

## Summit of the Old Gods

*Chapter 46: 033 mock collectively*

Under the watchful gaze of many complex eyes, Lu Ran quickly took the stage with his team members to receive the first-place reward.

Lu Ran got a slender blade that was clearly modeled after the Tang horizontal sword.

It looked like it was made of bronze, and even like one of those buried for a long time, with a dark green patina that was mottled and aged.

"Tsk," Lu Ran pursed his lips, gripping the long sword, feeling a sense of time-worn aura washing over him.

The Mottled Green Stone Sword!

Mottled Green Stone was considered one of the better materials among the common minerals found in the Demon Cave.

Jiang Ruyi and Tian Tian each received a Mottled Green Stone Sword, and Deng Yutang also got a Mottled Green Stone Spear.

Who knows if Mr. Deng said to himself in his heart,

"Thanks to the school for these mediocre rewards!"

After the group of four had thanked the audience and left the stage, it was then time for the second and third place teams to come up for their awards.

The weapons they received were made of an even lower-grade material from the Demon Cave, the common ore known as Magic Yellow Rock.

It looked like a kind of yellow-brown rock, nothing special.

As for the weapons for the fourth to tenth place, they were even heavier!

Made of Magic Grey Rock!

Looked just like the stones you could pick up off the street...

With such a comparison, Mottled Green Stone suddenly looked quite pleasing to the eye, at least it had some semblance to "bronze ware"!

"This vacation, there will certainly be no shortage of work."

Lu Ran ran two fingers over the Mottled Green Stone Sword.

Mottled Green Stone was a kind of watershed mark!

As for the more advanced minerals from the Demon Cave, those could no longer be considered "common"!

On one side was Lu Ran, eager to take on tasks and get a precious blade.

Meanwhile, up on the God Worship Platform, after the school commended the top ten, the male teacher started assigning summer homework.

The summer homework was simple:

The school required the students to team up and collectively slay a hundred Mist Realm Evil Demons.

This homework didn't involve a leaderboard, just complete it, and you'd get six Believer points credited to your account.

Kind of like handing out a "basic guarantee," right?

"These six points are practically a gift from the school to you! If you don't want them, don't come crying to me when you can't graduate."

"You've all undergone two assessments now. You know what you're capable of and how hard it is to earn Believer points."

"Those who aren't sure, go take a look at the leaderboards! Or check the official website!"

"Take a good look at the gap between you and first place. You became Believers on the same day, and Lu Ran is already facing a retest!"

"You must complete your summer homework, otherwise, you'll only fall further behind Lu Ran!"

Lu Ran: ???

Why the hell are you dragging me into this while you're lecturing them?

Crap!

I thought my Sound of Despair was pretty impressive, but turns out, you're even better at mockery?

"That's all from me, think about it carefully." The male teacher finally changed the subject, "Next up, the fifteenth night!"

Upon hearing this special term, the students' expressions all turned solemn.

The teacher on stage was also gravely serious: "Next month's fifteenth is the very special fifteenth of the seventh lunar month!"

And you will all be on summer holiday.

I want to stress this once more: on the night of the seventh lunar month fifteenth, you are not allowed to engage in battle!"

Lu Ran played with the Mottled Green Stone Sword in his hand, his mind whirring.

The fifteenth of the seventh lunar month

was indeed the most special full moon night.

The number of Evil Demons invading the city on this night was far greater than on other fifteenth nights, and the level of danger was also much higher.

Everyone living in this world knew this.

The Divine People Bureau's retest, however, was not mandatory. Students could choose not to attend.

But...

Who could easily give up such an opportunity?

The logic of getting a head start was understood by everyone.

The better you performed among your peers, the more opportunities you would have to earn points.

Take for example this invitation from the Divine People Bureau; it was a tangible example.

And the Divine People Bureau's retests offered more than just points.

If you managed to complete the task, there would definitely be corresponding material rewards!

For decades, Da Xia had been following this incentive policy, encouraging Believer students to train and grow.

At the chairman's platform, the teacher shouted: "Don't get arrogantly complacent just because you've become Believers and participated in one defense of the city.

On the days before and after the seventh lunar month fifteenth, all of you had better stay at home praying in front of the Divine Shrine Divine Sculpture!

Or go to the shelter and seek refuge.

If there's any deviant behavior, expect to be expelled immediately. Understood?"

"Understood!"

"Understood!" The field rang with a unified response.

The teacher nodded, "Now for the next order of business, team adjustments. The teams I call out will maintain their current formation, dismiss on the spot, and enjoy your holiday!

Team 1, Team 4..."

Immediately, there was an uproar on the field.

Following Team 1, straight to Team 4?

So, Teams 2 and 3 are subject to adjustment?

Tian Tian twisted her fingers nervously, like someone awaiting judgment, her heart hanging in her throat.

Her team was number 98, so Tian Tian waited and waited, almost to the point of breaking down.

"Don't worry," Jiang Ruyi gently ruffled Tian Tian's hair.

"Hmm," Tian Tian responded softly, head bowed.

Seeing the girl still filled with distress, Jiang Ruyi couldn't help but pinch her cheeks, consoling, "We really like you."

"Thank, thank you," Tian Tian said softly.

Was this like giving an acceptance speech for an award?

"Team 98!" Finally, the verdict was out.

Acquitted!

Hearing team 98 called out by the teacher, Tian Tian was almost moved to tears.

The girl's emotional fluctuations seemed a bit too severe, hard to understand unless putting oneself in her shoes.

"All right, that's enough," Jiang Ruyi patted Tian Tian's shoulder, then turned to look at Lu Ran, almost speaking but stopping short.

"As for Brother Lu being specially recruited, I do have some different thoughts," said Deng Yutang, clearly noticing Jiang's concern.

"Hmm?" Jiang Ruyi turned to look.

After thinking for a moment, Deng Yutang said, "The Divine People Bureau deliberately drops Brother Lu into the Moon Gazer team on the next fifteenth night.

To me, this seems more like a form of protection?

We've just been through a city defense task, and at the gate where we were stationed, Gate 4, quite a few powerful Evil Demons appeared.

Doesn't it strike you as a bit odd?"

While saying this, Deng Yutang also glanced at Lu Ran, the implication being clear.

