

Old Gods 511

Chapter 511: Wake up!!

"Roar!!"

The Angry Sea Flame Flood Dragon dragged its massive body, over five hundred meters in length, crashing forward with an earth-shattering force, as though it intended to crush everything in its path.

Arrogant, domineering, with an aura that pierced the skies!

By common standards, a body size of five hundred meters was already astonishing.

But to the Angry Sea Flame Flood Dragon clan, this size was insufficient to reach the "Great Demon of Sea Realm" level, only qualifying as River Realm.

"Hmph." A murderous intent surged in Lu Ran's eyes. He stood resolutely before the Angry Sea Flame Flood Dragon, fearless and steadfast.

In the depths of his gaze, a faint glimmer of crimson swept by like a phantom.

And then—an extraordinary spectacle unfolded!

Any observer would surely think the blood-red flood dragon would crush the minuscule member of the Human Clan or swallow him whole.

Yet, impossibly, the Angry Sea Flame Flood Dragon's enormous body suddenly trembled violently!

"Hiss..."

The dragon let out a keening cry, its roar still reverberating across the heavens and earth. But the once terrifying dragon's roar now sounded unmistakably like a scream of agony.

Yes—agony!

The Angry Sea Flame Flood Dragon had fallen victim to a poison known as "Tethering Silk."

It was appalled to discover it had been dragged into a crimson world. Countless red threads surged from all directions, piercing through its scales and ravaging its flesh.

"Hiss!! Hiss..."

The dragon's forward charge came to an abrupt halt, shrieking miserably.

Its pain was uncontrollable. It twisted its colossal body, spraying forth a gargantuan pillar of fire from its gaping mouth.

Evil Technique·Sea-Piercing Flame!

The dragon's head flailed wildly, spewing flames in every direction—into the sea, into the heavens, where they punctured clouds heavy with rolling smoke.

The image was utterly terrifying!

Being engulfed by such flames would spell disastrous consequences!

To be truthful, this clan's sheer size was like a bug in the system.

Replace it with another River Realm Evil Demon, say the Blood Disaster Dog clan—how could the flames from a dog's mouth ever rival the terrifying scope of the Sea-Piercing Flame?

"Heh." Lu Ran sneered coldly, his figure promptly vanishing.

In the next instant, he reappeared at the side of the Angry Sea Flame Flood Dragon's head, driving the Eight Desolates Annihilation Blade forward with deadly precision.

"Slash!"

The Tianchen Steel-crafted Eight Desolates Blade was razor-sharp. Wrapped in Lu Ran's Divine Power and bolstered by Fierce Heavenly Power, it instantly shattered the flood dragon's blood-colored scales.

The blade plunged straight into the dragon's flesh!

"Hiss..." The Angry Sea Flame Flood Dragon thrashed desperately, roaring furiously.

Does it hurt?

Maybe just a little.

After all, Lu Ran was far too small.

The Tang Blade in his hand was even smaller. Embedded in the dragon's body, it seemed to give off an impression of insignificance, almost negligible.

Negligible?

Lu Ran's gaze turned icy. Gripping the Eight Desolates Blade buried in the dragon's flesh tightly, a black cloud billowed beneath his feet.

From beside the dragon's head, he wielded the blade to carve backward, slicing across the dragon's body!

"Chop! Chop..."

Where the blade passed, scales fractured and scattered in every direction.

A long, thin wound stretched across the dragon's face to its neck and continued toward its body.

Scalding dragon blood splattered across Lu Ran's body!

The sight was extraordinarily grand!

But the problem was...

Could such a thin wound inflict effective damage on this colossal beast?

Unclear.

Lu Ran didn't care.

His actions weren't aimed at causing harm—they were fulfilling a promise.

Just moments ago, he had assured the Eight Desolates Annihilation Blade that he would use the boiling dragon blood...

To cleanse the blade!

"Buzz!"

Lu Ran continued to carve with the blade when he felt its hilt tremble heavily in his grasp.

"Hmm?" Lu Ran's eyes lit up.

Yes. Absolutely.

Eight Desolates, we've been at Holy Spirit Mountain for far too long, and fought for far too long.

You should awaken!

"Hiss!" Of course, the Angry Sea Flame Flood Dragon noticed the infuriating little pest.

The physical pain was trivial—insignificant in comparison to the mental torment it endured.

But Lu Ran's blatant provocation... was deeply insulting. Insulting to the dragon, that is!

Furious beyond reconciliation, the dragon's energy erupted violently.

Evil Technique-Flood Dragon Flame Killing Domain!

