

## Old Gods 501

Chapter 501: Don't believe in God anymore

When the members of the Ran Sect returned to the Cloud Sea Cliff, it was already dusk.

Throughout the journey, Si Xianxian had been in a daze.

In truth, ever since parting ways with the Big Wind Hall and when Lu Ran unleashed the Evil Mirror Technique·Mirror Flower Moon, Si Xianxian had been utterly bewildered.

Fortunately, Lu Ran had sent her a thoughtful "sister" to keep her company—Deng Yuxiang.

On the return trip, Deng Yuxiang told Si Xianxian many things.

So many that Si Xianxian couldn't fully process them.

So many that once she arrived at Cloud Sea Cliff, she ran alone to the edge of the cliff, gazing silently at the horizon where the sea met the sky.

The salty sea breeze tousled her messy shoulder-length hair, and the wind left her heart all in disarray.

Several dozen meters away, Lu Ran stood quietly beneath a large tree, gazing at the slender figure of the girl by the cliff.

Today, the sky over Holy Spirit Mountain was exceptionally clear.

The setting sun, as red as blood, cast an orange glow on the gaunt outline of Si Xianxian.

"Little Lu Ran."

"Hm?" Lu Ran, leaning against the tree, turned his head to the side.

Deng Yuxiang walked to the tree and looked at Si Xianxian's silhouette in the distance. "Cong Long and Jing Hong are already waiting at my residence. You can take Si Xianxian over anytime to help her sever the connection with the God."

Lu Ran nodded silently.

Unlike Xun Luo and his wife, Yu Changsheng, and others, the deity Si Xianxian worshipped was Divine·Lie Tian!

She was tormented every single day!

For Si Xianxian, tearing up the divine contract was something that could not be delayed any further.

Deng Yuxiang gently patted Lu Ran on the shoulder, urging him, "Go on, talk to her properly. Sooner or later, she has to take this step."

"Alright." Lu Ran began to walk forward.

The contract between a God and a Believer wasn't just an ordinary piece of paper; it couldn't be casually torn apart.

At that moment, Si Xianxian would endure extremely severe blows on both a physical and mental level.

In fact, it was the psychological hurdle that was the hardest to overcome.

After all, from the moment people gain awareness, they are inundated with teachings about what is "right."

Be it family, schools, society, or even the Gods themselves, all of them meticulously and forcibly molded devout Human Clan believers one after another.

Lu Ran carefully chose his words as he approached Si Xianxian from behind.

The girl, sensing something, turned her head to look at him.

"Still crying, are you?" Lu Ran no longer wore his heavy expression. Beaming, he teased her with a wide grin.

"You're the one who's crying!" Si Xianxian retorted softly, wiping her eyes with the back of her hand.

At this moment, she no longer needed to live in constant fear, no longer fleeing in desperation while being pursued.

For this reason alone, she finally had the peace of mind and energy to think about certain things.

And Si Xianxian sadly realized...

She seemed unable to return home.

The Human World wasn't great, but there, she had her mother and a place called Luoxian Mountain.

But now... everything felt so distant, so unreachable.

She had been deceived by Divine-Lie Tian into a supposed pilgrimage; there had never been any challenge to the Holy Ruins.

Si Xianxian hadn't even been allowed to react; she had been directly transported here.

Before the teleportation, the deity had even left her with a parting word:

"Follow your heart."

"Ha." Si Xianxian closed her eyes, a bitter smile spreading across her lips.

Yet unlike those Fierce Heavenly believers, she didn't want to act recklessly, venting fury without restraint.

She didn't want to kill until the heavens turned dark and the roads led to nowhere.

Lu Ran, Jiang Ruyi, the flowers and grasses of Luoxian Mountain, and the distant sunset—they all seemed to be trying to save her.

Trying to bring peace to her heart.

But for a lowly Believer, there was no room for resistance in front of the deity.

In the end, she still ended up at Holy Spirit Mountain, forcibly dragged into the mire of "kill or be killed."

Thankfully.

Si Xianxian opened her eyes and saw Lu Ran standing beside her.

His smile was somewhat infuriating, as though amused by her tear-streaked face, but the concern in his eyes was undeniable.

Thankfully, he was there.

"You..." Si Xianxian just opened her mouth to speak when her expression suddenly froze.

Because in Lu Ran's hand, he held a phantom War Hammer.

"What's there to be surprised about?" Lu Ran laughed as he swung the hammer lightly, flames igniting on its head.

"Lie Tian Hammer?" Si Xianxian exclaimed, staring at the all-too-familiar weapon.

"On the way back, wasn't Big Nightmare telling you all my secrets?" As he spoke, flames flared up around Lu Ran's body. "Didn't you see with your own eyes as I performed the Evil Mirror Technique?

What she said is true; I can infiltrate the ranks of the God Demons."

Fierce Heavenly Divine Skill-Fiery Fire Sky Leader!

"You've gone mad!" Si Xianxian exclaimed in alarm. "Even if this place is your stronghold, you can't just activate Fiery Fire Sky..."

Once again, her words abruptly halted.

Because the flames surrounding Lu Ran's body suddenly extinguished.

At the edge of the cliff stood only an energetic, smug figure.

Softly, Lu Ran said, "The Divine Sculpture of Lie Tian in my mind belongs to me. I can do whatever I like with it.

I am its master.

Someday, I'll be the master of this God."

Si Xianxian stared at Lu Ran in a daze.

His voice was soft, yet to her ears, it was like the rumble of thunder.

Lu Ran continued, "This Lie Tian Divine Sculpture—I've been saving it for you."

"For me?"

"I've always hoped that someday, it could help you escape your suffering."

Looking at Lu Ran's earnest expression, Si Xianxian's heart involuntarily warmed.

"Sign a contract with my Divine Sculpture; you'll gain so much from it~" Lu Ran suddenly grinned. "You'll be able to do what I do—turn the Divine Technique on and off at will.

You won't be poisoned by the God's mood swings anymore."

Si Xianxian's face went blank. "Huh?"

Lu Ran nodded. "You won't be the emotional trash can anymore. The contract I give you isn't a master-servant one but an inheritance contract.

One day, you'll completely replace this Divine Sculpture, and Lie Tian will cease to exist."

Si Xianxian listened in a daze.

Ever since meeting Lu Ran, she'd been in a constant state of confusion.

Her dazed expression... was kind of cute?

Looking at her wind-blown hair, Lu Ran raised a hand and gently smoothed it out.

Out of the blue, he quipped, "Also, once you believe in me, if you ever go crazy and lose your temper, just know—it's entirely your own fault!"

It's simply because you have a bad temper!"

Si Xianxian: "..."

"Hahaha!" Lu Ran burst out laughing.

This time, Si Xianxian snapped out of her daze and glared directly at Lu Ran.

Gradually, Lu Ran's laughter died down, and a seriousness returned to his gaze. "Sister Xian'er."

"Yes?"

"Stop believing in Gods. Believe in me instead."

Si Xianxian pressed her lips together, lifting her eyes to look at Lu Ran.

The sea lay to the east, the setting sun to the west.

Lu Ran stood facing south, looking at the girl before him.

The sunlight cast one half of his face aglow in gold, while the other half sank into shadow.

Suppressing the anxious pounding of her heart, Si Xianxian averted her eyes and muttered softly, "Narcissistic."

"Come with me, Sister Xian'er." Lu Ran smiled. "I've already paved your path and set your position as a protector of the Ran Sect.

Big Nightmare explained it clearly: Gods and demons are merciless; they see all beings as their slaves..."

"Alright." Si Xianxian suddenly replied, looking up at Lu Ran.

Actually, you don't have to say so much.

Back in the Human World, long, long ago, I was already following you...

Lu Ran paused, his smile broadening. "I heard that."

Si Xianxian's expression grew resolute. "Tell me what I need to do."

"What you need to do now is tear up your contract with Divine-Lie Tian." Lu Ran patted her shoulder as they made their way toward the forest.

Several dozen meters away, Deng Yuxiang leaned on a tree, her arms crossed, watching the pair approach.

She tilted her head slightly and said softly, "The Sect Leader convinced her. Soon, you should explain things to her carefully."

Just past the tree, Yan Shuangzi, also leaning against it, murmured faintly in response, "Alright."

When it came to voluntarily tearing up contracts, Yan Shuangzi was the most authoritative figure.

Though she hated reliving that painful part of her past, Yan Shuangzi didn't mind recalling it if it helped Lu Ran recruit a loyal follower.

As Lu Ran and Si Xianxian returned, Yan Shuangzi immediately stepped forward.

"Follow her; she has things to discuss with you," Deng Yuxiang said, patting Si Xianxian on the back and motioning toward Yan Shuangzi leading the way.

Si Xianxian looked at the tall figure ahead, her expression conflicted.

Of course, she recognized Yan Shuangzi.

Previously in Beifeng City, alongside Lu Ran, she had watched as Yan Shuangzi challenged the Divine Ruins, witnessing her unparalleled moment of glory in the city.

However, the once high-spirited woman had now become like this.

Si Xianxian suddenly felt fortunate.

Fortunate that she'd met Lu Ran early on.

Otherwise...

"The key connection between you and the God lies in your own mind, in your spiritual world," Yan Shuangzi spoke calmly, striding toward Nightmare Residence.

Si Xianxian listened silently.

"You know where it is. Every time you pray, the Power of Faith you offer travels along that path."

"You need to gather enough Divine Power in your brain, release it in a single burst, and forcibly destroy that pathway."

"As Human Clan members, our lowly status means the only way to sever ties with a God is through this self-destructive method."

...

Several minutes later, at Deng Yuxiang's residence.

A piercing scream rang out from within, sharp and harrowing.

On the bed in the bedroom, Si Xianxian clutched her head with both hands. Her forehead was drenched with cold sweat, veins bulging, her face deathly pale!

"Mmmmm~~~"

Jing Hong immediately blew a horn, soothing the injured person's psyche.

War Horn Divine Technique·Soothing Horn.

"Pop~"

"Pop~" A faint golden Dragon Carp and a pitch-black Mo Li swam, one after the other, colliding with Si Xianxian's forehead.

The powerful healing technique repaired Si Xianxian's wounded mind.

Her agonized cries, however, continued unabated.

Watching Si Xianxian's torment, Lu Ran felt heartbroken.

Even with everyone present, constantly tending to her, healing her body and calming her mind!

It was hard to imagine how Yan Shuangzi had survived when she was locked up alone in a prison, forced to tear up her own contract...

"Sigh." Lu Ran let out a deep breath, turning to look out the window at the deepening twilight.

Tomorrow will be better.

Tomorrow, you'll be like Shadow One—a protector of the Ran Sect.

You'll become that Mad Immortal.

...

Chapter 502: A Wild Ambition

Si Xianxian has dropped in rank.

This shattered Lu Ran's illusions.

He had thought that, with Yu Changsheng helping to nurse her body, as long as Si Xianxian could maintain her mental realm, she could hold onto her strength at River Realm·First Segment.

But reality was cruel.

Si Xianxian ultimately fell to River Realm·Fifth Rank.

For the Human Clan, as servants of the gods, the backlash from tearing apart the contract was simply too great.

Lu Ran's heart hung heavy again.

It should be known that dropping in rank wasn't the most terrifying part.

What's truly horrifying is the Human Clan being hit so hard, they collapse entirely and are unable to rise again.

So during this time, Lu Ran stayed by Si Xianxian's side.

On one hand, to take care of her body.

Lu Ran's Healing Techniques were of River Grade; whether it was the Cage Fire (Bath) or the Resurrection Carp, their healing effects were quite good.

On the other hand, Lu Ran needed to clarify the road ahead for Si Xianxian and strengthen her resolve!

Stabilizing her mental realm was of utmost importance!

Si Xianxian's demeanor repeatedly set Lu Ran's worries to rest.

She didn't succumb to despair.

On the contrary, after tearing apart the contract, Si Xianxian seemed to have unloaded a heavy burden.

That sense of liberation, that pure, heartfelt joy, even made Lu Ran feel envious!

Lu Ran seamlessly transitioned to lead, commanding his Fake God-Lie Tian Sculpture to sign an inheritance contract with Si Xianxian.

Thus, the Mad Immortal was born!

Carrying the mission to crush Lie Tian and usurp the Divine Position, she followed Lu Ran and embarked on a journey to upend the world.

Days passed quickly.

In the blink of an eye, it was early June.

That morning, Deng Yuxiang came looking for Lu Ran.

At the time, Lu Ran was sitting at the edge of the sea cliff, his legs dangling over the edge, occasionally swinging them back and forth.

Si Xianxian was squatting beside him.

The sea breeze gently ruffled her loose hair, revealing her sweet and beautiful face.

But for such a poised yet sweet woman, her actions were somewhat childish—she was, uh, squatting and playing with dirt?

She extended a finger, poking at the ground with her fingertip, crushing tiny stones one by one.

Lu Ran's voice was soft, murmuring something continuously.

Si Xianxian occasionally curved her lips into a faint smile and replied in a low voice.

This scene was beautiful.

In Deng Yuxiang's eyes, it looked as if Lu Ran was gently tending to a delicate flower.

Suddenly, an odd expression crossed Deng Yuxiang's face.

She realized something: the Si Xianxian before her was a reflection of her past self.

And also of her current self.

There was a time when she was plunged into the depths of despair, and Lu Ran had patiently accompanied her and carefully looked after her...

Until the flower bloomed again.

"Morning!" Lu Ran's voice rang out from afar.

He'd naturally sensed someone approaching.

Deng Yuxiang snapped out of her thoughts, striding forward quickly. "Sect Leader."

Squatting on the ground, Si Xianxian tilted her delicate face upward, looking at Ran Sect's first Guardian.

Si Xianxian was the fourth Guardian—though she was at the very bottom, she at least made it into the ranks of the Guardians.

When it came to choosing code names, Lu Ran respected the personal preferences of other Guardians and Divine Generals. But when it was Si Xianxian's turn, he unilaterally gave her the name "Mad Immortal."

Regarding this code name, Si Xianxian felt conflicted deep down but said nothing.

Ever since leaving the Fierce Heavenly Sect, whenever she went wild or acted insane, no one bore the blame for her actions anymore.

As Lu Ran put it: "It's purely because you've got a nasty temper!"

Now it was clear for everyone to hear!

It was Sect Leader himself who told me to go mad...

"I've hit a bottleneck in my cultivation," Deng Yuxiang dutifully reported, her manner calm and measured.

It was almost as if she were subtly teaching Si Xianxian how to interact with the Sect Leader.