After all, Lu Ran's "glorious" achievements were clearly traceable.

On the God Worship Platform, Lu Ran had summoned an Evil God·Yan Zhi.

"Protection, huh," Jiang Ruyi's brows knitted slightly, noncommittal.

If they really wanted to protect Lu Ran, wouldn't it be safer to let him stay at home in front of the Divine Sculpture or to throw him into a shelter?

"I've decided I'm going," Lu Ran suddenly spoke up, his usually joking demeanor now serious, "I won't miss this opportunity.

So... onto the next topic!"

Then, Lu Ran deftly switched gears, "When are we heading to Evil Dog Village?"

"Hehe," Deng Yutang couldn't help but shake his head and chuckle.

That's it, that's the spirit!

A true man,

should be precisely like this!

Jiang Ruyi paused for a moment before saying, "Let's go home and get ready first. We'll go in the afternoon."

Deng Yutang continued, "You guys wait at home; I'll drive to pick you up."

Lu Ran was surprised, "Are you old enough? Do you have a license?"

Who would have guessed, Deng Yutang retorted with a simple, "Almost."

Lu Ran: ???

"Almost" again, brother?

I ask when you're leveling up, you say almost.

I ask if you have a driver's license, and you also say almost?

Lu Ran protested, "Aren't you afraid of being caught by your sister and locked up in a dark room?"

"Almost brother" seemed a bit helpless as well, "It's not me driving; we have a chauffeur."

Lu Ran: "..."

Sorry, Mr. Deng.

It seems I was a bit too loud earlier.

*Chapter 47: 034 Soul Binding Sheep*

At 1:30 p.m. in the west of Rain Alley City, beneath the crow's feet.

A business van passed through multiple checks and slowly drove into the military camp area.

"There sure are a lot of people," said Lu Ran from inside the van, noting many social trainees, including a good number of high school students like them.

Thanks to Da Xia's supportive policies, students who came to complete assignments didn't need to pay any fees.

The military would even appoint a soldier, free of charge, to act as a proctor for the teams.

From another perspective, wasn't this proctor teacher also a bodyguard?

"Is that Gao Zhonglin?" Deng Yutang suddenly spoke from the passenger seat.

Lu Ran turned to look and saw a slightly chubby teenager with glasses.

Tian Tian, who was usually silent, spoke up for a rare occasion in a low voice, "That's him, the impressive one."

The rise of Gao Zhonglin mirrored that of Lu Ran's in some ways and could be described in one sentence—popping out of nowhere!

In his first assessment, Gao Zhonglin seized the third place on the individual leaderboard.

In the second assessment, he shot straight up to the whole school's second place!

Keep in mind, in the two years before worshipping God, Gao Zhonglin had never made it into the top fifty of the school.

But after worshipping God...

Everyone like Ma Tianchuan, Jiang Ruyi, and Wu Shanshan, step back please!

Three words: the wolf is here!

Although... well, this little wolf cub was a bit chubby.

But that kind of fits with the word "greedy," right?

"Could he be better than my Brother Lu?" Deng Yutang spoke casually.

Lu Ran nodded in agreement: "Definitely not."

From the back seat, Jiang Ruyi extended her slender finger and lightly poked Lu Ran's head, "Be more humble."

Lu Ran was indifferent, "Just being realistic!"

He, a Greedy Wolf believer, had let those high-and-mighty top students take a step back.

As for me, an Immortal Sheep Believer, I let the Greedy Wolf believers step back!

What's the rebellion against the Heavenly Gang about?

"You can head back now; we'll be here for a long time," said Deng Yutang to the driver. "I'll call you when we come out."

"Okay."

As the vehicle stopped, everyone got out quickly, took their weapons from the trunk, and rushed to the central building to register in line.

Besides weapons, Lu Ran had also brought a red band, which he tied around his arm.

He was ready to try out the "Sound Positioning" taught by Big Nightmare.

In fact, Lu Ran also wanted to bring a backpack with some food and water.

But these items were not allowed into the Demon Cave.

Within each Stone City and at the supply points in the wilderness, both water and food were provided—they just needed to be exchanged with Demon Crystals.

In a word:

Training, free.

Eating, drinking, sleeping, pay up!

Of course, if you dare to camp out in the wilderness, eating dog meat and drinking dog blood to survive the day, the military won't stop you...

Save it,

Just use your life to save, right?

"Instructor Dou!"

"What a coincidence, Dou is our proctor again?"

After queuing for some time and nearing the building entrance, they saw an old acquaintance walking briskly towards them and immediately greeted him.



Dou Zhiqiang, however, said, "I am specifically in charge of Team 98."

Everyone: "..."

Dou Zhiqiang scanned them, "How long do you plan to stay in Evil Dog Village this time?"

After exchanging looks, it was Jiang Ruyi who stepped forward, "Instructor Dou, it might be for quite a while.

We need to update our weapons and Divine Power Pearls, slay a lot of Evil Demons."

Dou Zhiqiang nodded, "How did your squad do in the city defense task of the 'Fifteenth'?"

Jiang Ruyi: "First place."

An uncommon hint of appreciation appeared on Dou Zhiqiang's face as he turned to Lu Ran, "And individually?"

Lu Ran smiled embarrassingly, "I fell back a bit, didn't score that high this time."

"Huh," Dou Zhiqiang snorted, "Did you still expect to score 98?"

"You've got to have a dream," sighed Lu Ran. "This time I only scored 91.2, a setback."

The stern instructor paused, clearly taken aback.

He confirmed, "The Fifteenth city defense, 91 points?"

Lu Ran shook his head, "Not 91 points, 91.2 points."

In the span of two sentences, you docked me 0.2 points. Can I bear this?

Dou Zhiqiang: "..."

Timely, Jiang Ruyi spoke up, "Instructor Dou, Lu Ran performed very well.

During the Fifteenth night, he was still first.

Including Yunshan City and the five county-level cities it administers, he ranked first overall."

At that, Dou Zhiqiang's expression was quite animated.

Interestingly,

When the group was in the car, Jiang Ruyi had urged Lu Ran to be more humble.

Yet, when facing outsiders' skepticism...

Not only did Jiang Ruyi speak up to protect him, but she even seemed a bit prouder than Lu Ran himself?

