snooping head had already ducked back.

Jiang Ruyi frowned lightly and stepped forward.

Hearing the approaching footsteps, Qiao Yuanxi turned pale.

Seeing no escape, she braced herself and rushed out, hugging Jiang Ruyi, sweetly calling,

"Sister Ruyi, where are you going?"

Jiang Ruyi: "..."

Looking down at the little Yuanxi in her arms, with those big watery eyes, Jiang Ruyi helplessly smiled.

Indeed, they truly were brother and sister.

One is coquettish, and the other a rascal.

At the same time, in the bathroom.

Standing under the shower, Lu Ran had placed a treasured gourd on the shelf holding the toiletries.

Since realizing that the Blazing Phoenix Patterned Gourd was awakening a mental connection with him, he'd intended to keep it close at all times.

Previously, with help from "Heavenly Pride," this Magic Artifact had verbally promised to follow Lu Ran.

Over the past twenty days, the person and the gourd became gradually more familiar.

The three days of advancement especially warmed their relationship.

Lu Ran naturally wanted to strike while the iron was hot!

Unexpectedly, while washing his hair, he suddenly felt something vaguely.

"Hmm?" Lu Ran raised his wet arm, wiped the foam from his eyes, and turned to look.

He saw a little Blazing Phoenix standing at the mouth of the gourd.

Its image was ethereal but vividly colored!

It appeared to be hollow, woven entirely from lines of golden flames.

Dreamlike, resplendently bright.

As Lu Ran looked over, the little Blazing Phoenix was also watching him.

"Hello!" Lu Ran carefully washed his foamy hands and reached forward gingerly.

The little Blazing Phoenix was the Artifact Spirit.

The golden flame lines making up its form were entirely ethereal, naturally posing no threat.

"Woo~"

Lu Ran felt a stir within, vaguely hearing a phoenix call.

The phoenix's call was like a flute, mellifluous and graceful.

"Come." Lu Ran extended his palm, trying to get the little Blazing Phoenix to jump onto it.

Yet the little Blazing Phoenix tilted its head, adorably watching Lu Ran.

Lu Ran wasn't in a rush, smiling, "I'll be really good to you; we'll gradually become spiritually connected."

"Woo~"

The noble little Blazing Phoenix slowly merged into the golden phoenix pattern on the gourd, disappearing.

Lu Ran continued his shower, happily humming a tune while scrubbing the foam from his head:

"The Little Mermaid paints sunbeam as eyeshadow, diving into a bubble's embrace~"

Several minutes later, feeling fresh, Lu Ran, wrapped in a bathrobe, played with the Blazing Phoenix Patterned Gourd in hand as he stepped out of the steamy bathroom.

The house, previously filled with Immortal Fog, had already returned to its original state.

"Brother! Come quick, watch TV with us," Qiao Yuansi called out.

Lu Ran went into the living room, saw the two women on the sofa, and sat beside Jiang Ruyi.

Earlier, on the morning of lunar sixteen, their mother had left for Jinghong Peak. Little Yuanxi knew that throwing tantrums wouldn't help, so she just felt silently dejected.

Thankfully, with Jiang Ruyi accompanying her, she wasn't too heartsore.

Instead, it was Jiang Ruyi who felt a bit down.

She had thought that during the three days of lockdown after the fifteenth, she could spend time with Lu Ran, but he stayed in the study until tonight.

"I've already booked a flight to Yeyu City for tomorrow morning, at five thirty."

Jiang Ruyi said, curling her long legs on the sofa and leaning against Lu Ran.

Her earlier annoyance had obviously passed. Or perhaps, she no longer had the time to be annoyed.

Lu Ran asked, "That early?"

"The day before yesterday morning, Grandpa Cheng Yi contacted you; I took the call."

Jiang Ruyi continued, "He said the Immortal Sheep left a message; tomorrow at ten thirty in the morning, the Divine Ruins will open within Luoxian Mountain."

On the side, though still watching TV, Qiao Yuansi's mind was adrift upon hearing this.

Jiang Ruyi snuggled in Lu Ran's embrace, her jade fingers lightly tracing the phoenix pattern on the Red Jade Gourd, opting to say no more.

"Yeah, I know." Lu Ran felt very guilty and lowered his head, placing a gentle kiss on her hair.

Suddenly, Lu Ran felt a tremor in his heart!

Jiang Ruyi, sensing something, lifted her stunning face to see Lu Ran's slightly dazed gaze.

"Wow!" Lu Ran suddenly exclaimed.

The Blazing Phoenix Patterned Gourd in his hands was glowing even more brightly.