"Good news!" Lu Ran's face instantly lit up with joy.

After over four months of cultivation, she was finally about to break through? Her speed of progress was already commendable!

River Realm·Fifth Rank...

Once she stepped into the pinnacle rank, the Human Clan would no longer need any more cultivation.

With just a single epiphany, she could storm out of the rivers and into the seas!

This journey had been fraught with challenges for Deng Yuxiang, but it had forged an unshakable will and soaring ambition within her.

The Sea Realm—was it really so far away?

Lu Ran immediately commanded, "Head over to Cloud Sea Residence, bring Little Chi Feng, and then prepare for your breakthrough in the seclusion room."

Deng Yuxiang lowered her head respectfully. "Understood!"

Lu Ran then turned to Si Xianxian, who was squatting and playing with dirt. "You too—don't just sit idle. When Big Nightmare breaks through, it'll also be an opportune time for others to cultivate."

"Go to the seclusion room and see if you can quickly rise back up to River Realm."

"Understood." Si Xianxian mimicked Deng Yuxiang's gesture, nodding in response.

The newly reborn Mad Immortal Guardian yearned for power with unmatched intensity.

After all, if she wanted to settle scores with Lie Tian and utterly obliterate that old bastard, she needed absolute strength!

On another note, Si Xianxian wasn't particularly fond of fish.

As a River Realm cultivator, she needed sustenance to maintain her life.

In these past few days, Si Xianxian had grown utterly sick of grilled fish and smoked fish.

With limited ingredients, it was difficult to prepare anything delicious within Holy Spirit Mountain.

Two days ago, Lu Ran had even specially created a Fog Realm-Evil Dog, slaughtering it to improve her diet, giving her a meal of dog meat.

But to Si Xianxian, the Evil Dog's meat tasted rather peculiar...

If she could regain her River Realm strength soon, she wouldn't have to worry about food anymore.

Lu Ran waved his hand dismissively. "Alright, off you go."

The two Guardians accepted their orders and departed. Lu Ran stood up as well, sending a mental transmission: [Evil Moon.]

[Here.]

[Besides those two who just left, summon everyone else in the cliff residence. We're meeting in the council hall in five minutes.]

[Understood.]

Lu Ran stretched lazily with abandon, gazing up at the swirling cloud seas around him. "Ahh~~~"

My Ran Sect is about to have its fourth Sea Realm Great Power!

Tiantu Mountain, your good days are numbered!

Indeed, Lu Ran had no notion that Deng Yuxiang would remain stuck at River Realm·Fifth Rank.

What the hell is "Death of Five"?!

My Nightmare Guardian was merely passing through—she's the woman who'll overthrow the Night Charm and crush the North Wind to pieces!

The one who will stand beside me in slaughtering gods and demons across the heavens—the Big Nightmare!

How could she possibly linger for long?

With a world-overturning ambition, let's just charge straight into the Sea Realm!

The thought of personally cultivating someone destined to conquer the Yangyang Sea filled Lu Ran with restless excitement and joy.

"Waiting for flowers, coming spring after spring, mocking my madness through the merciless years..."

Lu Ran, in rare spirits, began quietly humming a fitting tune. Leaning back, his figure flickered and disappeared.

When he reappeared, he was inside the council hall.

The body leaning back a moment ago had effortlessly settled into the main seat at the long table.

...

By the third of June, a heavenly phenomenon occurred!

A swirling mist converging upon Cloud Sea Cliff signaled to all that the Ran Sect's first Guardian had broken through her bottleneck and successfully entered the advancement phase.

Lu Ran further understood the outstanding merit of his Little Chi Feng, lavishing heartfelt praise upon Deng Yuxiang...

What a remarkable Magic Artifact—it was truly extraordinary!

Deng Yuxiang had prepared plenty of Divine Power Pearls but barely absorbed any of them. Little Chi Feng, single-handedly, carried her straight to the mountaintop!

Having learned from past experiences, Ran Sect members executed their guarding tasks with greater ease this time around.

Blades and weapons encircled the mountain, scanning for any potential threats.

The Evil Demon squads performed their respective duties, with one team of Evil Mirror Demons scattered around Cloud Sea Cliff, fervently refreshing Connection Mirrors.

The Evil Mirror Demons couldn't reside inside the cliff.

After all, anything with traces of Divine Power energy could be displayed on the Connection Mirror.

Needless to say, Ran Sect's collection of hundreds of Divine Power Pearls would just dominate the view indefinitely!

Good luck trying to sift through it all with your copper mirrors!

And when you finally spot a cluster of glowing Divine Power Pearls, the mirrored image wouldn't change for hours...

Additionally, River Realm-level Evil Mirror Demons could only wield River Grade Divine Method, limiting the Connection Mirror's detection range to just three hundred meters.

Lu Ran's heart, yearning to venture out to sea, grew increasingly restless.

Days ago, Lu Ran had interrogated every Dead Soul within the Rebirth Money one by one, extracting heaps of critical intel. He confirmed that the Evil Mirror Demon tribe indeed appeared on sea islands.

Lu Ran urgently needed to cultivate Night Charm Evil Sculptures!

Similarly, he needed to gather Holy Spirit Energy to nurture the Divine Sculptures in the Sculpture Garden.

The matter of setting out to sea had to be expedited...

On another note, Deng Yuxiang's advancement within the minor ranks of River Realm only required 2-3 days.

Having experienced the prolonged process of Xun Yifei, the Sea Realm Great Power's advancement, they now saw these couple of days as almost trivial.

As days and nights alternated and the cloud seas churned...

By the fifth of June, the misty shroud noticeably thinned out.

This meant... Deng Yuxiang had succeeded!

Since Ran Sect's occupation of Cloud Sea Cliff, this was the first time a member had advanced without enemies showing up to cause trouble!

Even as the mist dissipated, Lu Ran could hardly believe it.

Having been relentlessly beaten down by Holy Spirit Mountain, experiencing such peaceful progression left Lu Ran feeling oddly out of sync...

Unfortunately, no higher-tier celestial phenomenon graced the skies.

The Fog Dragon Roll didn't appear.

In other words, Si Xianxian hadn't managed to reclaim the River Realm amidst this blessing.

Poor Sister Xian'er.

Don't worry, I'll make sure to help you rise again...

[Little Lu Ran.]A voice transmitted directly into his mind.

By the sea cliff, a smile bloomed on Lu Ran's face. He had maintained a constant spiritual connection with the Night Charm Evil Sculpture just for this moment.

There was no mistaking the spirited tone of a triumphant woman in the transmission.

Lu Ran replied instantly: [Congratulations, Big Nightmare! River Realm Peak!]

Deng Yuxiang: [Were there any blind fools trying to bother us this time?]

[Not a single one.]Lu Ran gazed skyward, a smile spreading across his face. [For once, the heavens showed mercy.]

[Good, take Little Chi Feng back. I'm at the tunnel exit.]

[Coming.]Lu Ran's figure flickered away into the distance.

When he arrived in the woods behind Nightmare Residence, he found Ran Sect members gathered to congratulate the Guardian on her achievement.

"Sect Leader."

"Sect Leader!" A wave of respectful voices greeted him as Lu Ran nodded in acknowledgment and stepped forward to accept the Fiery Phoenix Patterned Gourd.

Looking at Deng Yuxiang, he smiled and said, "Get ready to break through again—advance to the Sea Realm."

Deng Yuxiang's smile froze, and a series of question marks seemed to hover above her head.

Do you even hear yourself talking?

"Heh." Yu Changsheng couldn't suppress a laugh.

The Xun Luo couple also wore amused expressions.

Deng Yuxiang resisted the urge to retort, maintaining composure to spare the Sect Leader some face in front of the others.

"What's the matter? Feeling conflicted?" Lu Ran thought for a moment before addressing Deng Yuxiang again with mock seriousness. "Aren't you known for being particularly obedient?"

Deng Yuxiang raised an eyebrow slightly.

Lu Ran, in a coaxing tone, added, "How about this: I order you to break through to the Sea Realm now!"

Deng Yuxiang: ???

She glared at him, unable to hold back, but stopped short of lashing out.

"Hahaha!" Seeing this, Yu Changsheng's laughter grew even louder.

"Alright, alright, I'll stop joking," Lu Ran said quickly, noticing Deng Yuxiang nearing her limit. "Go back to the seclusion room and stabilize your realm first.

In the meantime, I'll take the Zen Stick to Big Wind Hall. Once I return, we'll properly discuss your next step toward the Sea Realm."

"Understood." Deng Yuxiang nodded before turning to the hidden tunnel entrance in the forest.

Lu Ran, filled with lofty ambitions, watched her graceful figure disappear into the distance.

Yangyang Sea.

I must propel you forward!

...

Chapter 503: Wizard No. Sea Merfolk

Lu Ran kept his promise, ran an errand, and handed the Nine-ring Golden Zen Staff to He Qifeng before quickly returning to Cloud Sea Cliff.

Then, Lu Ran dove straight into the seclusion room to have a heart-to-heart conversation with Deng Yuxiang.

A few days later, on a certain night, Lu Ran's face betrayed a hint of disappointment as he was unceremoniously chased out of the room by Deng Yuxiang.

His ambitious spirit had been doused with a bucket of cold water.

From head to toe.

Deng Yuxiang's path was clear, and from certain perspectives, she was even more determined and resolute than Lu Ran!

However, ascending to the Sea Realm is not something that can be achieved casually.

Talent, effort, insight, and luck—all are indispensable.

To become a person of great power, hard work is naturally a given.

Deng Yuxiang was already deeply bonded with the Night Charm Evil Sculpture, achieving a high level of fusion, and her talent was undoubtedly top-tier.

In terms of insight, Deng Yuxiang had also reached a sufficient height and depth.

In her youth, she had taken root in the modest Rain Alley City, but now she had broadened her horizons and earned the right to expand the concept of "homeland" to encompass the entire mortal realm.

The determined path Deng Yuxiang ventured upon, her ambition, had even touched the realm of God Demons.

Lu Ran did not think her insights were lacking in depth.

All things considered, perhaps she simply lacked a touch of luck.

Who knows when that fleeting epiphany, coveted by all, might suddenly descend.

"Hah..."

In the pitch-black forest, Lu Ran stood at the cave entrance, surveying the silent night.

Big Nightmare... what a ruthless heart you have!

I spent days and nights discussing philosophy with you, and you just send me home to sleep?

After all, I am your Sect Leader—how could you just kick me out like that?

Seriously... Hmph, I'm not sleeping!

Lu Ran's figure flashed and arrived at the sea cliff.

The moon hung sparsely, the wind gentle over the vast seas.

He closed his eyes, letting the salty sea breeze brush against his face. Gradually, he felt less agitated.

After a while, Lu Ran shook his head and laughed softly.

His impulsive tendency—he still hadn't managed to change it!

No helping it.

The temptation of personally guiding someone to the Sea Realm was just too great.

Alas, epiphanies aren't something you can summon on demand; even if you've prepared everything, you still need to wait for the right opportunity.

"Splash—"

Lu Ran opened his eyes, listening to the sound of waves crashing against the rocks, looking out toward the distant night sky.

Then let's give the Nightmare Guardian and Mad Immortal Guardian enough time for them to ponder deeply at the cliff!

I'll take a team out to sea, seek out Immortal Islands, gather Spiritual Energy, and nurture the Divine Sculptures without delay.

If they suddenly enter the breakthrough mode, we have Evil Technique·Mirror Flower Moon on hand, and with a few teleportations, we'll be back in no time.

Lu Ran pondered silently, calling out in his mind: [Evil Shadow, go invite Mr. Cong Long over.]

[Yes.]

Lu Ran sat down and casually dangled his legs over the edge of the cliff, swinging them leisurely.

Moments later, a drowsy-looking Yu Changsheng approached Lu Ran from behind: "Sect Leader."

"I apologize for interrupting your rest, sir." Lu Ran didn't turn his head.

Yu Changsheng's gaze was deep, but the words coming from his mouth were entirely inconsistent with his expression: "Not at all."

Since the Sect Leader has summoned me late at night, surely there's something urgent to discuss!"

"Nothing major." Lu Ran lowered his head, watching the waves crash against the rocks below, "After days of discussing philosophy with the Nightmare Guardian, it's been a while since I've seen you, sir. I've missed you a bit."

Yu Changsheng: ???

Lu Ran suddenly turned his head, tilting his face upward to look at the man: "Don't you miss me, sir?"

Yu Changsheng twitched his lips awkwardly.

For a moment, he didn't know how to respond.

"Haha ~" Lu Ran grinned, "I'm planning to go out to sea tomorrow; what do you think, sir?"

Yu Changsheng finally took a sigh of relief, though his gaze carried a hint of resentment: "Sect Leader is finally heading out to sea."

"Indeed." Lu Ran nodded slightly, "I plan to locate the Evil Mirror Demon, gather Holy Spirit Energy, and by the way, search for the Sea Merfolk Clan in the Far Sea Region."

"Sea Merfolk." Yu Changsheng seemed thoughtful.

Lu Ran nodded slightly: "I'll blend into the clan's ranks to compensate for some of my weaknesses so that I won't fear Water Element Techniques anymore.

I can also summon the Sea Merfolk Clan to assist the Mo Li Clan, solidifying our side's control over this sea region."

"Good!" Yu Changsheng immediately nodded.

Lu Ran made a faint sound of agreement and continued, "Nightmare and Mad Immortal are both working hard to gain insights and breakthrough into the Great Realm. We need someone to guard them.

What does sir think—who should I take with me this time?"

Yu Changsheng deliberated for a moment before replying, "Most Ran Sect disciples aren't skilled in naval combat; Sect Leader could take me and Xun along."

Lu Ran silently nodded.

Yu Changsheng added, "The Evil Shadow Guardian, who's been following Sect Leader, must stay behind as well."

Evil Dog Evil Skill-Evil Recognition is Yan Shuangzi's essential tool for both daily life and combat.

The Sea Merfolk Clan, however, possesses a sound-based technique called the Sea Merfolk Song!

This technique is exceptionally grating—it can cause splitting headaches on a physical level, while on a mental level, it can throw targets into panic and confusion.

For someone like Yan Shuangzi, stepping into the Far Sea Region would undoubtedly be extraordinarily perilous.

"Hm?" Lu Ran frowned slightly, detecting a faint hint of hostility.

Clearly, Yan Shuangzi was deeply dissatisfied with Yu Changsheng's words.