Instantly, countless miniature flame flood dragons materialized within its body and swarmed outward.

This type of domain technique was overwhelmingly powerful!

An infinite number of tiny flame flood dragons surrounded their caster's form, autonomously seeking to kill foes.

Ever since Lu Ran became a Believer, the techniques he least wanted to face were loud ones.

And the techniques he despised the most were mobile ones!

He vividly recalled the time when he first encountered the Prison Sky Demon clan in the Human World, those horrifying arms had taught him quite the lesson.

Even now, thinking about it made him grit his teeth.

"Shhhh~"

Lu Ran's expression darkened as he flashed several hundred meters away.

The Eight Desolates Blade trembled faintly in his hand, scalding dragon blood dripping down its tip into the ocean below.

Lu Ran extended his hand forward, energy roiling within his palm.

"Pop~"

The whimsical sound of a fish blowing bubbles echoed across the sky.

A gigantic Mo Li materialized, its head forming rapidly as it soared toward the heavens.

Mo Li Clan Grand Technique·Ink-Colored Evil Carp!

Bear in mind, even the River Grade Ink-Colored Evil Carp measured an imposing three hundred meters.

Emanating from the hand of a mere Human Clan member, the scene was nothing short of fantastical.

"Hiss..."

Within moments, the Angry Sea Flame Flood Dragon let loose a piercing shriek.

This clan's spiritual defense has always been their weak point.

And yet, the Ink-Colored Evil Carp's peculiar bubble-blowing sound launched a devastating spiritual assault against its target!

While charging toward the dragon, it simultaneously unleashed countless miniature Mo Li carp. If these fish ensnared their target, they would mercilessly claw through the target's neural pathways.

"Roar!!"

The Angry Sea Flame Flood Dragon descended into complete madness, roaring in agony as it spewed forth another Sea-Piercing Flame.

The enormous pillar of fire actually pierced through the Ink-Colored Evil Carp!

However, the carp did not immediately disintegrate upon impact; though its belly was punctured, its head remained intact, continuing its haunting bubble-blowing sound.

Lu Ran flashed again, appearing beside the dragon's head and unleashing a sharp shout: "Ahhhh!!!"

Sea Merfolk Evil Technique·Sea Merfolk Song!

The Angry Sea Flame Flood Dragon's body froze abruptly!

The fire pillar spewing from its mouth ceased, and even the miniature flame flood dragons swimming around it dissipated into nothingness.

Flood Dragon Flame Killing Domain, being a domain technique, functioned as a sustained spell.

But Lu Ran's Triple Attack thoroughly broke the dragon's spirit!

Tethering Evil Technique·Silk Pupil!

Mo Li Evil Technique·Ink-Colored Evil Carp!

Sea Merfolk Evil Technique·Sea Merfolk Song!

All were spiritual assaults, targeting the dragon's weakest point!

Mere moments ago, the Angry Sea Flame Flood Dragon was rampant, considering the minuscule human beneath its notice, ready to crush Lu Ran underfoot.

But now...

The dragon had been rendered upright like a soldier at attention!

Its massive body hung stiffly in the sky.

"Shhh!" With a flash of movement, Lu Ran reappeared right before the enormous dragon's eye!

Truly daring with his skills!

Lu Ran's killing intent surged, his pupils dyed an eerily vibrant crimson. Leaning forward, he pressed his face directly against the dragon's eye.

Man and dragon met with penetrating gazes.

A diminutive human trampled the Angry Sea Flame Flood Dragon's domain, wreaking havoc directly upon its face!

The dragon's mind, already clouded and confused, fell further into abyssal crimson chaos.

Thousands of red threads tore at its body, ravaging its fragile psyche.

"Whimper..."

Weeping in torment, the dragon's elongated body trembled violently, thrashing its head and plunging into the depths of the sea.

"Slash!"

Blade met flesh!

Lu Ran's figure flickered, appearing atop the dragon's head as the Eight Desolates Blade plunged deep into its flesh.

This time, Lu Ran made no attempt to step onto clouds. Instead, a dense mist erupted beneath his feet!

"Slash—"

Almost like a sprinter, Lu Ran gripped the hilt embedded in the dragon's skull and began rushing down its body.

"Buzz!!"

The Eight Desolates Blade, buried deep within flesh and drenched in boiling dragon blood, emitted a roaring hum.

The vibration was fierce—unprecedented!

On the distant sea, a lone figure stood quietly.

Xun Yifei tilted his head upward, his gaze burning with intensity.