Jiang Ruyi quickly withdrew her finger from the powerful Magic Artifact, fearing she might accidentally cause trouble for Lu Ran.

From the dazzling golden glow, the little Blazing Phoenix emerged once more!

It fluttered its wings, and its ethereal image penetrated into Lu Ran's chest, seemingly merging into his heart.

True spiritual connection!

Tens of seconds later, the glow dissipated, and the gourd stopped its gentle vibration.

With a complex expression, Lu Ran slowly spoke, "The Blazing Phoenix Pattern recognized me.

We've had a qualitative breakthrough in our spiritual connection, and we can now communicate smoothly."

The unexpected good news embraced and diluted the sad atmosphere of parting.

Instantly, Qiao Yuansi beamed, "Ha, my brother is the greatest!"

With gentle fingers, Jiang Ruyi traced the phoenix pattern but didn't ask why the Artifact Spirit had suddenly decided.

She merely said softly, "He truly is someone worthy of entrustment."

Qiao Yuansi's heart swelled!

If so, could the next stage begin?

She quickly leaned forward, resting on Jiang Ruyi's curled long legs, her eyes twinkling, "Blazing Phoenix, Blazing Phoenix!"

Brother hopes that not only can you absorb the bones of slain Evil Demons but also the living ones too~"

Jiang Ruyi, aware of why Lu Ran had chosen this Magic Artifact, gently requested, "Could you assist him?"

"Woo~"

Lu Ran was stunned, then overjoyed.

Had the Artifact Spirit·Blazing Phoenix agreed?!

Chapter 420: Immortal Sheep Divine Ruins

Beijing's winter, the dawn breaks very late.

When Lu Ran and his companions got up early to catch the plane, it was cold and dark, the wind was howling, and the streets were desolate and empty.

This bleak scene exactly matched the melancholy emotions of parting.

These emotions accompanied them all the way to Yeyu City in Cainan Province.

In the airport arrival hall, the three encountered Deng Yuxiang and others who had come to pick them up.

"Brother Lu!"

"Class monitor Jiang." Deng Yutang and Bai Manni greeted one after another.

But it could be seen that everyone's emotions were a bit off, all pretending and concealing.

"What's wrong, Deng? Your eyes are red?" Lu Ran smiled at Deng Yutang.

"No, no." Deng Yutang hurriedly shook his head and stepped forward to take Lu Ran's suitcase.

"Mr. Deng, let me." Wen Yang, an Immortal Sheep Believer nearby, hurriedly said, taking the lead.

Lu Ran suddenly felt someone was calling him in the depths of his mind.

At the same time, he also noticed a woman on the left-front side, her beautiful eyes were upon him.

[Is the sword repaired?] Lu Ran communicated closely with the Night Charm Evil Sculpture, transmitting his message.

[Yes, it's repaired.] Deng Yuxiang nodded slightly, her action almost imperceptible.

[You've restored yourself quite well too.] Lu Ran looked at her beautiful face, bright and imposing.

"Let's go." Jiang Ruyi took Lu Ran's arm.

[Really?] Deng Yuxiang smiled slightly, turned and led the others outside.

Lu Ran nodded secretly.

Yes, that was the aura of proud confidence.

The image of the Big Nightmare as he remembered it!

Jiang Ruyi frowned slightly, noticing the subtle change in Lu Ran's expression.

Was he communicating with Deng Yuxiang?

And in such a tacit understanding.

They didn't need any words, just through eye contact, they understood each other?

Was she overthinking it?

Jiang Ruyi wasn't sure, her jade hand slowly fell, gently holding Lu Ran's hand.

Fortunately, Lu Ran responded fully, interlocking his fingers with hers.

[When we return, I'll pull Young Master Deng into our group too?]

Hearing the voice in her head, Deng Yuxiang's steps slowed, turning to look at Lu Ran.

Unexpectedly, as she turned her head, she was met with a pair of burning eyes.

Jiang Ruyi, still holding Lu Ran's hand, gazed at Deng Yuxiang from under her hat's brim, her eyes devoid of much emotion, just calmly staring at Deng Yuxiang.

Deng Yuxiang's gaze shifted, didn't respond, and turned to continue forward.

"Sister Yuxiang." Jiang Ruyi suddenly spoke up.

"Hmm?" Deng Yuxiang stopped and looked at Lady Luoxian.

Jiang Ruyi said, "Ride with me in the same car later."

The words were plain, yet carried a commanding tone.

Lu Ran was puzzled and looked at his fiancée: "Ruyi?"