Yu Changsheng appeared oblivious, standing motionless and unperturbed.

"Restrain your hostility." Lu Ran interjected.

The atmosphere around the sea cliff quickly returned to normal; the sea breeze resumed its peaceful dance, restoring tranquility.

Lu Ran was speechless!

Yan Shuangzi, Yan Shuangzi—do you dare?

You're only at the Initial Stage of the River Realm and still dare to show attitude to Yu Changsheng of the Sea Realm Fourth Rank...

Hm... that's rather bold—much like the spirit of your Sect Leader!

Just a few months ago, when I faced the Sea Realm disciples of Sword One and Jade Talisman, I too took them head-on~

"What say you, sir, perhaps you should also remain here at Cloud Sea Cliff?" Lu Ran suddenly proposed.

Yu Changsheng spoke softly, "Sect Leader, I understand your concern for the guardians' safety, but the defensive forces on our side are fairly strong, not to mention that the Luoshen General is stationed here.

If something does come up, Sect Leader could activate the copper mirror a few times, and we would be back in no time."

Lu Ran silently approved; great minds really do think alike.

Yu Changsheng emphasized with a more determined tone, "Sect Leader, your safety is the most important."

"Alright, sir, go get some rest; we'll set off tomorrow morning." Lu Ran readily agreed.

"Understood." Yu Changsheng took his leave, but after walking a few steps, he stopped again, "Sect Leader, you should catch some sleep too.

Once we head out, who knows when you'll be able to rest properly again?"

Lu Ran casually lay back, gazing at the stars in the night sky: "Tonight, I'm sleeping here."

Yu Changsheng saw Lu Ran's carefree posture and couldn't help but smile silently.

A few months ago, Lu Ran had been quietly melancholic and homesick here.

But now...

Whether or not Lu Ran still missed home, outwardly, he appeared utterly nonchalant.

Maybe this is what they call growth.

...

The night passed without further events, and the next morning.

Lu Ran managed everything at the cliff, instructed the Nightmare and Mad Immortal Guardians to focus on their insights, and then, surrounded by a group of send-off soldiers, he activated an Ancient Bronze Mirror.

The prisoners had revealed that there were plenty of islands in the sea, and as for the ones where the Evil Mirror Demon Clan frequented, they could be found by simply traveling east.

Lu Ran then fixed his gaze toward the direction of the rising sun and activated Evil Technique·Mirror Flower Moon.

After leaving the region controlled by nine giant fish, the trio prepared to plunge into the water.

This journey was not just about seeking islands but also about bringing havoc!

Mo Li, Fisherman, Sea Merfolk, and all the other water-dwelling Evil Demons—they were all targets!

"Xun!" Lu Ran stepped out of the Transmission Mirror and addressed Ran Sect's Divine General, "We're about to dive into the sea; do you have any advice?"

Xun Yifei, a seasoned naval combatant, was someone whose opinion was always worth considering.

Xun Yifei, holding a Divine Weapon, hovered above the surface: "Since the Sect Leader intends to hunt as many Evil Demons as possible, once we enter the water, we can advance in a triangular formation.

Let me lead the front, while you and Mr. Cong Long flank me on either side, using the appropriate techniques to maximize our perception range."

"Alright!" Lu Ran nodded immediately.

Xun Yifei pointed his Divine Weapon downward, diving straight into the water.

Now, Lu Ran knew the name of this three-pointed, double-edged blade—"Flying Waterfall Streams."

The name aligned perfectly with the effects of its Divine Weapon Domain!

"Splash!"

"Splash..." The trio plunged into the sea, swiftly forming their triangular formation.

Xun Yifei took the lead, clearing the path for the team.

Lu Ran immediately unleashed countless illusory Mo Lis.

Yu Changsheng called forth the Rain-summoning Carp, and for mobility purposes, he carried the small golden Dragon Carp in his arms.

Golden threads of rain fell vertically into the sea.

Though called rain, they were actually fine golden light beams that resemble rain; this perception technique was unaffected by the surrounding environment.

Lu Ran and Yu Changsheng were wrapped in soft veils, one black and one gold, flanking the rear as they followed Xun Yifei forward.

The trio advanced for a long while without encountering any Evil Demons.

In the vast expanse of the sea, finding an Evil Demon tribe wasn't an easy task.

"Gurgle~"

Feeling a little bored, Lu Ran blew out a tiny bubble.

Truth be told, Lu Ran hadn't experienced much of what it felt like to travel underwater.

The black veil coiled around him like a beautiful spiral, wrapping his body; it felt more like he was floating weightlessly in outer space rather than swimming.

Nor did he feel suffocated—the black veil provided all the conditions necessary for survival.

Just as Lu Ran was about to have the group surface to verify their direction, he suddenly noticed something—the illusory Dragon Carps seemed to have touched something?

Lu Ran turned sharply, looking down and to his right.

The area looked completely empty, with nothing there.

Nothing?

What nonsense!

My beloved Mo Lis touched you—show yourself already!

"Whoosh!"

Without hesitation, Lu Ran reached out with a move called "White Dragon Probing the Seas."

Okay, technically, it was Evil Technique-Immortal Sky Python!

An illusory white-scaled giant python shot out, roaring toward the lower right.

"Buzz!"

Energy surged, water ripples vibrated.

Lu Ran's eyes immediately narrowed!

The enemy he sensed had evidently evaded, but beyond the range of Evil Skill-Mo Li's perception field, Lu Ran saw another who was forced into revealing themselves by the giant python's attack!

The figure resembled a handsome young man with long silver-white hair.

He wore a mysterious silver mask shaped like tiny wings over his eyes.

He was shirtless, revealing a muscular torso, but his lower body was a long, silver-white fish tail!

The elongated fish tail resembled a silver-white, flowing gown, radiant and elegant, swishing lightly as he swam.

Not a disciple under the Luoshen General Yan Qing.

But indeed, hidden in water, invisible and formless—a member of the Evil Demon Sea Merfolk Clan!

"Oh, damn!" Lu Ran's heart tightened.

When had this group snuck up on them?

And there was no telling how many others were lurking nearby...

Lu Ran quickly deactivated Evil Technique-Evil Sense, plunging his vision into darkness.

Dark?

Darkness is fine—it has to be!

If they dared to start singing the Sea Merfolk Song, I'd probably be nailed dead to this very sea!

...

Chapter 504: Activated! New Evil Sculpture!

The Sea Merfolk Clan certainly has an excessively handsome appearance.

Their total body length reaches up to 3 meters, primarily due to their remarkably long fish tails, which measure at least over 2 meters.

Their physique does not grow with increased power, and upon death, they transform into pure energy bodies, dissipating into mist without leaving corpses.

Their Evil Techniques are exceptionally packed!

There's the underwater perception skill—Heart of the Sea; the spirit defense skill—Sea's Will.

There's also the survival and agile swimming skill—Sea Mermaid Tail; and the Evil Technique—Sea Merfolk Thousand Pearls, which unleashes countless water droplets to bombard the enemy relentlessly.

Not to forget the sonic attack Evil Technique—Sea Merfolk Song!

Additionally, there's the concealment skill—Sea Merfolk Concealment, which wraps the caster in a layer of water, allowing them to hide in the sea and suppress their presence.

As the arch-nemesis of the Third-class God Yan Qing, the Sea Merfolk Clan also has their trump card, capable of matching Yan Qing's faction blow for blow.

The River Realm Finishing Move—Child of the Sea!

Once activated, the Sea Merfolk Clan becomes immune to all water attribute skills and can even absorb the water-based attacks of their enemies, transforming them into pure energy for their own use!

Lu Ran quickly went over the Evil Techniques of the Sea Merfolk Clan in his mind.

Sweeping his gaze across it all...

He wanted them all!

Especially Sea Merfolk Concealment—how sneaky!

And the Evil Technique—Child of the Sea; with that skill equipped, he wouldn't need to fear Ash's faction anymore.

To be honest, ever since Lu Ran encountered Luo Ying, he had been inwardly alarmed.

The Luoshen General was indeed a loyal subordinate.

But this earth-shattering human artillery was way too terrifying—so strong that it left Lu Ran shivering with fear!

Even if Lu Ran activated the Sea Merfolk Evil Sculpture, even if Luo Ying's rain of arrows fell like a torrent, and even if there were swarms of Canglong...

Hmm... Okay, Lu Ran would still have reason to fear.

You can't ignore your opponent's Realm and simply talk about skill effects.

Luo Ying needed to be at the same Great Realm as Lu Ran, using skills of the same Grade, to have her damage output nullified.

"Hah!"

Lu Ran unleashed two 30-meter-long white-scaled pythons, crashing into the Sea Merfolk Clan.

The Sea Merfolk had no defense techniques!

After the python's collision, their bodies were mangled and their death looked utterly tragic.

He closed his eyes tightly and, aided by the endless swarm of Little Mo Li, detected numerous Sea Merfolk figures.

This tribe had a large population, didn't they?

Lu Ran abruptly swam backward.

Through his perception, he saw the Sea Merfolk collectively raising their hands, unleashing countless water droplets that shot forward as if they intended to blast Lu Ran into pieces!

Because the battle was taking place underwater, the water droplets fired by the Sea Merfolk fully merged with the marine environment.

It was unbelievably sneaky!

If it weren't for the high density and wide distribution of the Little Mo Li, Lu Ran might have been slaughtered indiscriminately by the Sea Merfolk Clan...

"Ah!!"

A piercing scream rang out!

What should have been an invisible sound wave revealed its trajectory through the rippling water currents, exposing its trumpet-like pathway for all to see.

In an instant, Lu Ran was completely enveloped.

Lu Ran's expression froze, and hurriedly teleported away.

"Hiss..."

On the water's surface, Lu Ran clutched his ears in pain, hissing sharply.

So, this was the Sea Merfolk Clan's trump card—Sea Merfolk Song?

Brutal!

You had to wonder how the Human Clan even came up with this name for the skill.

This couldn't be called a song, could it?

Was this supposed to be a world-ending soprano or something?

"Ugh." Lu Ran's body ignited with Cage Fire, and he felt as though his eardrums were about to rupture.

This day surely marked encountering his nemesis!

Bear in mind, Lu Ran had already turned off Evil Sense, yet he still couldn't withstand the piercing scream.

Fortunately, Lu Ran had always engaged Spirit Defense Techniques, preventing panic and immobilization where he stood.

In the God Demon world, sonic attacks were practically broken-tier existence.

They belonged to the realm of "true damage."

No defense could guard against them!

Thinking about this, Lu Ran was even more eager to activate the Sea Merfolk Evil Sculpture.

Next time he encountered an enemy, he would open his mouth and scream as well!

Lu Ran rubbed his ears furiously, recovering bit by bit, before diving back into the sea.

Due to the distance from the battlefield, Lu Ran activated the Evil Technique—Evil Recognition.

His blurry vision instantly became crystal clear.

Finding the battlefield was effortless for Lu Ran, as golden beams had fallen over there.

Yu Changsheng's oceanic combat abilities were beyond terrifying!

The schools of fish released from his hand moved faster and struck harder in marine environments, causing Lu Ran to inwardly gasp.

Countless Sea Merfolk had already been consumed by the fearsome fish swarm.

Xun Yifei was also wreaking havoc!

In fact, Yan Qing's faction and the Sea Merfolk clan were both resistant to water attribute techniques.

However, Xun Yifei was of the Sea Realm, while the Sea Merfolk were clearly from the River Realm or below.

Xun Yifei's Sea Grade skill—Clear Water Thousand Whips—could slaughter enemies effortlessly!

Against Xun Yifei, the most effective countermeasure for the Sea Merfolk Clan was their Evil Technique—Sea Merfolk Song.

Alas, Xun Yifei wielded the Divine Weapon—Cascade Stream Blade and had the Divine Technique—Clear Water Flow supporting him, allowing him to dart through the fight as swift as an arrow...

The two mighty forces of Yangyang Sea ripped through the Sea Merfolk Clan.

Lu Ran felt a mix of astonishment and pride.

Suddenly, he squinted his eyes, spotting a Sea Merfolk frantically fleeing the battlefield.

Charge!

Or else, he wouldn't even secure a single kill!

Lu Ran drew the Eight Desolates Annihilation Blade and fiercely thrust forward.

Ran Sect Blade Technique Third Form—Shuo Star!

"Whew~" The Sea Merfolk executed an abrupt brake, waving his palm and unleashing a cascade of water droplets.

Evil Technique—Sea Merfolk Thousand Pearls!

Each of these tiny droplets resembled a miniature bomb, detonating with formidable power.

The Sea Merfolk's remarkable reaction speed was naturally thanks to the Evil Technique—Heart of the Sea!

This was a unique underwater perception skill.

It made the caster extraordinarily sensitive to their surrounding marine environment!

The instant Lu Ran flashed, the Sea Merfolk had already sensed the disruption of energy in the seawater ahead.

"Oh, come on." Lu Ran was startled!

His forward-thrusting blade had just struck an invisible, colorless water droplet.

"Boom!" A muffled explosion rang out!

The Eight Desolates Annihilation Blade quivered violently from the blast, and Lu Ran clenched the hilt tightly before teleporting immediately.

He knew very well that remaining in this spot would subject him to the relentless bombardment of countless water droplets.

However, instead of staying amidst the battlefield, Lu Ran teleported to the Sea Merfolk's back.

The Sea Merfolk instantly detected the anomaly behind him!

He swayed his elegant silver fish tail and sped forward rapidly.

"Hah!"

Lu Ran vigorously thrust his blade forward; at the same moment, two rows of fangs appeared ahead.

The Sea Merfolk's keen sense and formidable Evil Technique—Sea Mermaid Tail allowed him to move quickly and effortlessly in the sea.

"Screech—"

Lu Ran's movements flowed seamlessly; while summoning the fangs, dense Immortal Fog spread under his feet as he followed up with another forward thrust.

Immortal Hoof,

The eternal god!

On land, Immortal Hoof allowed Lu Ran to maneuver rapidly, enabling him to launch heavenly strikes and reduce the impact upon landing.

In water, Immortal Hoof similarly boosted Lu Ran's speed!

The Sea Merfolk's expression stiffened: !!!

Faced with fangs ahead and a menacing man behind.

The Sea Merfolk decisively swung his exquisite tail, darting upward.

Lu Ran's Immortal Fog beneath him propelled him diagonally upward.

"Screech!"

In the blink of an eye, the blade pierced flesh!

The Eight Desolates Annihilation Blade stabbed the Sea Merfolk through the heart.