After several seconds, Dou Zhiqiang turned and walked away, "Follow me!"

Not wanting to delay, everyone immediately followed the instructor.

Lu Ran sneaked a look at Jiang Ruyi and murmured, "You be more humble."

Jiang Ruyi: "..."

Different from the last assessment,

This time, after Dou Zhiqiang led the group into the Demon Cave, he went straight to the South City Gate.

Then he transformed into a crow once again, leaving the stage to the young people.

"South gate," Lu Ran clenched the Dawn Blade, looking down the fire-lit path.

Jiang Ruyi commented, "There seem to be fewer trainees this side?"

"Doesn't that suit us just fine?" Deng Yutang weighed the spear in his hand, full of eagerness.

Now, having been through a night of the Fifteenth, confidence was high among them all.

Even Tian Tian wasn't too worried.

"Rumble..." Suddenly, they heard the hunting sound of a canine from the right front.

Deng Yutang reacted swiftly, stepping forward with the Heavenly Star Spear in hand.

It seemed evident that not many Human Clan trainees were in this direction.

They were still near the city gate, and already an Evil Demon was attacking.

"The Mist Realm, roughly Second or Third Rank?" Deng Yutang called out sternly.

From behind, Lu Ran's voice came, "Let Jiang try the New Divine Skill, we'll see its power."

"Fine," Deng Yutang halted his steps, still standing at the forefront of the group.

Jiang Ruyi had no objections, and the fingers of her naturally drooping hand made light motions as if sketching something in the air.

"Woof!" The Evil Dog rushed forward quickly.

Jiang Ruyi's Divine Technique was ready, coiled for action but she didn't strike immediately.

Having plenty of experience slaughtering Evil Dogs, they knew that to kill with one blow, they needed to look for an opening rather than blindly attacking.

Deng Yutang's body tensed, with knees slightly bent, gripping the Heavenly Star Spear.

"Woof!!"

As the Evil Dog closed in, estimating the distance to be sufficient, it leaped forward.

Those dagger-like teeth aimed straight for Deng Yutang.

"Yutang, back off!" Jiang Ruyi flicked two fingers forward.

Deng Yutang leaped backward decisively, and at the same moment, a thin serpent of fire brushed past him.

The flame rune flew forward, revealing an ethereal white jade board mid-flight, carrying the fire serpent directly towards the Evil Dog.

Divine Technique·Blazing Talisman!

"Woof!!"

The Evil Dog's eyes widened as it frantically twisted in midair, with nowhere to apply force.

Think you can jump, tiny dog?

You dare to jump, I dare to finish you!

"Boom!"

As the Evil Dog twisted in its struggle, the Blazing Talisman didn't hit the head but struck solidly on the body.

In an instant,

The fire burst, and the shock wave surged!

Pieces of flesh scattered everywhere, and blood rained down.

"Woo~ Woo~~~"

The Evil Dog was blasted flying back, its miserable cries echoing across the wilderness.

"Die!" Deng Yutang stomped the ground and leaped forward.

Finishing the job was his specialty!

Even though... it wasn't Deng Yutang's goal.

Considering the current power dynamic of the team, he had to regard Jiang and Lu as the absolute core.

Only after Deng Yutang had ended the Evil Dog's life did Jiang Ruyi turn to Lu Ran with raised eyebrows:

"Satisfied?"

"Mm-hm!" Lu Ran nodded eagerly, full of admiration.

Worthy of the noble spell-caster!

Just at Mist Realm·Third Rank, and already such offensive power.

Considering the Jade Talisman Sect believers are called "late-game" players, one can only imagine how formidable the beautiful Jiang will be in the future!

Lu Ran took the chance to say, "For the four of us to update our equipment, we have to slaughter a thousand Mist Realm·Evil Dogs.

And that's just to upgrade to the Stream Divine Skill·Divine Power Pearls.

We also have school award weapons, which means another thousand Mist Realm Evil Dogs, such a number...

Who knows how long we will have to kill them."

Jiang Ruyi pondered, "You want to challenge the Stream Realm·Evil Dogs?"

The ratio between Stream Realm Demon Crystals and Mist Realm Demon Crystals was 1:10.

Two thousand Mist Realm Evil Dogs could be converted to two hundred Stream Realm Evil Dogs.

Lu Ran nodded, "Stream Realm·Evil Dogs have no defense skills and are made of flesh and blood that blades can slice and talismans can blast apart."

After a moment of contemplation, Jiang Ruyi still chose to play it safe: "No rush, let's slaughter Evil Demons nearby first."

When Yutang and Tian Tian both advance to Mist Realm·Third Rank, we'll move on to the next Stone City."

Hearing the decision of their goddess, Jiang, Tian Tian instantly agreed, "I'm close to advancing too, and I've memorized the Divine Technique that matches the next phase."

After advancing, I can summon lotus skeletons from the ground to imprison Evil Demons."

Having witnessed the "Earth Grows Lotus" technique themselves during the night of the Fifteenth, when team leader Zhang Feng used it to trap Evil Demons, they knew it would add wings to their team!

Facing the assault of two Evil Dogs, Tian Tian could force one to log off!

"I'm almost there too!" Deng Yutang answered without being asked, adding, "Trust me, I'm even more eager than you."

Indeed, this was the case!

Because at Mist Realm·Third Rank, Believers of Red Cloth could learn a powerful Divine Technique—Red Cloth Soul!

With this skill, Deng Yutang could break free from his awkward situation.

To put it mildly, Divine Technique·Red Cloth Soul was the confidence Deng Yutang needed to overcome his weaker position.

To put it grandiosely...

Red Cloth Soul,

Was the capital for the Red Cloth believers to challenge authority!

With this skill, Red Cloth believers could activate berserk mode, temporarily boosting all their physical attributes significantly!

The amplification values were particularly notable!

This was also why Jiang Ruyi insisted on waiting for Deng Yutang to advance before facing the Stream Realm Evil Dogs.

Who in the world doesn't know of the might of "Red Cloth Soul" among the believers?

"Okay, okay, we believe you," Lu Ran said with a laugh, "then we'll just advance—"

Before he could finish, Lu Ran stiffened.

He vaguely felt as if some invisible entity had quietly melded into his body.