He was here on assignment; Mr. Cong Long had been worried about the Sect Leader and sent Xun Yifei to hold the line.

Instead, Xun Yifei witnessed a scene he would never forget for the rest of his life.

Amid the rolling thunderclouds and raging waves, his Sect Leader slaughtered the Angry Sea Flame Flood Dragon in a singularly brutal fashion...

One man, one blade.

From dragon head to body, and then all the way to its tail!

"Splash!" A thunderous crash erupted.

The massive Angry Sea Flame Flood Dragon slammed into the ocean heavily, generating towering waves!

Lu Ran did not follow it down. Instead, wind and waves supported his steps, suspending him in mid-air.

Now, he appeared more like a "blood man."

Holding the Eight Desolates Blade in one hand, dripping with dragon blood, he ran his fingers across its edge.

Boiling dragon blood slid away, revealing the gleaming Tianchen Steel material beneath.

"Eight Desolates."

"Buzz!" The blade quivered lightly, seeming to respond to its master.

Lu Ran licked his lips with exhilaration, ready to speak.

"Hiss!!" Another dragon howl echoed.

The Angry Sea Flame Flood Dragon had reached its limits, plunging into madness, as though it had lost all self-awareness.

A gigantic dragon's head suddenly emerged from the sea, its body consumed by raging flames!

Evil Technique-Dragon Flame Body!

The Evil Technique version of Fiery Fire Heavenly Leader!

Without question, before its energy and strength were completely depleted, its Evil Technique output would be immensely amplified.

If even a trace of energy clipped Lu Ran, he would be reduced to fragments!

From afar, Xun Yifei's heart leapt.

Dragons that had lost consciousness were extremely dangerous entities!

He wanted to intervene, to suggest Lu Ran retreat temporarily—surely the wise move.

Yet at this moment, Lu Ran's domineering aura was overwhelming!

Amid the ocean and sky, Lu Ran suddenly raised his hand high. Beneath the boiling clouds, a colossal battle axe rapidly formed.

Xun Yifei's eyes narrowed slightly!

That was...

The Barbaric Woman Clan's River Realm Technique·Barbaric Evil Battle Axe?!

"Whoosh!"

A hundred-meter-wide battle axe descended from the skies, carrying enough power to split mountains and seas, slashing toward the Angry Sea Flame Flood Dragon.

"Boom!!!"

The axe's edge struck fiercely, sending waves crashing like tsunamis to either side.

"Hiss..." The dragon howled miserably, its burning body cleaved in two!

All that remained was a massive dragon head, and ten meters of fragmented neck and body trailing behind.

Undeniably, both the Fierce Heavenly Sect and the Angry Sea Flame Flood Dragon clan's offensive prowess were horrendous.

But my Barbaric Woman Clan's output is equally explosive!

The Barbaric Evil Battle Axe had a second stage of output!

Massive quantities of yellow sand surged from the axe's edge, forming a terrifying Sand Sea that blanketed the ocean waves, raging uncontrollably.

Lu Ran twirled his blade, his figure flashing once more!

Amid the sands and waves, the green-cloaked figure appeared behind the dragon's shattered body.

"Slash—"

Lu Ran gripped the blade with both hands, eyes trained on the dragon's severed body as Immortal Fog churned beneath his feet!

"Eight Desolates!"

"Six months!"

"We fought on land and sea—today we battle the skies!"

Lu Ran roared furiously and charged into the mangled dragon's body!

Scalding dragon blood soaked him instantly, the razor-sharp blade carving through flesh and driving from tail to head, destined to pierce through the Angry Sea Flame Flood Dragon.

"Eight Desolates! Wake the hell up!!"

Buzz!!

...

Chapter 512: Yangyang Sea

One person, one blade, piercing through the remaining ten-meter-long dragon body, killing their way out from the dragon's head.

This time, the Angry Sea Flame Flood Dragon didn't even have the chance for a wailing.

The blazing dragon head plunged into the sea, staining large swathes of seawater red with blood. Flames burned the water, creating thick steam.

Lu Ran stood in mid-air, gripping the hilt of the blade with both hands, the Eight Desolate Blade poised before him.

Scalding dragon blood dripped continuously from the blade.

"Awaken, Eight Desolates..."

Lu Ran murmured, his blood-stained eyes fixed intensely on the Eight Desolates Annihilation Blade.

The hilt in his hands buzzed, its vibrations growing increasingly strong.

Lu Ran was overjoyed, filled with anticipation.

second, 2 seconds, 3 seconds...

"Pop!" In the sea, the enormous corpse of the Angry Sea Flame Flood Dragon shattered into spots of energy.