"Ack." The Sea Merfolk looked startled, clutching the blade protruding from his chest, with crimson blood dispersing in the water.

No, it shouldn't be like this.

I am the Child of the Sea!

The one born on and raised by the ocean!

"Screech!" With a twist of his wrist, Lu Ran sliced upward with the blade.

The sharp edge cut from the heart to the head, splitting the Sea Merfolk in two and killing them on the spot.

"Buzz~"

The Eight Desolates Annihilation Blade trembled gently.

Lu Ran's face froze for a solid two seconds, feeling both shocked and ecstatic!

This... this, did the Eight Desolates Blade just move?

Clutching the hilt tightly, Lu Ran immediately attempted to communicate with it, starting, "Glug~"

The words turned into bubbles as soon as he said them.

Lu Ran: "..."

He immediately teleported away, returning to the surface.

"Eight Desolates?" Lu Ran gripped the blade with both hands, testing, "Eight Desolates Annihilation?"

The Eight Desolates Blade remained motionless.

It was as if what had happened moments ago been an illusion.

"Eight Desolates." Lu Ran brushed a finger across the chilly blade, washing away the blood stains on its surface.

The blade's name had been jointly chosen by Lu Ran and Little Yuanxi.

His sister had originally wanted to name it "Eight Directions Annihilation," but Lu Ran had changed it to "Eight Desolates," to signify a far-off place.

To Lu Ran, "distant lands" specifically referred to the regions beyond the Divine Ruins.

Hence, his cultivation goal for this weapon:

To carve through the Holy Spirit Mountain Realm until Eight Desolates annihilated everything!

Since entering the mountain, Lu Ran had wielded the Eight Desolates Blade across countless battles, slaying plenty of evil beings and demons alike.

But today, where Lu Ran normally fought only on land, he had, for the first time, engaged in oceanic combat and personally vanquished an aquatic foe...

Could this act have had an important bearing on the Eight Desolates Blade's growth?

Probably!

As Lu Ran pondered, since the Holy Spirit Mountain Realm obviously encompassed marine territories.

The so-called "annihilation" should naturally be all-encompassing.

A sudden thought stirred within Lu Ran's mind, making him gaze toward the sky.

In that case, if the Eight Desolates Blade were to continue growing, wouldn't I need to delve into aerial combat as well?

"Sect Leader!"

"Finished already?" Lu Ran twirled the blade playfully in his hand and turned his head.

"Yes, you may begin absorbing the souls of demons." Xun Yifei replied solemnly.

"Good." Without hesitation, Lu Ran dove back into the water, activating the Pupil of the Dead World, while utilizing Evil Sense to sweep the area.

Whoa~!

The number of wandering souls was astonishing!

"Glug~" Lu Ran excitedly exhaled a bubble, his figure flickering as he moved.

As the deceased souls of the Sea Merfolk entered his eyes one after the other, Lu Ran wasted no time and immediately activated the Evil Sculpture!

"Buzz!!"

In the God Demon Sculpture Garden, a particular sculpture shuddered violently.

Its form was mesmerizing—a human body with a fish tail, its curves exquisitely graceful, with long, flowing hair cascading down its back.

Though merely a stone sculpture, it exuded an irresistible aura of mystery and elegance.

Lu Ran darted back and forth within the ocean, frantically absorbing souls!

From this day onward,

This seat shall reign as a mermaid!

Momentarily, I'll summon a long fish tail and frolic about in the waters.

Hehe~

...

Chapter 505: Burning Mermaid

Lu Ran carefully searched and managed to seize the souls of 16 Sea Merfolk.

Among them, 11 were River Realm souls, and 5 were Jiang Realm souls.

Lu Ran's mind buzzed as the Evil Sculptures within the Sculpture Garden continued to grow in scale.

Mist Realm... Stream Realm... River Realm!

River Realm First Rank... Second Rank...

Before reaching the Jiang Realm, the statues' progression was extremely fast, instantly providing feedback to Lu Ran.

Finally, the Sea Merfolk Evil Sculptures settled down into stillness.

Lu Ran returned to the sea surface, secretly marvelling: These guys really had treasures to offer; their souls were permeated with so much Holy Spirit Energy?!

"River Realm Third Rank." Lu Ran murmured to himself, his heart stirring with excitement.

Apart from the Jiang Realm ultimate skill of the Sea Merfolk Clan, he had equipped himself with all six other techniques!

"Congratulations, Sect Master?"

Yu Changsheng stood on the sea surface a few meters away, tentatively speaking.

Xun Yifei, meanwhile, remained underwater, guarding everyone from beneath. Occasionally, he lifted his gaze to check on Lu Ran's state.

At that moment, he saw Lu Ran's face light up with a smile and watched as Lu Ran nodded gently toward Yu Changsheng beside him.

Suddenly, Xun Yifei's eyes sharpened!

Lu Ran extended one hand sideways, and at his fingertips, tiny droplets of water continuously shot outward.

"Splish splash splosh..."

As the water droplets fell into the sea, each exploded into a cascade.

Sea Merfolk Evil Technique·Thousands of Drops of the Sea Merfolk!

"Perfect for fishing, huh." Lu Ran withdrew his Divine Technique and shook his damp hands.

Soon after, an unusual layer of water curtain abruptly enveloped his body.

Sea Merfolk Evil Technique·Sea Merfolk Concealment!

This deceptive skill allowed Lu Ran to blend seamlessly into the ocean, cloaking himself within its depths.

However, at this moment, he was still on the surface of the sea.

Thus, Lu Ran hadn't truly become invisible; both Yu Changsheng and Xun Yifei could still discern his silhouette with the naked eye.

"Interesting, huh?" Lu Ran disengaged the Sea Merfolk Concealment, his face visibly excited.

Yu Changsheng nodded with mild approval, smiling.

"Let me show you something even more fun!"

Lu Ran unleashed a surge of Divine Power, rapidly growing a graceful fish tail from his waist.

Over two meters long!

The sleek fish tail shimmered in pure silver, resembling a magnificent flowing gown that sparkled with ethereal radiance.

Evil Technique·Sea Mermaid Tail!

Yu Changsheng: "..."

Xun Yifei: "..."

Under the watchful eyes of two Sea Realm experts, Lu Ran transformed fluidly.

Whether beautiful or not, that was debatable.

At the very least, he had fully turned into a merfolk!

This exceptionally ornate fish tail came equipped with impressive functionality!

To note, the Sea Merfolk Clan weren't inherently born with underwater breathing capabilities.

Before reaching Stream Realm Third Rank, the Sea Merfolk needed to surface periodically to breathe, much like dolphins or whales.

Once their abilities advanced to Stream Realm Third Rank and they acquired the Evil Technique·Sea Mermaid Tail, they'd gain the ability to dive deep into the sea.

This energy-fashioned fish tail seamlessly fused with the merfolk's natural tail, granting the clan underwater survival capabilities and enhancing their agility to navigate the ocean freely.

Lu Ran didn't have a natural fish tail.

Although physically incompatible with this technique, it didn't matter much.

At this instant, Lu Ran's legs were wrapped within the glamorous fish tail, and through naked eye observation, his lower body seemed to have vanished entirely.

"Splash!"

Lu Ran dismissed the dark gauze enfolding him and dove straight into the sea.

"Blub blub blub~"

Lu Ran released a series of bubbles from his mouth, feeling an overwhelming sense of joy.

He finally experienced the sensation of swimming!

Up until now, Lu Ran had been using the Mo Li Evil Technique-Dance of the Mo Li. Whether soaring in the air or diving into the ocean, it always felt like he was in a weightless environment.

Barely perceiving gravity in the skies and unable to sense buoyancy underwater.

But now...

Lu Ran tentatively moved his legs, and his long fish tail undulated up and down simultaneously, supporting his forward motion.

"Wow!" Lu Ran praised inwardly.

As he swam onward, he repeatedly turned his head to admire his splendid fish tail.

My goodness~

Who could possibly resist this?

Lu Ran played with reckless joy—his silvery fish tail, as if alive, ensured he could stay submerged indefinitely.

Yu Changsheng's expression turned a shade peculiar as he watched Lu Ran swim a full circle around him beneath the sea.

It suddenly dawned on him that their mysterious and powerful Sect Master was only 19 years old this year...

Lu Ran's movements grew increasingly adept, swimming faster and faster!

"Sputter!"

Lu Ran suddenly emerged from the water, leaping high into the air, his fish tail scattering shimmering droplets.

He carved a stunning arc in midair before plunging back into the ocean.

Yu Changsheng observed the scene and couldn't help but chuckle quietly.

Lu Ran's overall appearance was certainly somewhat comical.

A fisherman's bamboo raincoat and hat juxtaposed against the elegant silvery tail below—a fusion of completely mismatched aesthetics.

In that very moment, Yu Changsheng's eyes revealed a hint of amazement.

As Lu Ran dove underwater, he activated Evil Technique·Sea Merfolk Concealment.

Lu Ran transformed into a droplet of water, melting silently into the ocean itself, vanishing without a trace.

Two words: seamless~

Underwater, Xun Yifei, who had been observing quietly all along, showed faint traces of gentle affection.

Perhaps Lu Ran's display of childlike innocence had stirred memories in this young father's heart.

Xun Yifei understood deeply that his children could gain access to Divine Technique or Evil Technique by offering reverence to Lu Ran.

If his son and daughter could possess such a beautiful fish tail...

They too would find boundless joy, wouldn't they?

Xun Yifei mused quietly, only to realize later that he'd lost sight of Lu Ran entirely.

"Splash!"

After quite a while, Lu Ran resurfaced, revealing his true self.

His upper body hovered above the water, while his fish tail swayed gently beneath the waves. "Let's keep moving. All the Evil Demons we encounter along the way—leave none alive!"

"Understood." Yu Changsheng immediately dived underwater.

Lu Ran gestured toward Xun Yifei, and the three-man team resumed their triangular formation, heading east.

Kill as they travel.

The vast ocean truly belonged to both the Mo Li and the Sea Merfolk.

The farther they strayed from land, the more frequently the Sea Merfolk clans surfaced.

Fortunately, Lu Ran had two Sea Realm experts as his guardians, ensuring the journey was thrilling but safe; he gorged himself in carefree delight!

Unconsciously, the Sea Merfolk Evil Sculptures advanced to River Realm·Fifth Rank.

At this rank, the sculptures' progression slowed, unable to upgrade further within a short time. Lu Ran could only endure the relentless vibrations of the statues.

"Ugh." Lu Ran massaged his temples, feeling somewhat helpless.

In this state, his Perception Techniques were nearly useless.

Once the sculptures reached Jiang Realm and could produce Evil Demon minions, Lu Ran thought he might create some Sea Merfolk to serve as escorts for the team.

Wait!

Lu Ran had an epiphany.

Once he could produce Evil Demon minions, he wouldn't have to endure the hardships of traveling!

He could have the Sea Merfolk carry him forward!

The Mo Li Clan were slower swimmers, but the Sea Merfolk Clan were swift and wouldn't hinder speed.

It was what Lu Ran thought—and precisely what he did!

When the Sea Merfolk Evil Sculptures ascended to Jiang Realm, Lu Ran immediately halted their journey. Under the protection of Yu Changsheng and Xun Yifei, Lu Ran successfully created several River Realm·Fifth Rank Sea Merfolk.

After brief instruction, Lu Ran commanded the Merfolk to scatter, positioning themselves around their three-man team.

From then on, their Perception range expanded, and the group's safety improved.

Lu Ran specifically kept one Sea Merfolk close—not riding atop it, but letting it hold his hand to lead him forward.

It was indeed quite effortless~

Also, these guys were unbelievably handsome!

Broad chests, perfectly sculpted muscles—truly a feast for the eyes.

Luckily, Lu Ran was straight...

And yet, when Lu Ran removed the Sea Merfolk's silver eye mask to reveal a pair of flawless, crystalline silver eyes, he couldn't help but feel momentarily dazed!

Quickly, he reattached the uniquely shaped mask to the Sea Merfolk.

Dammit!

Those eyes really deserved to be hidden.

Truly demonic!

...

As the sun set in the west, nightfall descended.

With the Ran Sect team venturing farther, the strength of Evil Demon clans they encountered grew wildly stronger!

Lu Ran's Sea Merfolk guards dwindled steadily, leaving only two behind.

In this Far Sea Region, River Realm Evil Demons were proving insufficient.

"Ya!" Lu Ran suddenly called out, releasing a sonic wave.

Mist-grade Evil Technique-Sea Merfolk Song!

Yu Changsheng and Xun Yifei immediately responded to his signal. Following Lu Ran's lead, all three, along with two Sea Merfolk, swam upward rapidly.

"Splash!"

Waves burst forth.

Lu Ran canceled the fish tail and conjured a black cloud beneath his feet, standing tall on the sea surface.

"Sect Master?" Yu Changsheng was surrounded by faint golden gauze, illuminating the night.

Lu Ran looked skyward and said, "Let's travel through the air. The ocean is perilous, and we've been fighting all day... Hmm?"

Lu Ran paused mid-sentence, suddenly soaring upward, with his gaze fixed toward the distance.

Xun Yifei activated his clear-water eyes, following Lu Ran's line of sight. Through the dense night, he could faintly distinguish an island amidst the vast sea.

"I see an island!" Lu Ran exclaimed, excited.

Yu Changsheng quickly responded, "Sect Master, we must remain cautious. Let's investigate first before deciding whether to land."

"Sure." Lu Ran pulled out the Fiery Phoenix Patterned Gourd and began guzzling its contents.

"Gulp gulp gulp... burp~"

Lu Ran wiped his mouth with the back of his hand and summoned an Ancient Bronze Mirror with his other.

As the Fallen Mirror took shape, several hundred meters ahead of the island, a Fallen Mirror quietly activated.

The group—three humans and two demons—entered the mirror in sequence. Yu Changsheng dismissed his golden gauze, lest any adversary detect their presence.

Lu Ran flew through the dark night, circling the island carefully for reconnaissance.

The island wasn't particularly large, though it was densely forested.

After searching extensively, Lu Ran failed to detect traces of Holy Spirit Energy. Just as he was lamenting the missed opportunity, his figure froze abruptly!

What was that?

Lu Ran's eyes widened slightly, spotting a beautiful woman sound asleep beneath a tall tree.

Willow-shaped brows, a cherry-like mouth.

A thin gold bracelet on her wrist, golden earrings gracefully swaying on her earlobes.

The deep green low-cut gown she wore only further accentuated her alluring beauty...