"Lu Ran?" With her keen intuition, Jiang Ruyi noticed something off with Lu Ran, "What's wrong?"

Lu Ran's gaze was slightly vacant as he envisioned a bizarre scene in his mind.

It was a land shrouded in mist, where Evil Demon Sculptures stood tall amidst layers of fog.

The soul of the recently slaughtered Evil Dog drifted into the "Evil Demon Sculpture Garden" and was absorbed into a gigantic Evil Dog Statue.

Ah, Lord Immortal Goat!

Since our last meeting, you're not holding back, huh?

Easy now,

I'm off to bind souls!

*Chapter 48: 035 Four stages!*

Half a month later, deep within the wilderness.

On a path lit by a stretch of torches that continued into the deep night, Jiang Tian Deng, a three-person team, all wore solemn expressions as they faced a rather large Evil Dog.

Its body length exceeded two meters, clearly identifying it as an Evil Dog of the Stream Realm.

They were supposed to be a four-person squad, so where had the other member gone?

At that moment, Lu Ran, with a Dawn Blade in hand, was weaving through the darkness of the vast wilderness, drawing the attention of two smaller Evil Dogs.

A series of "Woof Woof Woof" sounds were enough to fray anyone's nerves.

There were moments when Lu Ran felt the temptation to turn around and attack, but reason opted for restraint.

The two Evil Dogs he was luring away were between the Mist Realm Third and Fourth Rank; Lu Ran couldn't afford to fight back and had to be constantly wary of their Evil Technique·Evil Tooth!

"This is truly annoying!"

Lu Ran muttered under his breath while adjusting the red cloth that covered his eyes.

With regards to the skill "Sound Positioning", Lu Ran, after half a month of training, had barely touched the surface of mastery.

But under the current dangerous circumstances, he chose to use his eyes for observation, aiding him in battle.

"Brother Lu! Here it comes!" Deng Yutang's roar came from afar.

"Tss!"

The Immortal Fog wafted around Lu Ran's feet, and he suddenly soared forward, swiftly widening the distance from the Evil Dogs behind him.

What was more terrifying was that in the very moment Lu Ran took off, four razor-sharp fangs emerged from nowhere and viciously snapped at empty air.

You have to admit,

Divine Technique·Immortal Hoof, was just too damn perfect for field battles!

Lu Ran continued to lead them on a wild goose chase while turning his head to glance at the torch-lit path and spotted the leaping figure of the Stream Realm·Evil Dog.

"Meh~"

The sheep's bleating was faint and light, not easily noticed, yet the acutely sensitive Evil Dog Clan heard it clear as day!

The Evil Dog of the Stream Realm instinctively looked back, only to see a ghostly figure crossing the torchlit path.

The ghostly figure burst out from the darkness of the wilderness on one side and vanished into the darkness on the other, its form disappearing without a trace.

Only a faint mist lingered, drifting above the torchlit path.

Such a spectacle was somewhat eerie, yet thrilling.

It was hard to tell who the real Evil Demon was...

"Monster!" Deng Yutang seized the opportunity and lunged forward, thrusting his spear under the belly of the Evil Dog, and with a fierce upwards jerk!

Whoo!!

A human afterimage spread from Deng Yutang's body, several times larger than his physical form.

Just like the goddamn True Martial Soul!

The afterimage was blurry and its face could not be seen, but the red cloth wrapped around its head was vividly clear.

Divine Technique·Red Cloth Soul!

The Evil Dog of the Stream Realm was already huge and fast, and its momentum was absolutely formidable.

Your average Mist Realm Believer would meet one fate—knocked to the ground and torn to shreds.

However, Red Cloth Believer·Deng Yutang called upon his ancestors, and his bodily attributes surged instantly!

"Rise!!"

Deng Yutang bellowed with rage, lifting the Stream Realm Evil Dog into the air with his spear, mercilessly hoisting it skyward.

From behind the team, Jiang Ruyi's beautiful eyes sharpened, sparks flew from her fingertips, and a Bursting Flame Talisman was flung into the night sky.

"Boom!"

Flashes of fire erupted, flames roared!

The Evil Dog's howls of agony echoed to the heavens.

Jiang Ruyi didn't hold back; her fingertips quivered as she swiftly drew the next Bursting Flame Talisman.



Such a tactic was the optimal solution derived from repeated live combat drills.

Deng Yutang had considered seizing the moment while the Evil Dog was distracted to stab it to death.

But such a move had a low margin for error.

For Deng Yutang had to ensure a killing blow without the slightest mistake!

Otherwise, the Evil Dog, charging with tremendous force, would likely pierce through the spear and effectively launch itself onto Deng Yutang.

If at this moment the Evil Dog didn't die instantly but struggled in its death throes, thrashing about wildly...

The consequences would be unthinkable!

"Boom!"

Just as the Stream Realm·Evil Dog reached its peak height, another Bursting Flame Talisman was already upon it.

Jiang Ruyi's body surged with Divine Power, her gaze never leaving the Evil Dog, but she said, "Watch Lu Ran."

Tian Tian had been standing in front of Jiang Ruyi, shield at the ready; she was the last line of defense for their three-person squad.

If the tactic failed, Tian Tian would have to take the lead.

Now that the Stream Realm·Evil Dog was a sitting duck, Tian Tian promptly knelt down to rescue their squad's little lamb.

"Whoosh!"

Divine Power billowed, and Tian Tian's short, ear-length hair fluttered.

Divine Technique·Lotus Bud!

Twenty meters ahead, a lotus flower silently bloomed.

"Lu Ran." Tian Tian struggled to call out, though her voice was still soft.

"Brother Lu!" Deng Yutang raised his pitch, reverberating through the desolate wilderness.

"On my way!"

A voice approached from afar, and within the dark expanse of the wilderness, a ghostly figure finally appeared.

Lu Ran aimed straight for the blooming lotus on the torchlit path, heading directly for it.

Clearly, the squad had rehearsed this tactic countless times before.

"Woof!"

"Woof!" The two Evil Dogs pursued relentlessly, barking furiously behind him.

Speed was the strength of the Evil Dog Clan.

And now, this damned human seemed to mock them with his every second of life!