Even the blood-stained seawater transformed into threads of mist, dispersing rapidly.

This world was magical enough—such a massive blood-red dragon disappeared into smoke as if it had never existed in this world.

Lu Ran was indifferent to everything happening beneath his feet.

His gaze burned solely upon the Eight Desolates Annihilation Blade.

Excitement, anticipation... confusion, disappointment.

In mere tens of seconds, Lu Ran's emotions were like riding a roller coaster.

Almost like experiencing unrequited love.

His joy and anticipation vanished before he could muster the courage to confess, only to see the goddess happily leaning into someone else's embrace.

It was truly unbearable~

"Don't stop now." Lu Ran watched as the Eight Desolate Blade fell silent.

Just keep vibrating! Why did you go quiet again?

Did you run out of energy?

Lu Ran gripped the blade hilt with both hands, swaying it back and forth as if holding a pillar of incense.

"Eight Desolates, let's discuss this, could you wake up?"

Not far away, Xun Yifei had been silently watching all this, suddenly laughing soundlessly.

When people are utterly speechless, they indeed let out inexplicable laughter.

Earlier, how magnificent was the presence of Lu Ran?

How imposing was his radiance?

He trampled the face of the Angry Sea Flame Flood Dragon, slaughtering wildly, ultimately cleaving through its burning dragon head!

Exuding the aura of a king reigning over the world!

And now? Look at this!

Lu Ran held the blade, wobbling it pitifully like a farmer shaking incense, pleading in desperation...

"Still not enough?" Lu Ran dropped his gaze.

"Land battle, sea battle, aerial battle—covered them all."

"In these six months, we've traversed Holy Spirit Mountain, evading pursuers, eliminating villains, saving comrades."

"Wuji Peak, Withered Woods, Night Charm Lake, Sword Mountain Peak, Sword Ridge Peak...the Tiantu bandits, Hidden Wolf Forest followers, Sea Clan allies..."

"And the boundless ocean, our Seven Star Island..."

Lu Ran pressed his forehead to the blade, speaking softly.

Is this still not enough?

"Buzz~" Eight Desolate Blade quivered lightly.

As if it was responding, or perhaps comforting its master.

Since early June, when Lu Ran slew the Sea Merfolk Clan in distant waters, the Eight Desolate Blade began to react.

A faint trace of consciousness emerged.

Through the subsequent tide of battles, the blade grew little by little, occasionally giving Lu Ran feedback.

Until today's battle, the Eight Desolate Blade trembled with unprecedented intensity!

Lu Ran thought all was about to succeed, but unexpectedly, the blade still failed to form a complete Artifact Spirit.

"So very difficult." Lu Ran sighed deeply.

He had defined a clear trajectory for cultivating his weapon, yet the trials of the past six months were experiences ordinary warriors could not fathom over a lifetime.

The Eight Desolate Blade, following such a master and nurtured with such care, still couldn't progress quickly enough...

Xun Yifei stood nearby, quietly keeping watch.

From time to time, his eyes would sweep over Lu Ran, clearly seeing his despondent expression.

But only a dozen seconds later, Lu Ran's countenance shifted.

With a single stroke across the blood-stained blade, his disappointment vanished, replaced entirely by determination.

Xun Yifei couldn't help but silently nod.

Neither arrogant nor discouraged—truly befitting of the General's Style!

"Xun."

"Here!" Xun Yifei surged across the turbulent sea, propelled by the water flowing around his feet.

"Let's head back," Lu Ran said softly.

"Yes!" Xun Yifei obeyed, but as he skimmed across the waves for a few meters, he suddenly halted. "Sect Leader."

"Hmm?"

"You will succeed; you just need a little more time."

Xun Yifei was not one for idle chatter. His proactive reassurances now left Lu Ran somewhat surprised.

"Of course!" Lu Ran nodded strongly.

I've managed to mend shattered lives—what's a complete blade to me?

Nightmares, Evil Shadows, Mad Immortals—each sunk into abyssal depths, violently broken. Yet in my hands, each emerged whole and radiant.

"Splash!"

Lu Ran plunged into the sea, carefully washing the blade.

Though the Eight Desolate Blade failed to form its Artifact Spirit this time, Lu Ran was certain it had made significant strides toward becoming a Divine Weapon!

It might even be just one final step away.

Lu Ran had previously nurtured both Dawn Blade and Quiet Night, and understood precisely what this level of feedback signified for the Eight Desolate Blade.

Perhaps the blade only required a triggering moment.