This wasn't the Golden Branch and Jade Leaf Evil Mirror Demon herself, was it?

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

Little temptress, I finally found you!

Lu Ran cautiously unsheathed the Eight Desolates Annihilation Blade, his heart screaming internally:

Please, Evil Mirror Demon!

Please tell me you've pillaged the Holy Spirit Energy from over ten, maybe dozens of islands.

Please, let this one strike elevate my Jiang Realm Second Rank Evil Mirror Demon sculpture straight to the Sea Realm!

Come,

Bring all the resources you've gathered in your lifetime and surrender them to the embrace of the Evil Demon Lord...

"Swish!"

Lu Ran suddenly thrust the blade forward, his figure darting like a flash!

Ran Sect Blade Technique Third Form·Shuo Star!

...

Chapter 506: My Moon

"Hmm?"

The beautiful woman sleeping under the tree sensed something, opening her sleepy eyes.

Suddenly, her delicate body shivered slightly!

The dreamy sleepiness in her beautiful eyes was gone, leaving only complete astonishment.

The newcomer was quite mysterious, dressed in a wide green bamboo hat and bamboo clothes, obscuring the starlit sky.

The mysterious figure kneeled on one knee on her delicate body, holding a Tang Blade that had already pierced her brow.

"Sizzle!"

Even more bizarre, the blade was accompanied by several lines of black mist, penetrating through her beautiful skin, seeping inside, hindering her energy flow.

The Evil Mirror Demon instinctively raised her slender jade hand, tightly gripping the mysterious figure's sleeve.

Her cherry lips parted slightly, as if she wanted to cry out.

The mysterious figure was quick, covering her mouth with a hand: "Shh... It's okay, it's okay, it will all be over soon."

The light in her eyes quickly dissipated.

In just two seconds, her hand weakly released, falling to the ground.

Lu Ran slowly withdrew the blade, placed a hand on her palm-sized pretty face, and closed her beautiful eyes.

He was already quite adept at handling such ruthless acts.

Long ago in the Demon Cave-Galaxy Bay, Lu Ran had slain countless captivating little demons... Uh, delightful fairies.

While in motion, Lu Ran cautiously looked around, searching for possible enemies.

The surroundings were dead silent.

It seemed there was only this charming little demon taking a nap here.

"Puff~"

Lu Ran's knee sank downward, kneeling on the ground.

Because the delicate body beneath his knees shattered into energy, turning into thick mist.

Lu Ran clicked his tongue secretly!

Goodness~

The concentration and mass of this mist suggested that this Evil Mirror Demon was likely at River Realm Peak!

If it had set up a stance and fought with real knives and guns, it would have taken some effort!

Ambushing really is the most comfortable way~

Lu Ran took out the Fiery Phoenix Patterned Gourd from his bosom to absorb the energy.

Meanwhile, in another dimensional world, the dead soul of the Evil Mirror Demon continuously converged and merged into Lu Ran's eyes.

"Buzz!!"

In the God Demon Sculpture Garden, the Evil Mirror Demon Sculpture started vibrating.

Lu Ran's face lit up with joy.

Yes, that's exactly right!

Just keep vibrating, don't stop!

Lu Ran held the Fiery Phoenix Patterned Gourd, slowly stood up, and a dark cloud rose beneath his feet as he continued searching through the dense forest.

Due to the statue's promotion within the garden, it was hard for Lu Ran to listen carefully to any sounds anymore.

But he still had his eyes and nose.

After a detailed investigation, Lu Ran was somewhat disappointed to find that on this island, there was only this one Evil Mirror Demon.

Lu Ran searched once more, confirmed there were no other living beings, and then returned to the sea, bringing several people onto the island.

After arranging for two Sea Merfolk to patrol around the island, he said to Yu and the others, "Tonight, you all have a good rest."

Xun Yifei said, "Sect Leader, let me keep watch while you take a rest..."

"No need," Lu Ran interrupted, "We've traveled all day, and you two have been fighting all day, you need to rest."

On this journey, Lu Ran's Sea Merfolk Evil Sculpture had already reached Jiang Realm·Second Rank!

Yu and the others had contributed significantly!

Lu Ran added, "Moreover, in my current state, I can't fall asleep even if I wanted to, it's perfect for keeping watch."

With that, he waved them away before they could say more.

Seeing how persistent the Sect Leader was, the two didn't protest further, finding a sheltered place in the forest to meditate and rejuvenate.

Lu Ran climbed to the highest point on the island, hidden among the trees, keeping watch in every direction.

The lonely island under the night sky was quite peaceful.

The sound of the waves was rhythmic, and when the sea breeze blew, it brought the rustling of leaves.

Unfortunately, Lu Ran could not enjoy this beauty.

In his mental world, the Evil Sculpture was expanding its scale bit by bit, buzzing and unsettling Lu Ran.

The night deepened.

Lu Ran gazed at the bright moon over the sea, watching the beautiful white moonlight spilling over the water.

Initially troubled and restless, he found himself strangely entranced.

The Holy Spirit Mountain Realm, why does it have a sun, moon, and stars?

This place is clearly not Earth, so why is it so similar to the human home?

Could it be an alien planet similar to Earth?

Or perhaps this realm was created by the God Demons together?

Everything I see is false.

The seemingly vibrant and lush forests are devoid of any birds or beasts.

The seemingly vast and open sky conceals an invisible energy, ever-watchful, striking down those who foolishly try to escape into the heavens, scattering their souls.

The Holy Spirit Mountain Realm is undoubtedly a cage.

Just like the Human Clan on Earth, everyone lives in a big lie.

Only the lie of the Holy Spirit Mountain Realm is more blatant.

The God Demons seem not too interested in putting on a show.

Lu Ran nodded silently.

It's quite possible that to maintain prolonged dominance and preserve the human order, the God Demons constructed a human slaughterhouse specifically.

So...

Lu Ran brushed aside the lush branches with one hand, quietly gazing at the moon over the sea.

After a long time, he murmured:

"Moon, oh moon, you aren't my moon, are you?"

Shining on the Holy Spirit Mountain, unable to reach the human world.

It can reach me, but not her.

"Hmm." Lu Ran shook his head vigorously, no longer daring to delve deep into his thoughts.

Afraid that longing would overwhelm him, becoming uncontrollable.

Since entering the mountain, it was the first time Lu Ran shed his hard shell, at the edge of the Cloud Sea Cliff.

At that time, Lu Ran especially missed Jiang Ruyi.

He accidentally asked Yu Changsheng a question, "Do you think we can ever return to the human world?"

Mr. Conglong's response was intriguing: "People's hearts are already dead; no one believes in going home. But they all believe in you."

Since then, Lu Ran had sealed his heart, cutting ties with the human world.

He knew he was the hope of many, knew he had to be steadfast, focused.

Until a few days ago when he met Si Xianxian, the seal in his heart loosened a bit.

And now, as he gazed at the moon, watching the melancholy moonlight spreading across the sea, random thoughts raced through his mind.

It wasn't the moon of the human world.

Not the one that accompanied him as he grew up.

Nor the one that walked alongside him on the night of the fifteenth.

"Boom!"

A thunderous roar suddenly sounded from high above the sky.

Lu Ran's expression darkened slightly.

He looked up at the starry night, yet couldn't see the culprit behind the noise.

Suddenly, there was also a "boom" in Lu Ran's mind.

He held his forehead with one hand, massaging his temple. Inside the park, the Evil Mirror Demon Sculpture had advanced, reaching Jiang Realm-Third Rank!

And the Evil Sculpture didn't stop there, it continued expanding the statue's scale.

Lu Ran adjusted his breathing, trying to calm himself down.

"Boom!"

The intense sound came again, as if deliberately opposing Lu Ran, refusing to let him have peace.

"Hoo~"

A black Cage Fire ignited on Lu Ran's body, soothing his emotions.

He felt that if this continued, he would almost become a different kind of Fierce Heavenly believer.

Always having a buzzing head and troubled heart, enduring the uproarious sounds that high and mighty beings occasionally produced above his head.

Frustrated and suffocated, his nerves were about to break down!

Wouldn't anyone go mad in this situation?

"Ah!!" Another scream came from the side, recognizable as the Sea Merfolk's "wonderful" singing voice.

Lu Ran widened his eyes, his temple pulsing rapidly!

Damn! Everything's coming at once?

This world really plans to drive me crazy!

Lu Ran suddenly turned his head, swiftly pushing aside tree branches, looking into the distance.

Despite his agitation, he found himself looking at quite a picturesque scene.

Outside the island, on the relatively calm sea surface, was a drifting, dilapidated fishing boat.

Upon the broken fishing boat stood a slightly hunched figure.

Wearing a bamboo hat, draped in bamboo clothes, while holding a rusty fish spear.

From afar, he looked just like an old fisherman.

Evil Demon Clan·Fisherman!

At this moment, the Fisherman had one foot on the bow of the boat, holding a fish spear and viciously stabbing into the sea.

"Ah!!" The Sea Merfolk dodged nimbly while striving to cast spells, with piercing cries piercing through the night, drifting far, far away.

The Fisherman suddenly took a step back, grabbing with both hands into the air.

Only to see a net made of flowing water form!

At the same time, the fishing boat beneath him moved swiftly backward, needing no manpower to row, the boat moved as he wished.

"Yo~~~"

The Fisherman sang out loud.

Evil Technique·Fisherman's Song!

Invisible sound waves spread out, helping the Fisherman search for sea enemies, and as the boat swiftly retreated, he cast the net forward to the right.

"Yo~~~"

Several more high-pitched singing voices emerged from the distant night.

Lu Ran looked over, even though he had closed his Evil Sense, he faintly saw with the help of moonlight 6 or 7 small fishing boats speeding this way.

On the bow of each boat stood an old fisherman.

"Heh." Lu Ran let out a cold laugh, drawing the Eight Desolates Annihilation Blade.

Alright, looks like you've finally arrived!

I was just worrying about having no outlet for all this pent-up anger...

"Boom!!"

Lu Ran's face turned stiff.

The entity high above was really like opposing him, tormenting and punishing the tiny Human Clan.

Lu Ran... certainly wasn't superstitious!

Then I simply won't use Evil Sense!

"Swish~"

In a flash, he stood on the bow of the boat, right in front of the Fisherman.

"Ah?" The Fisherman was startled.

Having just cast the net, he had only summoned a fish spear when a figure abruptly appeared before him.

Lu Ran didn't hesitate, starting immediately!

It was a world-destroying high note...

"Ah!!!"

Sea Merfolk Evil Technique·Sea Merfolk Song!

A face-to-face kill?

Sort of, but before the kill, it should be called a face-to-face sing...

Invisible sound waves, like amplifiers, emanated from Lu Ran's mouth, enveloping the target ahead.

"Ah!" The Fisherman trembled violently.

Under the brim of his bamboo hat, that old wrinkled face was filled with pain, even dropping the fish spear from his hand.

The throbbing headache and terror were evident!

Lu Ran didn't care about that?

While displaying his vocal skills, singing the Sea Merfolk Song, the Eight Desolates Annihilation Blade in his hand stabbed straight into the Fisherman's head.

"Sizzle!"

The blade pierced the skull!

Lu Ran strode forward, skewering the Evil Demon-Fisherman.

Under the melancholic moonlight, two figures, one tall and one short, both wearing bamboo hats and bamboo clothes, walked from the bow to the stern of the boat, eventually plunging into the sea together.

"Splash~"

Falling into the water, Lu Ran grew a beautiful silver-white tail from his waist down, resembling a graceful long skirt.

The long tail swayed back and forth.

Lu Ran kept his eyes closed as he swam flexibly in the sea.

Evil Sense had to face divine punishment.

So how about the perception-type Evil Technique-Heart of the Sea from the Sea Merfolk Clan?

Can you punish that?

I won't be sharp-eyed and alert!

I'm just extremely sensitive to the surrounding ocean environment and abnormal water flows.

"Hoo~"

Lu Ran swayed his beautiful tail, feeling the ripples from the fishing boats, heading straight for the many Fishermen!

Chapter 507: Immortal Island!

Under the moonlight, in front of the beach.

Two tall figures stood side by side, closely monitoring the battlefield's situation.

Xun Yifei activated the Divine Technique-Clear Water Eyes, his vision piercing through the vast night to spot the chaos in the Fishermen's formation far off the sea!

One by one, huge white-scaled pythons burst forth from the water, smashing apart fishing boats and fishermen alike.

Even clusters of dense water droplets shot out from the sea, bombarding the Fishermen relentlessly.

Yu Changsheng fiddled with his paper fan, softly asking, "How's the battle?"

Xun Yifei immediately responded, "Rest assured, sir, the Fishermen's clan has been utterly dismantled under the Sect Leader's assault."

"Very well." With a graceful snap of his folding fan, Yu Changsheng turned and walked toward the forest, saying, "Keep an eye on things for a while longer; I'll head back and rest first."

Don't want to get scolded by the Sect Leader once he returns."

Xun Yifei: "..."

In just two short minutes, the Fishermen's clan had been completely wiped out.

Although Lu Ran only activated the Sea Merfolk Evil Sculpture today, at this moment, he had already mastered the Evil Techniques of the Sea Merfolk Clan.

Lu Ran's sea combat capabilities had undergone a qualitative leap!

The Fishermen's clan, capable of only surface-level combat and lacking underwater fighting skills, stood no chance when faced with Lu Ran's "Fiery Fish," and were mercilessly slaughtered!

Xun Yifei saw Lu Ran breaking through the water's surface, ascending into the clouds—is he about to perform Soul Binding?

As soon as Lu Ran showed signs of returning, Xun Yifei promptly turned around and darted into the forest.

Lu Ran soared through the clouds, victorious and carrying spoils of his success.

Upon returning to the island's highest point, Lu Ran briefly activated his Evil Sense, checking on Yu and Xun's status.

And what he saw made him chuckle.

These two Sea Realm Great Powers sure know how to put on a proper act.

But why have you swapped positions where you meditate?

They care about him, and naturally, Lu Ran would not be ungrateful.

Pretending as if he hadn't noticed, he quickly shut off his Evil Sense, then leaned back against the thick tree trunk, taking a deep breath as he sat on a sturdy branch.

Once again, Lu Ran stared absentmindedly at the bright moon.

High up in the heavens, bursts of earth-shaking roars occasionally echoed, reverberating throughout the Lower Realm.

It seemed the God and Demon factions were engaged in a frenzied slaughter.