"You and Yuanxi take the same car." Jiang Ruyi's voice softened a bit.

Nevertheless, the noble and powerful aura indeed manifested the dignity of Lady Luoxian.

Lu Ran: "..."

For this reception, Wen Yang and others brought three cars. Jiang Ruyi let go of Lu Ran's hand and walked towards the last car.

Deng Yuxiang followed with interest.

Lu Ran was then overwhelmed by Qiao Yuanxi, dragged to the second car.

Soon, the vehicles set off.

Lu Ran held back for a while and then asked in his head: [What did she say to you?]

[For now, she hasn't spoken.]

In the last car, Deng Yuxiang sat in the back seat, glancing at Jiang Ruyi beside her.

Since getting in the car, Jiang Ruyi hadn't spoken a word.

This silence, however, made the driving Wen Yang on edge.

Deng Yuxiang had learned in detail about Jiang Ruyi's past from her brother, knowing she once was a gentle and quiet girl.

But time changes things, Deng Yutang's information was long outdated.

The once gentle, lovable girl was now the unapproachable Lady of the Sect Master.

She paired great strength and immense influence!

Since Jiang Ruyi moved to Luoxian Mountain, the recent full moons had seen Lady Luoxian's prestige soar!

The abundant divine power permeating the Immortal Mountain attracted a lot of evil demons' invasions.

Jiang Ruyi, as the Sect Master's lady, would fight on behalf of Lu Ran.

From the mountain's military defenders to the city-keepers to the Immortal Sheep Believers in the mountain...

People's respect wasn't just for the title "Sect Master's Wife", but for her deeds and actions.

Lu Ran gave her everything, and Jiang Ruyi was striving to maintain and solidify it all.

Her dazzling radiance shone upon the long night, protecting this realm's people, and she was being upheld and pushed to a divine altar by the people.

A high and lofty divine altar.

As for her gentle side, maybe, just maybe, it was reserved for Lu Ran alone...

"You two are very in sync." Halfway through the journey, in the silent car, Jiang Ruyi's voice suddenly sounded.

"We've faced life and death together for a long time." Deng Yuxiang replied casually, looking out the car window.

Jiang Ruyi turned to look at Deng Yuxiang.

Instantly, Deng Yuxiang felt a surge of pressure, causing her to frown slightly.

However, when Deng Yuxiang turned to look back, her expression was already back to normal.

The two pairs of beautiful eyes once again locked fiercely.

Jiang Ruyi's lips moved slightly: "Use that connection to take good care of him."

Deng Yuxiang suddenly smiled: "Of course."

Jiang Ruyi, though expressionless, said blandly: "You owe him."

Deng Yuxiang's smile gradually faded and she nodded silently.

Jiang Ruyi turned to gaze out of the window, speaking no more.

In the River Realm, there's a high requirement for the mental realm; that single reminder was enough.

In the latter half of the journey, the car plunged back into silence.

Until the convoy arrived at the mountain's foot, and the vehicles just came to a halt, someone opened the car door for Jiang Ruyi.

Seeing who stood outside, Jiang Ruyi's eyes softened, no longer cold as before.

"What were you talking about?" Lu Ran helped her out of the car, unable to suppress his curiosity.

Jiang Ruyi lifted her gaze, looking at Lu Ran with a slight smile.

To be fair, this was the first time Lu Ran had seen such an expression on Jiang Ruyi's face.

Little Ruyi... something's different about her today.

Was it because of the impending separation?

Perhaps.

Jiang Ruyi took the initiative to grasp Lu Ran's hand: "Don't tell me you're worried I'm bullying her."

Lu Ran: "..."

Previously, if Lu Ran heard this, he would have snorted.

But now...

"Lady Luoxian instructed me to take good care of you." A female voice came from the side.

On the other side of the car, Deng Yuxiang leaned on the door, watching the divine couple.

Lu Ran looked towards Wen Yang, who was getting out of the driver's seat.

Wen Yang seemed very anxious, head hanging low, quickly making his way to the trunk to fetch the luggage.

"Let's go, up the mountain, don't waste time." Jiang Ruyi gently tugged Lu Ran's hand.

"Mm... Let's go."

Today, Luoxian Mountain wasn't open to any pilgrims.

On the way up, there were only a few of them, and everyone remained silent.

When they reached the top, they arrived at Luoxian Temple, and saw many Immortal Sheep disciples in white training uniforms.

The two Cheng grandfathers led the group, assisted by many Immortal Sheep disciples, respectfully saluting Lu Jiang.