Lu Ran's mere existence was an affront to the Evil Dogs...is that all?

"Woof!"

The trailing Evil Dog's eyes suddenly lit up, noticing the fleeing figure in front suddenly turn around?

Indeed, as Lu Ran neared the illusory lotus, he abruptly turned and slid backwards.

With his legs coiled and body leaning forward, he even stabbed his blade into the ground, sliding backwards through the phantom lotus.

The impatient Evil Dog launched itself forward.

The landing spot was self-evident!

The illusory lotus flower was like a rat trap, and Lu Ran was the tempting piece of cheese.

"Woof!"

The Evil Dog that was further behind saw its partner leap forward and opened its mouth wide for another Evil Technique.

Evil Technique·Evil Tooth!

Four fangs appeared out of thin air, snapping viciously in front of Lu Ran.

But before the fangs fully materialized, Lu Ran had already detected the Energy Fluctuation.

"Ping!"

Lu Ran's feet shattered the ground as he leapt violently to the side.

The illusory lotus snapped shut, ensnaring the self-trapped Evil Dog, and in the moment of closing its petals, becoming a Lotus Bone, solidified into a reality.

"Thud, thud, thud," came several dull thumps.

The Evil Dog that had landed precisely within the Lotus Bone was trapped firmly.

The trailing Evil Dog collided with the now-solid Lotus Bone.

The two Evil Dogs, intent on cooperative hunting, were thus separated.

Only a petal's width apart, yet they could no longer aid one another.

At the same time, Deng Yutang had already rushed up.

"Die!"

Deng Yutang moved with incredible speed, like a lightning bolt!

For the old ancestor spirit had yet to leave his body!

The so-called surge in all attributes, of course, included speed.

Hearing this, Lu Ran immediately responded with a low sheep's bleat:

"Meh~"

In an instant, the Evil Dog was distracted, and the Heavenly Star Spear was already upon it!

Could Deng Yutang, who could take the full-on charge of a Stream Realm·Evil Dog, not handle a mere Mist Realm·Evil Dog?

A few quick thrusts, and the dog was slain!

"Tian Tian!" Lu Ran shouted sharply, mist billowing beneath his feet as he rushed towards the Lotus Bone.

Tian Tian didn't dare to be distracted, keeping her gaze firmly on Lu Ran's figure.

Just as the figure was about to collide with the Lotus Bone, Tian Tian quickly retracted her hand.

The Lotus Bone, deprived of its master's Divine Power supplement, instantly dissipated into an illusionary mist.

"You little runt, I've tolerated you for a long time!"

Lu Ran, wielding his Dawn Blade, dashed through the phantom lotus.

"Tss!"

A black dog's head soared into the air, blood spurting profusely.

And Lu Ran charged into the dark wilderness beyond, vanishing without a trace once more.

"Well done." Jiang Ruyi leaned over and patted Tian Tian's head gently.

"Mm." Tian Tian, kneeling on one knee, tilted her face up and revealed a sweet smile.

Not far behind the two women was a barely recognizable canine corpse.

The Stream Realm·Evil Dog, blasted to pieces, had long since ceased to live.

"Flap, flap, flap~"

High above, a crow circled, taking in the entire scene.

Even Dou Zhiqiang, with his broad knowledge, couldn't help but inwardly exclaim in awe.

Fantastic!

A four-person squad with an average strength of Mist Realm Third Rank had slaughtered one Stream Realm Evil Dog and two Mist Realm Evil Dogs without injury.

The team demonstrated the unique features of their respective schools, coordinated flawlessly, and their attacks flowed seamlessly.

Their offensive was as smooth as mercury pouring down the earth, executed in one breath!

This footage should be recorded and sent to the school for use as a tutorial for beginners!

Such practiced coordination was no fluke.

Dou Zhiqiang, as a proctor instructor, had witnessed their growth over the past 15 days.

There was no grading of summer homework, just a matter of completion.

Otherwise, he really should give these students... Hmm?

The black crow beat its wings, its pupils piercing through the vast night, locking onto a certain spot in the dark wilderness.

Within its sight, the blade-wielding young man's body trembled slightly, enshrouded in a veil of mist.

"Hmm~"

Lu Ran's eyes were tightly closed, emitting a sound akin to enjoyment.

Divine Power kept tumbling within him, and the Divine Power Pearl around his neck also released mists, aiding him in stepping into a higher realm.

Mist Realm·Fourth Rank!

At the same time, in Lu Ran's spiritual world, within the mist-shrouded Evil Demon Sculpture Garden.

The colossal sculpture dedicated to the Evil Dog Clan, whose eyes had been dull and lightless, now subtly began to shine with a ghostly glimmer...

*Chapter 49: 036 Butcher Dog Vanguard*

"Lu Ran?"

Jiang Ruyi lacked the ability to see in the dark and could only call out in the direction where Lu Ran had vanished.

It was no wonder she was so nervous; the scene where Lu Ran was carried off by the Yan Zhi on the rainy night of the fifteenth was still vivid in her memory.

However, the pitch-black wilderness remained dead silent, with no reply whatsoever.

"Brother Lu?" Deng Yutang also realized something was wrong and immediately shouted out loud.

"I'm... I'm here."

Finally, Lu Ran's response came from afar.

Jiang Ruyi immediately gave the order, "Yutang, go back him up."

"Got it." Deng Yutang, following the sound, charged over with his gun in hand.

Jiang Ruyi also started moving, her fingertips lightly outlining something.

"Whoa?" Suddenly, an excited voice from Deng Yutang came out of the darkness.

Jiang Ruyi asked, "What happened?"

Deng Yutang exclaimed, "Brother Lu is advancing to Fog Realm·Fourth Rank!"

"Oh?" Jiang Ruyi was both shocked and delighted. Was Lu Ran about to advance to the Fog Realm·Fourth Rank?

Such a terrifying speed of advancement was truly befitting someone with an extraordinary talent!

"Is Sister Ruyi advancing too?" Tian Tian, unable to hide the admiration in her eyes, looked up at Jiang Ruyi with her grimy little face, "Are you going to advance as well?"

Jiang Ruyi sensed for a moment and replied, "I need a few more days."

"Hmm, Sister Ruyi, you should use the Divine Power Pearl to absorb the canine corpses and consume more Divine Power," Tian Tian whispered.