Only when fish-belly white streaks appeared over the horizon did the Holy Spirit Mountain Realm finally quiet down. But earlier, during the latter half of the night, the Evil Sculpture in Lu Ran's mind had already gone dormant.

Jiang Realm·Fourth Rank!

This was the ultimate result delivered by the Evil Mirror Demon Sculpture.

From Second Rank to Fourth Rank—such accelerated advancement in strength was as if riding a rocket upward!

A rough conversion revealed that one strand of Holy Spirit Energy equated to one River Realm Dead Soul.

Which meant the Evil Mirror Demon Lu Ran ambushed and slew last night had collected at least 200 strands of Holy Spirit Energy?!

No need to say more, a heartfelt thanks to the Evil Mirror Demon's sending over a giant rocket for his growth!

...

The sun rose in the east, the sky was high and clear.

Yu Changsheng walked beneath the tree, softly calling, "Sect Leader."

"Hmm."

"Now that daylight has arrived, take some rest, Sect Leader. I'll take over the watch."

"No need." Lu Ran leapt down from the tree, gazing at the radiant sun to the east, "Let's head further east and see if we can find some islands rich in accumulated Holy Spirit Energy."

Yu Changsheng hesitated for a moment, then said, "Sect Leader, there was quite the commotion last night."

Lu Ran chuckled and nodded, "Indeed, quite the commotion."

Yu Changsheng's expression turned solemn, "Such times usually draw Evil Demons lingering in the deep sea closer to the surface to gather Holy Spirit Energy.

If we set out today, we are likely to encounter many Evil Demons."

Lu Ran thoughtfully nodded, "Good, I need Dead Souls anyway."

With Yu Changsheng and Xun Yifei, both of whom hailed from the Sea Realm, they should be able to handle most situations. And if things really got out of hand, Lu Ran could step in as the ace up their sleeve!

Worst case—they'd just retreat!

Seeing Lu Ran's resolve, Yu Changsheng nodded, "Sect Leader merely needs to be mentally prepared. Also, if Sect Leader notices falling strands of Holy Spirit Energy in the sky, there's no hurry to collect them."

"Oh?" Lu Ran arched an eyebrow.

Yu Changsheng nodded again, "Sect Leader has mentioned wanting to track down the Evil Mirror Demon Clan.

In my humble opinion, if Holy Spirit Energy appears within an Evil Mirror Demon's line of sight, they're very likely to activate Mirror Flower Moon and race ahead of the sea-bound Evil Demons to collect it."

Lu Ran immediately caught up with his thought process, "Thank you for the reminder, sir."

Holy Spirit Energy could certainly serve as an excellent bait for finding the Evil Mirror Demons.

Yu Changsheng twirled his paper fan, "Sect Leader is too kind."

"Fetch Xun. Let's go."

"As you wish!"

The Ran Sect immediately set off. Lu Ran did not create new Sea Merfolk but brought along the two remaining Merfolk from yesterday's battles on their journey eastward.

Lu Ran initially assumed that they would quickly find the next island upon discovering the first.

After all, the teleportation range of Jiang Grade Evil Technique·Mirror Flower Moon had a limit—no more than a hundred kilometers.

Since an Evil Mirror Demon had appeared on the first island, Lu Ran reasoned there must be another island within a hundred kilometers radius!

However, it seemed Lu Ran chose the wrong direction.

The trio and their two demons wandered eastward, not discovering an island quickly but instead engaging in multiple fierce battles against the Mo Li Clan and the Sea Merfolk Clan.

Yu Changsheng's prediction proved correct.

The previous night's commotion had stirred every monster hidden in the ocean depths to the surface's dive-ready regions, eager to absorb Holy Spirit Energy.

Initially, various evil demon clans in the ocean operated under a tacit understanding, keeping to their territories.

As a result, the seas were relatively tranquil.

The Ran Sect's presence had, however, entirely disrupted this peaceful landscape!

Especially during their skirmishes with the Mo Li Clan, the battle's sheer scale was utterly absurd!

This clan had notably massive physiques—River Realm Mo Li were fifty meters in size, Jiang Realm ones were a whopping three hundred meters.

And as for the eight hundred-meter titanic proportions of Sea Realm Great Demons? Enough said!

The unfortunate two River Realm·Sea Merfolk perished in battle after battle.

But Lu Ran also received good news.

The sculptures in the Sculpture Garden trembled once more—two of them, in fact!

Jiang Realm·Second Rank Sea Merfolk Evil Sculpture.

Sea Realm·First Rank Mo Li Evil Sculpture!

"My goodness!" Amidst a chaotic battlefield, Lu Ran gasped in astonishment, clutching Yu Changsheng who was protecting their retreat, and fell backward into a floor mirror.

Meanwhile, Yu Changsheng cast schools of fish that continuously poured outward.

"Splash!"

As Yu Changsheng fell into the mirror, the floor mirror in front of them shattered under a flood of endless fish.

No need for Lu Ran to manually cancel the Evil Technique·Mirror Flower Moon—the mirror had already splintered completely!

"Sect Leader, this area is relatively peaceful."

Below them, Xun Yifei—who had entered the mirror first—was now floating on the water, inspecting the sea beneath.

"Ah..." Lu Ran sighed with relief.

At this moment, he felt a mix of joy and concern!

Joy from the Evil Sculpture's advancement.

The fact that the Mo Li Evil Sculpture had already reached the Sea Realm!

Attaining such heights in realm—it's unimaginably challenging to progress further. Yet now, it was expanding in power!

Lu Ran was more than elated—he was euphoric to the point of bewilderment!

If he could experience this pace of growth daily, what couldn't he achieve?

Concern from...

Lu Ran realized he was incapacitated once again!

Jiang Realm Evil Sculptures advancing might only vibrate for two or three hours maximum.

Sea Realm sculptures, though, were different—their tremors would last an entire night!

Lu Ran glanced at the two, decisively stating, "Gentlemen! After these battles, I've stolen considerable energy from the Evil God, and I'm currently digesting it!"

Throughout today, my state will remain disrupted—I'll be mentally overwhelmed with headaches and unable to think clearly..."

Yu Changsheng's expression was heavy, "Sect Leader! Given the situation, let's adjust our objectives and first locate an island for shelter!"

We'll travel through the skies, relying on Mirror Flower Moon for speed, prioritizing safety, and avoiding further confrontations with sea-bound Evil Demons."

"I'll follow Sir's instructions!" Lu Ran nodded without hesitation, letting Yu Changsheng lead them into the air.

Xun Yifei held his Divine Weapon as he followed suit.

Lu Ran absorbed the energy from the Divine Power Bead Chain around his neck, repeatedly casting spells to continue moving eastward.

Fortune favored the persistent!

When Xun Yifei took the lead and stepped into a floor mirror once more, his eyes lit up brightly!

"Sect Leader, there's an island!"

"Hmm?" Lu Ran stepped out from the mirror, riding the invisible waves, standing behind Xun Yifei.

Following the Divine Seeking General's directions, Lu Ran used Extreme Eye Power and spotted a distant island indeed.

Unlike the previous one, this island was much taller, resembling a small mountain with steep cliffs—almost giving off a sea cliff-like impression.

"Let's go have a look." Stretching his hand forward, Lu Ran cast another spell.

A moment later, the trio entered in single file, arriving at the island's eastern edge, a hundred meters away.

Lu Ran's eyes widened abruptly!

Xun Yifei's expression also shifted, "That's... Holy Spirit Energy?"

"Yes! It's Holy Spirit Energy!" Lu Ran nodded fervently, thrilled beyond measure!

The cliff was lush with trees, and at the edge of the forest floor, Lu Ran spotted strands of mist.

"From the looks of it, this is likely an uninhabited island," Yu Changsheng promptly deduced.

Anything alive on the Holy Spirit Mountain would be drawn to Holy Spirit Energy like moths to flame.

If there were creatures or Evil Demons present, the resources would already have been plundered completely!

Flying forward, Yu Changsheng warned again, "Sect Leader, proceed cautiously."

"Hmm." Lu Ran nodded slightly, following close behind.

The trio circled the island, conducting a meticulous inspection.

This island had a distinctive characteristic—it was shaped like a "7," with towering cliffs reaching 30 to 40 meters. No proper paths led up the mountain; the only way to enter the forest was to fly.

"Gulp." Lu Ran's Adam's apple shifted visibly.

Looking at the tendrils of mist lingering among the trees, his eyes gleamed with fervor!

So much! So much rich Holy Spirit Energy...

Imagine consuming it all at once—how divine would that be?

Yu Changsheng floated to Lu Ran's side, softly asking, "Sect Leader, in your current state, can you fully absorb this Holy Spirit Energy?"

"Of course I can!" Lu Ran replied instantly.

With both the Mo Li Evil Sculpture and the Sea Merfolk Evil Sculpture vibrating away, his head was already buzzing nonstop...

One more sheep is herded, so why not two? Let my Lie Tian Divine Sculpture join the glorious vibration party as well.

Come on!

All three of you together—I'm on a schedule...

"Shwoosh~"

Lu Ran flickered to the edge of the forest. Staring at the mist spreading across the ground, he opened his Pupil of the Dead World.

"An Immortal Island! It truly is an Immortal Island!"

"Jackpot! A massive fortune..."

"I devour, I devour, and I devour again... Divine Sculpture, grow quickly!"

...

Chapter 508: Happy

[Sister Xian'er.]

[Young Master?] Si Xianxian was somewhat surprised, her voice sweet as honey, [What's the matter?]

[Are you in the seclusion room?]

[I am! I've been diligently cultivating, no slacking!] Si Xianxian misunderstood, thinking Lu Ran was checking up on her, and pursed her lips.

[That's good! You know, you've already bound with the Divine Sculpture; every day you're deepening the fusion with it.]

[Yes.] Si Xianxian nodded repeatedly.

Lu Ran had told her before: the more deeply she fused with the sculpture, the higher her talent and potential would grow, increasing her cultivation speed and growth limits!

When she first heard the news, Si Xianxian felt like she was living in a dream!

Even now, she still finds it hard to believe.

Enhancing talent and potential, raising cultivation limits—isn't that supposed to be a benefit granted only by divine blessings?

In the forty years since the gods descended, how many people have truly received such blessings?

A scarce few!

But here with Lu Ran, it's as if she receives divine blessings every single day?!

Lu Ran continued transmitting his voice: [Every time the Divine Sculpture upgrades, it's the perfect opportunity to deepen your fusion with it.

The backlash your body suffered from tearing the contract before should also heal over time.]

Si Xianxian's beautiful eyes widened with excitement: [You're saying all this—is the sculpture about to upgrade? What do I need to do?]

[You don't need to do anything, just stay in the seclusion room.]

[I don't need to...] Si Xianxian's voice was cut off as her delicate body suddenly trembled lightly.

Si Xianxian: ???

She shakily raised her left hand, thought for a moment, then stretched out her right hand to grasp her left wrist, trying to steady it.

However, her left hand's trembling only grew worse.

Because her right hand was shaking too!

Si Xianxian: "..."

Not just her hands—her entire body was trembling!

Si Xianxian finally understood why Lu Ran had gone out of his way to send a voice transmission, asking if she was in the seclusion room.

Turns out it was to prevent her from embarrassing herself in front of others!

"How thoughtful," Si Xianxian stammered softly.

Sitting cross-legged, she uncrossed her long legs, then leaned back and sprawled across the icy ground.

"Phew..."

Si Xianxian took a deep breath, savoring this special version of divine blessings.

This was Lu Ran's blessing!

Embarrassment? Shame? Nonexistent!

Among the Ran Sect's ranks, there were cultivators at the River Realm and the Sea Realm, yet here she was—a mere beginner at the River Realm. Now that's truly embarrassing!

Come on, Young Master!

Quick, enhance my talent and potential!

I want to break into the River Realm, I want to step into the Sea Realm!

I want to wield a giant hammer, charging headfirst into the God-Demon formations, leaving none standing...

"Ah~" Si Xianxian sprawled on the ground, her arms and legs spread out wide as she slowly closed her beautiful eyes.

Over here, the Mad Immortal Guardian lay comfortably, dreaming wildly.

Meanwhile, the Ran Sect's Sect Leader was toiling arduously, skimming across the ground.

No choice—the Holy Spirit Energy scattered all over the place.

Any part of Lu Ran's body that touched the energy would absorb it directly into his soul.

So he had to activate the Pupil of the Dead World, bringing his eyes close to the Holy Spirit Energy to manipulate the sculptures in the field, guiding the energy into the pupil.

"Being Sect Leader—" Lu Ran murmured as he worked diligently.

Like being a vacuum cleaner.

Behind Lu Ran, Yu Changsheng and Xun Yifei followed cautiously, afraid they might accidentally touch the Holy Spirit Energy and compete for resources with the Sect Leader.

The two of them could only watch helplessly as Lu Ran "vacuumed" the entire forested island.

"Hmm." After a long while, Lu Ran finally completed his task, collapsing on the ground.

His mind was foggy, and a silly grin spread across his face, looking none too bright.

By his rough estimation, there must've been over 300 wisps of Holy Spirit Energy.

With this harvest, the Lie Tian Divine Sculpture, already at River Realm·Second Rank, could surely ascend to the Sea Realm.

Faintly, the two heard Lu Ran muttering, "So happy, so happy~"

Yu Changsheng: "..."

Xun Yifei: "..."

"You two," Lu Ran flipped himself over onto his back, lying spread-eagled.

"Sect Leader!" The two immediately responded.

"Today, I'm completely spent," Lu Ran waved his hand, indicating the three sculptures that had upgraded simultaneously had drained him completely, "The rest is up to you two."

With those words, Lu Ran stopped trying to stay awake, his thoughts drifting away, and his gaze growing increasingly empty.

Like a fool.

Yu Changsheng and Xun Yifei exchanged glances.

Though they were happy for the Sect Leader, the concern in their eyes was even more pronounced.

Yu Changsheng said softly, "Xun, go dig a cave—keep it quiet. We can take further action after the Sect Leader recovers."

Xun Yifei immediately nodded, glanced around briefly, and hurried off into the dense forest.

Yu Changsheng approached slowly, bent down, and gently picked up the vacant-eyed Lu Ran.

My Sect Leader...

You'd better not end up truly brain-dead.

How am I going to face Nightmare, Evil Shadow, and Mad Immortal?

Those female guardians—each one more fiercely loyal than the other—would hunt me to the ends of the earth...

And the Luoshen General? She's counting on you to give her people a way to survive. If something happens to you, she'll probably skewer me with arrows!