The title "Mountain Master" and "Lady" rang out loud and clear like never before.

Lu Ran immediately returned the gesture.

Jiang Ruyi followed half a step behind Lu Ran, standing quietly behind him.

"Mountain Master." Cheng Yi stepped forward, holding a long and thick incense stick, handing it to Lu Ran.

"Thank you, Grandpa Cheng." Lu Ran accepted it, moving to the side to light the incense at the furnace.

Within the vast Luoxian Temple, the space was packed with people, yet a deep silence prevailed.

The crowd watched as Mountain Master Luoxian lit the incense, approached the incense burner, closed his eyes, and offered his respect.

"Immortal Sheep, disciple has returned, here to keep the appointment."

"Disciple considers himself ready to challenge another realm."

"Please, Immortal Sheep, open our sect's Divine Ruins."

Lu Ran murmured in his heart, bowing toward the Immortal Temple's main hall, then inserted the incense into the burner.

"Buzz~"

The peaceful Luoxian Mountain suddenly quivered gently.

Simultaneously, a low voice echoed in Lu Ran's mind: "Here to die?"

Lu Ran: "..."

The divine voice carried a hint of teasing: "Have you sorted your affairs?"

Lu Ran remained silent for a while, then murmured: "Those two Peace Beads are all that I have to settle."

Disciple, grateful for Immortal Sheep's protection."

"Hmm, wait at the back mountain." The voice faded away.

...

At 10:20 AM, at the eastern edge of Luoxian Village, inside the Jiang household.

Lu Ran dressed in full black combat gear, wearing black combat boots, carried four slender Tang Blades across his back.

This time, the blades were arranged in an "X" shape.

The left one and two, respectively, were Xiaguang and Eight Desolate Annihilation.

The right one and two, respectively, were Silent Night and Cloud Sea Dust Cleanse.

At his waist hung a finely crafted Phoenix Pattern gourd.

Truly, fully armed!

Jiang Ruyi and Qiao Yuanxi stood beside Lu Ran, little Yuanxi still had red eyes, repeatedly giving warnings.

Next to them, Deng Yuxiang was also clad in black combat attire and boots.

On her back was a broken blade.

The "repair" Deng Yuxiang referred to did not restore the Night-slaying Great Saber to its former 2.8-meter length.

She only repaired the cracks on the broken blade.

At this time, the Night-cutting Blade's hilt was over 20 centimeters long, and the blade was about 1.1 meters long.

Both the handle and blade were slanted with preserved fractured appearance.

Deng Yutang and Bai Manni silently accompanied their sister, saying nothing.

"Buzz!!"

Heaven and earth suddenly erupted with intense energy waves.

Several people simultaneously looked eastward.

In the dense mountains and forests, a grand palace emerged majestically from the ground!

It was composed entirely of energy, resembling ancient palaces, with each brick and tile exuding a solemn vibe.

Intense pressure swept across the land, nearly suffocating all life on the mountain!

"Gulp." Deng Yutang swallowed hard, gazing up at the imposing palace.

The palace's tightly closed doors were grand enough to warrant the word "magnificent."

So... Brother Lu and his sister are about to break down the door and storm in?

How is this any different from an ant trying to shake a tree?

Last year in Beifeng City, Lord Beifeng once descended with a Divine Ruin.

In attempts to break the Divine Ruin door, one North Wind Disciple after another perished, vomiting blood, severely wounded, unconscious...

"Let's go!" Lu Ran strode out of the courtyard.

At the village entrance, dozens of meters away, the two Cheng grandfathers clasped their hands in respect, gazing at the arriving group:

"Those not from the Immortal Sheep sect, stop here."

Cheng Yi specifically clasped his hands and bowed respectfully to Jiang Ruyi, bent slightly: "Mountain Master's Lady, please stop here."

"See you." Lu Ran's gaze swept over them, smiling and nodding, indicating goodbye.

His carefree demeanor was exceptionally dashing.

Deng Yuxiang's pace didn't stop as she brushed past Cheng Li, never turning her head from start to finish.

Deng Yutang watched his sister's departing silhouette, always so beautifully vibrant.

Yet his heart felt unbearably heavy.

"Cheer up, brother! Make sure you come back safe!" Qiao Yuanxi's eyes were red and swollen as he clenched his little fists.

Jiang Ruyi embraced little Yuanxi, holding that crying face against her chest.

She gazed into Lu Ran's eyes and gently said:

"Come back soon, I'll be waiting."

"Mm, okay."

"Hiss—"

Immortal fog billowed, and Lu Ran flew backward.