"Hehe." Jiang Ruyi chuckled and gently tapped on Tian Tian's head with her finger.

Are you taking care of me now?

This trip to Evil Dog Village saw everyone focused on their cultivation, not slacking off at all, and in fact, they were even advancing faster than usual.

After all, the energy inside the Demon Cave was relatively abundant.

While the group was reluctant to absorb Demon Crystals, the Divine Power Pearls could completely drain the canine corpses, turning them into nutrients for their growth.

"Squad leader." A voice called out.

The two women looked over and saw Deng Yutang supporting a shivering Lu Ran, walking back towards the path lit by torches.

"You two deal with the Evil Dog corpses," Jiang Ruyi said softly. "I'll watch over him."

"Okay."

"Alright." Deng Yutang helped Lu Ran sit down, then immediately went to collect the bodies.

As the beliefs of the believers continued to enhance, each breakthrough took longer and longer.

Jiang Ruyi walked forward slowly, quietly standing beside Lu Ran and watched the two teammates at work.

Suddenly, Lu Ran's body tilted slightly, and his shoulder came to rest gently on the beautiful Jiang Ruyi's leg.

Jiang Ruyi's expression froze for a moment, then she looked down at him.

But she saw Lu Ran still had his eyes closed, seemingly concentrating on advancing?

"You rascal."

Jiang Ruyi hesitated, but after a brief moment of indecision, she still didn't kick him away.

After all... well, after all, Lu Ran was advancing.

It was better not to disturb him.

Jiang Ruyi thought to herself, not knowing why a faint blush quietly bloomed on her pretty face illuminated by the firelight.

Lu Ran was completely relaxed!

The sensation of advancing was intoxicating, and now he had the beautiful Jiang Ruyi's long legs for a chair back?

Being a believer was indeed a good life!

In my next life, I will still be—

"Flap flap flap~"

A black crow slowly flew down and landed in front of them.

Seeing Instructor Dou arrive, Jiang Ruyi looked somewhat awkward, turning her head to the side.

"Just reminding you, today is the 5th day of the seventh lunar month," the black crow spoke with human language. "You are located outside the southern No. 2 Stone City.

I suggest you make your way back now and leave the Demon Cave before the 10th day of the lunar calendar."

Jiang Ruyi replied, "Understood, Instructor. Let's let Lu Ran concentrate on his advancement, and we can discuss this shortly."

Dou Zhiqiang said, "..."

Fine, I said too much.

Suddenly, a strange noise rose nearby as if something heavy was being dragged.

Jiang Ruyi turned her head and the sight before her brought a mix of laughter and tears.

Tian Tian, the girl who was always so gentle, even timid, was now dragging the body of an Evil Dog?

Her dirty little hands held the dog's tail, and with each step forward, a long bloody trail was marked on the ground.

The scene was both bloody and horrifying!

"Just use your Divine Power Pearl to absorb it," Jiang Ruyi said.

Tian Tian stopped in her tracks, opened her mouth but seemed too frightened to object, which made her silent.

Jiang Ruyi gently said, "Listen to me."

"Okay." Only then did Tian Tian let go of the dog's tail and crouched down next to the corpse.

Tough training indeed led to growth.

At first, even Lu Ran couldn't help but feel nauseous when facing the corpses of Evil Dogs.

Now, the weakest member of the team dared to face the bloody corpses of Evil Demons without flinching.

Jiang Ruyi watched over Tian Tian's petite figure, a touch of tenderness flashing in her eyes.



She always believed that with enough respect and encouragement, the girl could certainly develop confidence.

She could become a well-rounded Sword Lotus believer and a loyal and powerful teammate.

In this team, Lu Ran might be the strongest one.

But Tian Tian had made the most progress, having overcome far more than anyone else.

"Instructor Dou." Deng Yutang, holding two blood-stained Demon Crystals, returned with large strides and noticed the black crow on the ground.

This training session saw Deng Yutang's reemergence.

The Divine Technique-Red Cloth Soul reinvented him from his past gloom and made him the buoyant wealthy young master once again.

The Red Cloth Ancestor was exceptional!

The only flaw of this Divine Technique was that it consumed too much Divine Power and physical strength.

Even someone as vigorous as Deng Yutang couldn't always invoke the Ancestor, or else he might end up weak as a shrimp...

The black crow didn't respond, and Deng Yutang didn't continue further. He faced north and stayed alert.

After about seven or eight minutes, the energy fluctuations around Lu Ran grew more intense.

He let out an extremely satisfied noise through his nose:

"Mmm~"

Jiang Ruyi was still too shy and moved to the side.

The Instructor was still watching!

Withstanding not moving away was already being considerate enough for Lu Ran, but now...

What was that noise?

"Hey?" Lu Ran propped himself up on his hands, peering through the mist at the beautiful Jiang Ruyi.

My backrest... how did it grow legs and run away?

"Congratulations," Jiang Ruyi said without looking at Lu Ran but instinctively accepted the Demon Crystal Tian Tian handed her.

"Congratulations, Brother Lu!" Deng Yutang smiled and came over to pull Lu Ran to his feet.

"Luck, just luck~"

Lu Ran, who was just pulled up, squatted back down, looking at the black crow: "Instructor Dou, did you say we should return now?"

The black crow replied, "After the 10th, the Demon Cave will be sealed, and you won't be able to leave."

"Understood." Lu Ran turned to look at Jiang Ruyi. "We're almost done with our task, right?"

Jiang Ruyi reported, "Including this loot, we now have 133 Stream Realm Demon Crystals and 326 Fog Realm Demon Crystals."

I had no idea until you told me—our small team had already dealt with so many detailed dogs...

days ago, Tian Tian and Deng Yutang completed their advancements one after another. Since then, the team had been heading straight to southern No. 2 Stone City, focusing solely on battling the Stream Realm·Evil Dogs.

The process of obtaining these 133 Stream Realm Demon Crystals was not a mean average daily gain, but rather an increasing stepwise achievement.

As time went on, the team's slaying of the Stream Realm·Evil Dogs became significantly more effortless, and their harvest increased!

With so many Demon Crystals, the team certainly wouldn't carry them around. Every time they rested in No. 2 Stone City, they handed over their gains.