Even Xun Yifei might commit self-sacrifice to atone...

Looking at it this way, tearing apart the Ran Sect's strong ranks might actually be quite simple.

All it takes is a mishap with Lu Ran.

...

Time flows, the sun rises and sets.

Yu Changsheng sat silently in the cave, cultivating, while listening to the sound of rain falling outside.

In the depths of the cave, Lu Ran lay motionless on the ground. Suddenly, his fingers twitched, and his gaze began to regain a hint of focus.

"Mm..." Lu Ran rubbed his head, sat up, and took in his surroundings.

"Sect Leader, you're awake." Yu Changsheng's gaze was somber as he looked toward Lu Ran.

"Sir, what time is it?"

"It's already the next night." As he spoke, Yu Changsheng's gaze grew even more melancholic.

You're finally breathing again!

Thank goodness—this guardian doesn't have to die for you after all.

"Huh? The next night?" Lu Ran was shocked.

He thought it'd only take a day, but instead, he'd been zonked out for this long?

Quickly closing his eyes, Lu Ran probed his mental world, checking the cultivation levels of the sculptures.

Lie Tian Divine Sculpture, Sea Realm... huh?

Why was it only at River Realm·Fifth Rank?

Lu Ran frowned slightly. Clearly, his dazed self from before had miscounted.

In that case, this sculpture should've settled down yesterday.

Lu Ran immediately checked the other two sculptures. Sure enough, Mo Li Evil Sculpture had advanced to Sea Realm·Second Rank.

Meanwhile, the Sea Merfolk Evil Sculpture had reached Sea Realm·First Rank.

"Hiss..." Lu Ran sucked in a cold breath, both shocked and delighted!

So that's why!

During the previous battles with various Sea Merfolk clans on the move, he had indeed harvested a large bounty!

I must say, the souls of sea-dwelling demons carry far more Holy Spirit Energy than those of land-dwelling demons!

Lu Ran's face lit up with joy, nearly laughing aloud.

Going forward, he could manufacture River Realm Peak Sea Merfolk.

With this, the Ran Sect's control over Moy Bay and the defensive strength of Cloud Sea Cliff could be significantly elevated!

Tsk~

If only I could grow as quickly as the Divine and Evil Sculptures...

But then again, once an Evil Sculpture reaches the Sea Realm, further advancement becomes exceedingly difficult.

After all, for every small rank upgrade of a Sea Realm Evil Sculpture, a full thousand wisps of Holy Spirit Energy are required!

When will this madness ever end?

[Sect Leader.]

[Mr. Cong Long?] Lu Ran opened his eyes and turned his head.

Yu Changsheng spoke gently, urging, [Next time you absorb energy, you must do so in moderation. Don't wolf it down like this again.]

[Heh heh~] Lu Ran grinned.

Upgrading three sculptures simultaneously did leave Lu Ran feeling like his brain had short-circuited.

Even after they stopped trembling one after another, gradually reducing the strain on his mind, he still utterly let go, lying there blankly.

This journey opened Lu Ran's mind to an entirely new concept!

Previously, whenever a sculpture upgraded, Lu Ran did his best to endure, striving to stay calm and rational.

But this time?

Lu Ran outright gave up—if he couldn't stay conscious, so be it. Just lie down and let it happen!

Lose awareness, become a puppet.

Give up resistance—I'm dumb now.

[Come on, Mr. Cong Long!] Lu Ran leapt to his feet, brimming with energy.

[Come?] Yu Changsheng gazed at the eager Lu Ran, concern evident in his expression, [Sect Leader should rest a little longer to recover your spirit.]

The past two days of Lu Ran's state had truly worried Yu Changsheng.

[With the cover of night, it's the perfect time for mischief!] Lu Ran flourished his hand.

Yu Changsheng: "..."

Seeing Yu Changsheng's exasperated expression, Lu Ran chuckled: [The main issue is that there are still two guardians at home who may breakthrough to the Great Realm at any moment.

If we spend too long outside, I won't feel at ease.]

Yu Changsheng didn't entirely approve of Lu Ran's approach but still asked: [What kind of outcome does the Sect Leader aim for?]

[We've now confirmed the presence of the Evil Mirror Clan on the island!] Lu Ran said gravely, [I plan to extract the energy of the Evil Mirror Clan to craft River Realm Peak Evil Mirror Demons.

Once an Evil Mirror Demon reaches the River Realm, it can use the Evil Technique-Mirror Flower Moon!

I intend to station them on various islands so that they can collect Holy Spirit Energy within their range.

Later, I'll return periodically to harvest the accumulated resources—what do you think, sir?]

Yu Changsheng nodded thoughtfully. It was indeed a promising idea.

Take this island, for instance: desolate surroundings, virtually no signs of life. Leaving an Evil Mirror Demon here would certainly yield abundant Holy Spirit Energy!

Lu Ran quickly stepped to Yu Changsheng's side, tugging him to his feet: [Come on, come on, Mr. Cong Long, there's no time to waste!]

Yu Changsheng smiled wryly.

That tone... Are you trying to wheedle me?

Pulling and tugging—what kind of decorum is this?! Seriously...

Though Yu Changsheng muttered complaints inwardly, he couldn't help but savor the lively interaction, allowing Lu Ran to drag him up and out toward the cave entrance.

Outside, darkness reigned, accompanied by torrential rain.

[Divine Seeking General?]

[Present!]

[Let's go—we'll complete the task quickly, so you can get back home to see your children.]

[Understood!]

Lu Ran soared through the skies, his ambitions fiery.

The Sea Merfolk Evil Sculpture had reached the Sea Realm! Once the Evil Mirror Demon Sculpture and Lie Tian Divine Sculpture both achieved the Sea Realm, this mission would be deemed a resounding success!

If he could claim a few strategically positioned islands, station little demons there to seize resources...

That would be a mission completed beyond expectations!

...

Chapter 509: Rivers and Seas, Immortals and Nightmares

In mid-June, Lu Ran led her team and hastily returned to Cloud Sea Cliff.

Because Big Nightmare had sent a voice transmission reminding her, she finally experienced that flash of "sudden inspiration" and activated the ascension mode.

Goal: Sea Realm!

Rather than calling it sudden inspiration, it was more accurate to say she had long been prepared with profound insights and consistently maintained a sufficiently elevated state of mind.

She was merely waiting patiently for an opportunity.

And that very opportunity emerged on that morning, the instant her fingers gently brushed against the broken blade.

The memories of all that she had encountered in Beifeng City began to resurface in her mind one by one.

Especially the recollection of Lu Ran's vivid narration, saying that Divine·Beifeng had casually waved his hand to harvest her life and claim her soul...

Deng Yuxiang tightly gripped the fractured blade handle, her beautiful eyes gleaming with sharpness, as Divine Power surged within her!

At this moment, she broke through the bottleneck!

The once humble and insignificant member of the Human Clan was now ascending step by step, roaring triumphantly as she climbed higher...

When Lu Ran and the others arrived tens of kilometers away from Cloud Sea Cliff, they found the base shrouded in mist.

Add to that the swirling fog dragon rolls connecting the cliff to the heavens.

The sight was unimaginably magnificent!

"Mr. Cong Long," Lu Ran flew mid-air, summoning the Ancient Bronze Mirror, "After returning to Cloud Sea Cliff, circle the interior and organize the vigilance for all units to check for any overlooked areas."

"Yes!" Yu Changsheng promptly accepted the order.

"I'll head to Moy Bay first and craft River Realm Peak Sea Merfolk." As she spoke, Lu Ran's skill was already forming.

Above the sea cliff, a full-length mirror emerged, and three men dressed in green raincoats and bamboo hats walked out one after another.

"Sect Leader," Yan Shuangzi had been waiting at this spot for quite a while.

"Hmm." The surrounding mist was too dense, so Lu Ran stepped closer to finally make out Yan Shuangzi's face. "Has anyone ignorant wandered over?"

"It's been relatively peaceful for now."

"Good." Lu Ran patted her shoulder, his expression solemn. "Stay vigilant, and notify me immediately if anything arises."

"Understood!"

In an instant, Lu Ran's figure flickered and descended to the rocks beneath the cliff.

First, he drew out the Dawn Blade, letting it patrol around the sea cliff, then extended a hand forward, focusing on crafting Sea Merfolk.

This trip to sea had brought remarkable gains to Lu Ran!

So much work that it felt like his feet were scrambling to meet the back of his head!

Unfortunately, during this journey, Lu Ran managed to locate only one Immortal Island, unable to push Divine Sculpture·Lie Tian into the Sea Realm.

But what he did find was the trail of the Evil Mirror Clan and led his team to slay numerous little demons, successfully advancing Evil Mirror Demon Sculpture to Sea Realm·First Rank!

Later, with Yu Changsheng's assistance, Lu Ran selected and occupied seven isolated islands.

He named them using the Big Dipper constellation.

Each of the islands was remote, cut off from the outside world.

Lu Ran assigned to each island one River Realm Peak·Evil Mirror Demon, one River Realm Peak·Sea Merfolk, and one River Realm Peak·Black Lantern.

The Evil Mirror Demon's task, naturally, was to collect Holy Spirit Energy.

The Sea Merfolk's was to guard the islands, ensuring unusual threats like Fisherman-type Evil Demons wouldn't accidentally land on the islands.

As for sea-dwelling Evil Demons, Lu Ran explicitly directed: if the enemy was weak, ambush them!

If the enemy was strong or from a large faction, the Sea Merfolk were to remain invisible, hiding away quietly.

The Evil Demon·Black Lantern functioned as a doctor; if any minor incidents truly occurred, the Black Lantern could patch up the other two companions.

Teaching these Evil Demons alone consumed enormous effort from Lu Ran!

Especially the Black Lantern Clan!

These item-type Evil Demons were practically imbeciles.

Thankfully, humanoid Evil Demons like Evil Mirror Demons and Sea Merfolk showed promising intellect.

The Evil Mirror Demon, being a tool-user (with the copper mirror), ironically made an excellent teacher; the harmonious coexistence of one demon and one lantern created a surprisingly serene picture...

And claiming islands wasn't simply a matter of landing on them to declare ownership.

Lu Ran and the others had to investigate the seas surrounding the islands.

Fortunately, two Sea Realm Great Powers from the Fish-seeking faction contributed immensely in completing this extraordinarily challenging task.

Just how difficult was it?

During the process of selecting and occupying isolated islands, Lu Ran's Sea Merfolk Evil Sculpture even advanced to Sea Realm-Second Rank!

Which speaks volumes of the series of fierce battles the Ran Sect trio endured!

Prior to taking to sea, Lu Ran was just a landlubber who, despite possessing the Mo Li Clan's Evil Technique, was largely untrained—a flashy amateur devoid of substantive water-combat prowess.

Now upon returning, Lu Ran had undergone a complete metamorphosis!

He had transformed into a full-fledged elite of maritime warfare...

Regarding the painstakingly seized seven islands, Lu Ran held ambitious hopes!

He wished that after some time, when he revisited the islands to harvest Evil Mirror Demons, he'd collect a soul along with an abundance of Holy Spirit Energy!

"Hah..." Lu Ran let out a deep exhale as energy swirled in his palm.

"Divine Power molds their bodies, Source Energy shapes their souls."

One after another, the elegantly crafted Sea Merfolk materialized under his hands.

In the Sculpture Garden, the Sea Merfolk Evil Sculptures had already advanced to Sea Realm·Second Rank, enabling Lu Ran to craft two additional River Realm Fifth Rank·Sea Merfolk atop the existing ten.

Excluding the seven Sea Merfolk stationed at the "Big Dipper Islands," Lu Ran reached the quota, crafting a total of five River Realm·Fifth Rank Sea Merfolk.

"Follow me!" Lu Ran beckoned with a flick of his hand and leapt forward, where a graceful silver-white fishtail grew swiftly from his waist.

As he entered the water, Lu Ran transformed into a merperson, leading his team as they swam toward the distance.

After extensive refinement at Seven Star Island, Lu Ran now had some tricks up his sleeve when coaching the Sea Merfolk Clan.

He patiently instructed for a while, then led the Sea Merfolk squad to meet up with the Mo Li team, adding two River Realm Peak·Mo Li to the roster.

After more than an hour, Lu Ran finally returned to Cloud Sea Cliff.

"Oh my mother..."

Lu Ran's figure flickered as he plopped onto the edge of the cliff before collapsing there directly.

Exhausted.

Too exhausted!

It wasn't just about rushing home and laboring tirelessly—it was the past half-month of continuous high-intensity missions, always on high alert.

He was drained, both physically and mentally!

"Ha... ha..."

Lu Ran's chest heaved as he gasped heavily.

It wouldn't do!

Resting wasn't an option yet.

With seven River Realm Peak Evil Mirror Demons stationed at Seven Star Island, Lu Ran still had three summoning slots!

He needed to first retrieve the River Realm Evil Mirror Demon troops within Cloud Sea Cliff and summon three higher-ranked Evil Mirror Demons to position them north, south, and west of the cliff.

Jiang Grade-Connection Mirror had a detection range of five hundred meters!

The Evil Mirror Demons could refresh the Connection Mirror at any moment. The moment they detected approaching lifeforms, they could immediately report!

Currently, the eastern sea off Cloud Sea Cliff could be described as sufficiently defended.

The other three directions required a defense upgrade!

"Tired, huh." Supporting himself with one hand, Lu Ran muttered to himself, "If you die of exhaustion, just count it as falling asleep."

He pulled out the Fiery Phoenix Patterned Gourd from his chest and tilted his head back to guzzle its contents.

"Glug-glug-glug... hic~"

"Swish!" As Lu Ran let out a satisfied burp, his figure flickered and disappeared.

Time passed.

Just as Lu Ran was working within an underground cavern five hundred meters west of Cloud Sea Cliff, he suddenly sensed someone calling him.

Lu Ran immediately connected spiritually with several sculptures.

[Young Master? Can... can you hear me?] A familiar voice echoed in his mind.

To Lu Ran's surprise, the fearless Sister Xian'er sounded unusually timid.

[Sister Xian'er, what's the matter?] Lu Ran asked with concern.

[Did you just come back? Mr. Cong Long arrived at the seclusion room earlier and gave me a Longevity Carp.] Si Xianxian seemed hesitant but still showed concern. [How did everything go? Was it smooth?]

[More or less.] Lu Ran's heart warmed. [And you, have you regained your health?]

He realized this transmission wasn't mission-related—it was merely out of concern.

[I should've recovered long ago, right? I feel I've been merging quite well with Divine Sculpture.] Si Xianxian's voice grew softer and more guilty. [Thank you, Young Master.]

Lu Ran had not only freed her from the torment of Divine-Lie Tian but also provided her with such dreamlike resources!

Yet, more than half a month later, she was still at River Realm Fifth Rank.

What made Si Xianxian feel even more ashamed was that Deng Yuxiang had reached Jiang Realm Fifth Rank!

Today, the Ran Sect's foremost Great Protector was already charging toward the Sea Realm!

While she'd made no progress, not even touching the Jiang Realm...

Lu Ran's voice was warm: [You need to work hard to comprehend. Just look at Sister Yuxiang...]

Si Xianxian's face flushed red; she scratched her head, embarrassed and angry.

She already felt guilty enough!

But Lu Ran's comment was like lighting a fuse!

Si Xianxian erupted angrily, raising her brows: [You're so good to me! You think I don't want to repay you?]

Lu Ran opened his mouth: [No, I...]

Si Xianxian: [You think I don't want to ascend? Do you know how miserable I feel every day, and you dare call me out!]

Lu Ran: "..."

Oh, boy~

That speed, that intensity, that feisty temper!

After being ruthlessly tormented by destiny, the fiery vigor of Sister Xian'er had finally returned...

Si Xianxian exploded completely, muttering incessantly: [This damned body just refuses to ascend! Don't I want to smash Lie Tian's damn head? Don't I want to charge into battle for you... for you?]

In the seclusion room, as Si Xianxian unleashed frenzied power, her voice transmission suddenly paused.

She slightly widened her eyes, sensing something faint.

"Buzz!!"

A violent surge of energy erupted from within her.

"Huh?" Si Xianxian looked completely dumbfounded.

What's going on?

So... so this is a moment of inspiration?

This cursed body—turns out it just needed a good scolding?

If only you'd said so earlier! I'd have scolded sooner... wait, no, that's not the point.

It must've been the anger, the blossoming ambition under heightened emotion, the desire to smash Lie Tian's head, the determination to fight for Lu Ran...

Si Xianxian quickly composed herself, solidifying her resolve again and again.

[Sorry, Sister Xian'er, it's my fault for imposing too much pressure on you. Don't...]

[Shh! Don't talk, I'm ascending!]

Lu Ran: ???

No way!

Lu Ran sat there stunned for a long time, nearly laughing in disbelief.

What's this about? You vent your frustration at me, and then you ascend?

You... well, Sister Xian'er, feel free to vent more in the future.

I enjoy hearing it; I love listening to it~

...

## Chapter 510: Blood Washes the Eight Desolates

Three days later, by the sea cliff.

Lu Ran sat cross-legged in deep meditation, focusing intently on his cultivation. Resting across his knees was the Eight Desolates Annihilation Blade, and nestled in his arms was a delicate gourd.

Taking advantage of the Ran Sect's two Guardians advancing their ranks, Lu Ran and his bonded weapons and artifacts were frantically absorbing the dense energies between heaven and earth.

In such a cultivation environment, it would be difficult not to grow rapidly!

Suddenly, Lu Ran felt an indistinct summoning, like someone was calling out to him.

It must be Sister Xian'er.

After all, the Big Nightmare was still ascending, and Lu Ran had a perpetual mental connection with the Evil Dog and Evil Sculpture, always keeping an open line with the Evil Shadow Guardian.

Lu Ran accepted the "voice call" immediately, and a sentence imprinted itself in his mind:

[Young Master~~~]

The deliberately drawn-out tone made Lu Ran grin instinctively.

Well now!

That sweet little voice was truly delightful~

Lu Ran could already imagine the sweet smile on Sister Xian'er's face.

[Did you succeed?] Lu Ran tested cautiously.

[Haha, I'm back to the River Realm!] Si Xianxian exclaimed in excitement, practically leaping for joy.  
[Finally, no more eating dried fish meat~]

Lu Ran also smiled and reminded her warmly: [Congratulations! The Big Nightmare is still advancing, and the sacred power within the cliffs is abundant. Don't get complacent; make sure to take this opportunity to stabilize your Realm thoroughly.]

[Mhm mhm, thank you, Young Master, for saving me from disaster! Even if I must serve as your horse or ox, I'll repay your great kindness and virtue.] Si Xianxian's voice was sweet and filled with laughter.

Lu Ran: "..."

Si Xianxian: [Why aren't you saying anything? What, you don't believe me?]

Lu Ran pouted: [You should focus on your cultivation, you little First Rank River Realm chick! And to think you call yourself a Ran Sect Guardian... I can't bring myself to acknowledge that.]

Si Xianxian immediately pulled a long face: [Are you saying I embarrass you?]

Lu Ran let out a snort: [When we first met, I was in the Stream Realm, and you were in the River Realm. Now I've reached the River Realm, and you've only just crawled out of the River Initial Stage.]

Si Xianxian's temper flared instantly, her beautiful eyes practically shooting flames: [Young Master! Have I been too lenient with you?!]

Her earlier good mood due to her breakthrough vanished without a trace.

Cursed man!

He knew exactly how to stab right into someone's heart!

Si Xianxian gritted her teeth: [Come on then, tell me where you are! I'll come riding the Fiery Fire Heavenly Leader to find you!]

[No time! Not seeing you! Focus on your cultivation!] Lu Ran decisively cut off the connection.

Truthfully, Si Xianxian was still just at the Initial Stage of the River Realm, which in the Holy Spirit Mountain Realm was hardly worth mentioning.

The issue, however, was that she was a Fierce Heavenly believer!

More precisely, Si Xianxian was destined to replace the Divine Position of Lie Tian.

"Cross-realm slaughter" — these four words seemed custom-made for her! When this girl went mad, she could even kill those in the Sea Realm...

"Hoo~" Lu Ran exhaled deeply, calming his mind.

Playful banter aside, Lu Ran truly felt a weight lifted off his heart upon Si Xianxian's successful breakthrough.

It meant her body had finally recovered.

She now had a clear and precise goal, and her Mental Realm had re-stabilized.

No doubt, the Human Clan was indeed the lowliest existence, and the cost of rebelling against the gods was unbearably heavy!

Si Xianxian's voluntary act of tearing apart her pact with a god brought devastating backlash upon herself.

Lu Ran had reason to believe that it was precisely because of this overseas venture, where he nurtured the Divine Sculpture's ascension in the garden, leading to Si Xianxian's continuous fusion and resonance with it, that she had fully restored herself.

"Good, it's good that she's healed." Lu Ran murmured softly.

Si Xianxian had completely bid farewell to a tragic past! The rest of her life would have no shackles, allowing her to take bold, unrestricted strides and soar with each step!

Eventually, she would transform into the Ran Sect's one and only Mad Immortal.

Lu Ran's lips curled into a smile once more. With one hand gripping the blade's handle and the other holding the Blazing Phoenix Patterned Gourd, he focused intently on training.

Si Xianxian's breakthrough from the River Realm to the Second Rank of the River Realm took her only three days.

Meanwhile, Deng Yuxiang's breakthrough to a Great Realm, ascending to the Sea Realm, would take five to ten days.

Strictly speaking, these five to ten days were a phase where Deng Yuxiang would see explosive growth.

The surging Divine Power would continuously expand her meridians, nourishing every inch of her flesh, and enhancing her physical strength.

Thus, from the moment she broke through her bottleneck, the longer she took to advance, the more beneficial it would be for her!

There was only one problem: this was Holy Spirit Mountain!

The longer her advancement took, the more likely she'd encounter an attack from unscrupulous foes.

On Deng Yuxiang's sixth day of advancement, something happened!

A worried Lu Ran suddenly received a telepathic transmission from Yan Shuangzi.

[Sect Leader!]

[What's the matter?] Lu Ran's heart sank. Among his subordinates, the Evil Shadow Guardian was the most dutiful and the quietest.

To his surprise, Yan Shuangzi transmitted: [I've hit a cultivation bottleneck and just wanted to report this to Sect Leader.]

Lu Ran: ???

The thick, rolling mist brought about by the Big Nightmare's advancement was enormous, forming one Fog Dragon Roll after another, still linking heaven and earth!

In such an environment, cultivation among the Ran Sect members naturally progressed with half the effort for twice the effect.

The problem was...

Lu Ran vaguely remembered that Yan Shuangzi had only returned to the River Realm this past March. Now it was late June.

In just three months, she was ready to advance again?

Such cultivation speed was almost catching up to Lu Ran himself!

Wait!

Lu Ran suddenly recalled that Yan Shuangzi had been knocked down from the Second Rank of the River Realm.

Could it be that rebuilding her Dao Heart and retracing her cultivation path allowed her to advance more skillfully and quickly?

[This is wonderful news!] Lu Ran suppressed his thoughts and replied. [Coordinate with Jing Hong to hand off your responsibilities, then come to the sea cliff. I'll lend you the Little Chi Feng.]

Yan Shuangzi hesitated for a moment: [But the Nightmare Guardian is still advancing. Shouldn't I...]

[It's fine!] Lu Ran interrupted firmly. [Cultivation and growth are the top priority! If you fall behind for even a step, you'll fall behind for every step after that! The only reason to deliberately slow your progress is if you aren't ready yet.]

Yan Shuangzi's fate had already been far too tragic.

She had faithfully followed him; how could he let her suffer further?

Yan Shuangzi pressed her thin lips together and responded softly: [Understood.]

After a brief pause, Lu Ran transmitted: [Sister Yuxiang will surely be ecstatic to know how spectacularly you've rebuilt and are progressing.]

[Understood!] Yan Shuangzi replied solemnly.

"Things are improving." Lu Ran picked up the Blazing Phoenix Patterned Gourd and weighed it in his palm.

Breakthroughs were happening in succession.

The Ran Sect's overall strength was growing visibly and rapidly.

As the leader of the sect, how could Lu Ran not feel joy in his heart?

Half a minute later, Yan Shuangzi silently appeared at Lu Ran's side, lowering her head and kneeling on one knee.

Lu Ran handed over the Treasure Gourd: "Focus on breaking through. That's the only thing you should concern yourself with right now. Providing you with a secure environment is my responsibility."

Yan Shuangzi accepted the Fiery Phoenix Patterned Gourd, lowering her face beneath the brim of her bamboo hat, and nodded silently.

"Go on. I await your good news."

"Understood!" Yan Shuangzi disappeared.

Lu Ran remained seated for a moment before slowly standing up and taking a deep breath.

He had been in the Holy Spirit Mountain Realm for nearly half a year.

Lu Ran had forged a foundation; where once he had only Deng Yuxiang by his side, now he was surrounded by many loyal, like-minded companions. Everything was falling into place.

When he arrived as a newcomer, weak and helpless, this harsh and cruel land couldn't prevent him from finding his footing.

Nor could it suppress his rise!

From now on...

Lu Ran raised his head, his resolute gaze piercing through the layers of mist, as if seeing the heavens beyond.

You will not stop me!

With his hands behind his back, Lu Ran stood tall, drawing in the dense energy around him.

His Dao Heart gleamed brilliantly, growing and thriving in a place unseen by others.

Time passed slowly as the sky began to darken.

"Hiss..."

Suddenly, from the eastern sky, the faint sound of a dragon's roar echoed forth.

Lu Ran's eyes snapped open.

That sound... was it the Angry Sea Flame Flood Dragon?

The eastern sea near Cloud Sea Cliff was under the control of Lu Ran's Mo Li team and Sea Merfolk squad. It was virtually impossible for an Evil Demon to get through the defenses there.

The only ones capable of getting through would be creatures like the Angry Sea Flame Flood Dragon.

Both comfortable in the ocean and dwelling within the sky.

Dwelling in the sky?!

Lu Ran's heart stirred as he gripped the Eight Desolates Annihilation Blade: "Eight Desolates, you and I fighting the Angry Sea Flame Flood Dragon—could this be considered an aerial battle?"

"Sect Leader?" Through the dense mist, Luo Ying's voice called out.

"Luoshen General, hold your position. I'll take a look!" Lu Ran commanded loudly and vanished in a flash.

After three instances of Instant Teleportation, Lu Ran appeared three kilometers away, standing between the sea and sky.

"Hiss!!"

A dragon's roar shook the heavens and earth.

In the darkened skies of the east, a gargantuan dragon flew straight toward him.

Its body stretched for hundreds of meters, every scale glowing a menacing blood red!

That massive form seemed to turn the whole sky crimson.

Its enormous dragon eyes locked onto the direction of Cloud Sea Cliff—its attack target couldn't have been clearer!

The Angry Sea Flame Flood Dragon's speed was extraordinary, completely ignoring a "tiny" being like Lu Ran in its path.

Lu Ran glanced over his shoulder.

Cloud Sea Cliff was still shrouded in mist, with fog dragon rolls linking heaven and earth. It was certainly an enticing sight for anyone—or anything.

"Roar!!"

The Angry Sea Flame Flood Dragon opened its large, bloody maw, roaring in rage as it charged violently, exuding ruthless terror and an overpowering aura!

Lu Ran abruptly ascended skyward, not opting for a sneak attack but instead positioning himself directly in the dragon's flight path.

"Hiss!!"

The Angry Sea Flame Flood Dragon finally noticed the puny human.

Yet it didn't unleash any special skill—instead, it simply continued forward.

Obviously, with its commanding, colossal body charging forward, a tiny human would naturally be crushed into dust.

"Eight Desolates, wake up."

Lu Ran slowly raised the blade in his hand.

Amidst the billowing stormclouds, a solitary figure stood between sea and sky, his blade pointing directly at the blood-colored dragon far away.

The Angry Sea Flame Flood Dragon, stretching hundreds of meters long, brought with it a crimson-stained horizon, roaring as it surged forward, seemingly intent on obliterating all under heaven.

Even before the battle began,

this scene already carried an epic, legendary aura.

"On land, I've wielded you to slay countless Evil Demons and cut down innumerable fiends."

"In the deep sea, we've fought battle after grueling battle, staining countless waters red with the blood of Evil Demons."

"This fight, Eight Desolates, is our aerial battle!"

Gripping the blade tightly, Lu Ran watched as the furious dragon drew closer and closer.

The overwhelming aura crashed toward him, accompanied by fierce sea winds that sent his bamboo cloak fluttering wildly.

Lu Ran's eyes burned with murderous intent, locking onto the massive beast with its bloody maw wide open.

Eight Desolates,

Today, let's wash your blade with this scalding dragon blood.

Eight Desolates,

It's time for you to awaken!