"Let me calculate," Lu Ran said, fiddling with his fingers. "This should be enough to exchange for a River Grade·Divine Power Pearl. If we want to upgrade the weapons, we're still short..."

Jiang Ruyi interjected, "34 Stream Realm Demon Crystals, 4 Fog Realm Demon Crystals."

The school's summer homework didn't need to be counted; it could be included in the equipment upgrading task.

"Only a top student, huh!" Lu Ran smacked his forehead. "We've been killing night and day for over half a month, and you still remember addition and subtraction."

Jiang Ruyi replied, "..."

The black crow took flight, and from afar came a phrase, "Don't forget to deduct the costs for food and lodging of these days."

Lu Ran looked at the top student and joked, "I told you, anyone who kills night and day for half a month would get their brain muddled."

But Jiang Ruyi just watched the black crow fly into the distance, until the Instructor disappeared into the dark, before she quietly said, "It's already been deducted.

Food and lodging for two people per room, 5 Fog Realm Demon Crystals per day."

Upon hearing this, Lu Ran didn't even have time to feel embarrassed because the pain in his heart was too sharp!

Even though the food and lodging fees were at student rates, the four of them could actually share one stone room.

Unfortunately, with boys and girls needing separate accommodations for sleeping and bathing, they had to reluctantly pay the price.

Speaking of which, just the "bathing" itself was worth five Fog Realm Demon Crystals.

Otherwise, the smell of blood on everyone's body might scare even themselves...

"We have 5 days left." Deng Yutang confidently said, "Slaughtering thirty-four or thirty-five Stream Realm Evil Dogs, we can certainly do it if we try hard!"

"Hmm." Jiang Ruyi's hand touched her neck, her fingertips gently twirling the Divine Power Pearl.

Once exchanged for a River Grade·Divine Power Pearl, there'd be no need to worry about the shortage of Divine Power for a long time to come.

And weapons...

Jiang Ruyi looked down at the greenish stone sword in her hand.

Even though she often cast spells from afar and rarely engaged in close combat, the battlefield fluctuated constantly, and close quarters combat was inevitable.

The greenish stone could be upgraded to two relatively rare and uncommon materials from the Demon Cave.

One was the Rainbow Stone, and the other was the Colorful Silk Stone.

Which one should I choose?

*Chapter 50: 037 The First Evil Technique!*

July 10th, lunar calendar.

Before the central building of the military camp beneath the feet of Divine-Witch Crow, a group of men and women with grimy faces and tattered clothes, appearing like refugees, were driven out.

"Whew~" Lu Ran, blending in among them, took a deep breath, gazing up at the clear sky and blazing sun with a world of emotions in his heart.

There was no such thing as daylight within the Demon Cave-Evil Dog Village; the longer one stayed, the more they craved the light.

The weather gods were kind, for Rain Alley City, usually drenched in endless rain, was today clear and cloudless.

Beside him, Jiang Ruyi slowly closed her beautiful eyes and slightly tilted her face, basking in the sunlight.

A full 21 days of slaughter had finally come to an end here.

"It feels like a lot of wasted effort, doesn't it?" Lu Ran suddenly said.

"Hm?" Jiang Ruyi didn't open her eyes, still luxuriating in the warm sunshine.

Lu Ran continued, "Twenty-one days of killing, and not a single Demon Crystal left to show for it, empty-handed."

"I... I have one here." Tian Tian pulled out a Mist Realm Demon Crystal from his pocket and handed it to Lu Ran. "I've got one."

Lu Ran burst into laughter, "You keep it, as a memento."

"Mm-hmm." Tian Tian felt a surge of joy, carefully tucking away the Demon Crystal.

A mere Mist Realm Demon Crystal wasn't very valuable.

But the time it represented was precious to Tian Tian.

"How could it have been wasted effort?" Jiang Ruyi slowly spoke, "We all advanced in rank, and the mission was successfully completed."

An equipment upgrade wasn't the most important thing.

The key was the improvement in each person's combat strength, the tactical execution of the team, the unspoken understanding in their coordination—all of which could indeed be described as "transforming."

"Jiang?" A voice called from behind.

Jiang Ruyi turned to look, only to see a shabbily-dressed and bedraggled figure.

Third-class Divinity·Greedy Wolf believers·Gao Zhonglin?

Gao Zhonglin pushed up his rimless glasses, the cleanest part of him, "You've been staying in Evil Dog Village for quite some time."

They weren't close, so Jiang Ruyi merely nodded politely.

Seeing that the goddess Jiang wasn't interested in speaking, Gao Zhonglin turned to look at Lu Ran, stretching out his hand with a smile:

"Brother Ran, I've long admired you!"

It was interesting; since the assessment results were published, Lu Ran had also come to be called "Brother Ran."

Out in the world,

one's face is indeed earned.

"Don't, don't, don't." Lu Ran shook hands with him, shaking his head modestly with many refusals.

Gao Zhonglin laughed and said, "When will Brother Ran let me taste victory, just once?"

"Emperors take turns, next year to your house!" Lu Ran's eyes were full of encouragement.

"Haha!" Gao Zhonglin laughed heartily, "Next year? By next year, we'll all have graduated!"

"Oops." Lu Ran looked at Jiang Ruyi next to him, "I let him hear that."

Jiang Ruyi smiled and gave Lu Ran a white look.

Several people eavesdropping nearby were also rather speechless.

They really thought Lu Ran was encouraging Gao Zhonglin or at least being polite.

But after their conversation, everyone finally caught on to what Lu Ran meant.

"A true talent!" Lu Ran put on a look of camaraderie.

"Hardly." Gao Zhonglin smiled and let go of his hand, "Have you completed your equipment upgrade task?"

"We did," replied Lu Ran with a nod.

"It's finished?" Gao Zhonglin was very surprised, his eyes sweeping between Lu Ran and Jiang Ruyi's faces.

Lu Ran was all chuckles, perhaps not telling the whole truth, but Jiang Ruyi also nodded, which genuinely shocked Gao Zhonglin.

Gao Zhonglin licked his dry lips, his eyes flickering slightly: "You two have been first in both assessments, unlike us.

You had to kill at least two thousand Mist Realm Evil Dogs to complete the mission, right?"

His words dropped, and even the people around cast covert glances.

Trainees naturally understood that these student believers were novices among novices.

But hearing of such a record, they couldn't help but marvel in silence.

Two thousand Evil Dogs?

Two thousand??

Are these students or butchers?!

"We took a shortcut," Lu Ran eyed Gao Zhonglin.

Those little expressions, those little glances...

Little wolf cub,

finally showing your tail, huh?

Truly, it's no wonder others look at a "Immortal Sheep Believer" like Lu Ran with a tinge of skepticism.

A Human Clan believer could increasingly resemble their own divine being!

After all, young people at the age of seventeen or eighteen are in the critical period of character formation and personality development. If a divine being were to strongly intervene at this stage, it would naturally shape all aspects of the believer's growth.

Not to mention, divine beings do prefer recruiting believers who share similar temperaments.

"Teach me, Brother Ran!"

Gao Zhonglin, eager, grabbed Lu Ran's hand firmly.

Lu Ran, with a generous bearing, didn't guard his secrets: "We went to kill Stream Realm Evil Dogs."

Gao Zhonglin: ???

Expectation on his face turned bizarre, "Is that what you call taking a shortcut?"

"Yes!" Lu Ran confirmed, "Two thousand Mist Realm Evil Dogs just turn into two hundred Stream Realm Evil Dogs, right?"

Gao Zhonglin almost choked!

He huffed, saying, "By your logic, then if you go kill River Realm Evil Dogs, just 20 would suffice!"

"Brother, you're a genius, no wonder you're a master!" Lu Ran's eyes shone as he nodded vigorously, "Next time I'll give it a try!"

Gao Zhonglin was completely dumbstruck!

Is this... is this even human speech?

"Boss, all the information has been registered. Instructor Doug says that after the start of the semester, we can go to the school to exchange for new equipment." Deng Yutang walked over, "The car has also been arranged, it'll be here soon."

While speaking, Deng Yutang also curiously watched Lu and Gao shake hands.

To those in the know, this scene was quite peculiar.

After all, they were ranked first and second respectively.

And one was a sheep, the other a wolf.

"Thanks for the advice, Brother Ran, I'm off to report for my mission!" Gao Zhonglin released his hand, nodding to Deng and Tian as a farewell, then walked away.

That B daylight, not worth talking anyway!

He'd hoped to trap some intelligence, to discuss some secret techniques of killing dogs, ask about the tactics of Team 98.

He hadn't expected,

to be played by the other party!

It's truly vexing~

"Damn." Lu Ran watched Gao Zhonglin's departing back, murmuring softly, "I put on another act~"

A palm suddenly landed on Lu Ran's back.

Lu Ran turned to look, only to see Jiang Ruyi also watching Gao Zhonglin leave, softly saying:

"He's aggressive, and as a Greedy Wolf believer, he'll likely become more ferocious."

"Definitely." Lu Ran nodded without hesitation.

Whether from the team's perspective or a personal standpoint, they were each other's most direct rivals!

Currently, Lu Ran was indeed one step ahead, but he couldn't afford to slack off in the slightest.

The cold reality was this: ranking meant resources, and resources meant the possibility for development.



"You're going to have another exam soon, be careful on the night of the 15th." Jiang Ruyi spoke softly, "Listen to the arrangements of the Moon Gazer, don't be too reckless."

The concern in the girl's eyes could not be hidden.

Lu Ran put on a serious face, nodding solemnly, "Don't worry!

This time, I won't be carried away by another woman again."

"Smack!"

Jiang Ruyi gave Lu Ran a teasing look, lightly hitting his shoulder.

This guy, truly...

never serious for more than three seconds!

...

At half-past ten in the morning, Lu Ran, dragging his tired body, opened the door to his home.

Without even changing his shoes, he walked straight into the bathroom.

The ragged clothes on his body were no longer in need of washing.

Previously, whenever he rested in Stone City, he would take the opportunity to wash his bloodstained clothes while bathing.

But those often bloodied garments could no longer retain their original color.

After a full half-hour, Lu Ran emerged refreshed, carrying the clean Dawn Blade, and walked out.

He changed into fresh clothing and came before the shrine, bowing respectfully: "Greetings, Lord Immortal Goat, your Disciple is off to sleep."

The truly weary Lu Ran greeted his deity, then pulled out his phone from a drawer to charge it, before collapsing onto the small bed.

Lu Ran had hoped for a long sleep, but as soon as he drifted off, he found himself standing amid the fog-shrouded Evil Demon Sculpture Garden.

"Lord Immortal Goat, let your Disciple sleep for a bit longer!"

Lu Ran was utterly resigned.

Being a believer, he couldn't even catch a break in his sleep?

Lu Ran: "I really can't hold on... shall I go?"

An anomaly suddenly arose in the Sculpture Garden, nearly startling Lu Ran awake!

The Evil Dog sculptures were normally quiet, but the eyes of one began to glow with a ghostly light.

As if they were coming to life!

The Evil Demon Sculptures gazed directly at Lu Ran, sending a chill down his spine!

"You often close your eyes, attempting to use other senses to discern the battlefield," a deep and hoarse voice sounded from behind.

Lu Ran turned around and looked up to see a huge black Sheep Head also floating mid-air.

Black Fire flickered above the Black Sheep Head.

Those Dead Sheep Eyes gently observed the tiny Human Clan member.

"Yes." Lu Ran suppressed the terror in his heart, nodding firmly.

No matter how many times Lu Ran saw those horizontal pupils, he could never grow accustomed to them.

"This Evil Technique can assist you greatly."

The voice of the Black Fire Sheep Head didn't move, yet the sounds clearly fell into Lu Ran's ears.

The next moment, Lu Ran's body trembled!

The Evil Demon Sculpture behind him emitted a dense mist, like a thin stream of water, cascading from heaven above.

Ultimately, the mist connected with the small Human Clan member.

Sniff~

Lu Ran suddenly sniffed and smelled a thick scent of death.

And he seemed to hear the faint sounds of Black Fire flickering atop the Black Sheep Head...

The Evil Technique of the Evil Demon·Evil Dog Clan—Evil Sense!

...

I seek some monthly tickets.