To Lu Ran, within Holy Spirit Mountain... opportunities lay all around!

Lu Ran contemplated silently and left to return to Cloud Sea Cliff after cleaning.

As for the soul of the Flame Flood Dragon, it had long been automatically drawn into Lu Ran's Pupil of the Dead World.

Regrettably, the mist formed from the dragon's shattered remains was lost, as Lu Ran's focus was entirely on the blade, preventing him from channeling the Divine Power Bead Chain to absorb the energy.

No matter.

Within Cloud Sea Cliff, both Nightmare and Evil Shadow Guardians were advancing—energy was plentiful.

Lu Ran returned to his usual spot and resumed cultivation at the cliff's edge.

It must be said, the recent breakthroughs among Ran Sect members had been extraordinarily smooth.

Aside from the one unwelcomed Angry Sea Flame Flood Dragon, the next few days were devoid of unusual creatures.

By noon two days later, Lu Ran received Yan Shuangzi's transmission.

[Sect Leader, your subordinate has successfully advanced.]

[Excellent!] Though prepared, Lu Ran could not hold back his joy. [Congratulations on reclaiming River Realm Second Rank!]

Inside a pitch-black seclusion room, Yan Shuangzi silently lowered her head.

If not for those mishaps, she might be equal to Deng Yuxiang.

Even if Deng Yuxiang had earlier joined Lu Ran and bonded with Evil Sculpture, at the very least, Yan Shuangzi wouldn't have lagged far behind her former confidant.

But now...

Deng Yuxiang was poised to become a Sea Realm Great Power, capable of shattering mountains and splitting seas with a mere wave of her hand.

While Yan Shuangzi still struggled at the Initial Stage of River Realm.

[Evil Shadow?]

[Here.] Yan Shuangzi recollected herself. [What orders does the Sect Leader have?]

Lu Ran furrowed his brows slightly. [You don't seem very happy?]

Yan Shuangzi: "..."

Lu Ran pondered for a moment, realizing the problem likely lay in the words "reclaiming River Realm Second Rank."

Did the phrase dredge up bitter memories?

Organizing his thoughts, Lu Ran spoke softly: [Your past experiences shape the you of today and will forge the you of tomorrow.]

Raising people is like raising flowers.

Even if those people are seen as omnipotent entities in the eyes of the world—a Vast River.

In Lu Ran's view, even River Realm Great Powers are still human—they, too, can feel fragility and sorrow, and deserve to be delicately nurtured.

He continued: [Don't misjudge my intentions; I am neither glorifying suffering nor indulging it.

I am acknowledging, I am venerating you—the one who endured such suffering and still rose again.]

Yan Shuangzi pressed her lips together, replying softly: [Yes, Sect Leader.]

Lu Ran felt helpless, correcting her: [Sect Leader.]

[Yes, Sect Leader.]

[You should also acknowledge yourself; you should admire yourself.] Lu Ran said firmly, [Focus on solidifying your Mental Realm and stabilizing your Realm in the seclusion room.

Evil Shadow, we have a long journey ahead.]

[Yes, Sect Leader.]

Lu Ran: "..."

He rose from his seat, standing at the edge of the high cliff, sighing inwardly.

Take your time.

I'll nurture you well.

"Whoosh~" The patrolling Dawn Blade flew past the edge, circling Lu Ran before disappearing into the mist.

Lu Ran stood still in the thick fog, unable to see far, but the sound of waves crashing was clear.

Calculating the timing, Big Nightmare ought to be nearing the end of its seclusion by now.

After all, this breakthrough to a Great Realm within River Realm had taken nearly ten days.

And naturally, the longer Deng Yuxiang took, the better!

After all, every second of her advancement strengthened her body through saturation with Divine Power.

As Lu Ran speculated silently, the towering Fog Dragon Rolls connecting heaven and earth abruptly dissipated.

Gradually, the mist over Cloud Sea Cliff grew thin.

Lu Ran sensed the change and was instantly elated.

Deng Yuxiang had succeeded!

Had she ascended to become a revered Yangyang Sea figure?!

Lu Ran restrained himself from immediately sending a transmission, patiently waiting for a while longer before realizing something. In a flash, he appeared beside Nightmare Residence.

Sure enough, Ran Sect members had already gathered.

And the one being congratulated was none other than the long-absent Deng Yuxiang!

Lu Ran was naturally moved.

Two martial artists, Deng Yan and Deng Yuxiang, with nearly identical styles, both clawing their way out of the abyss, yet treading different paths.

Deng Yuxiang's brilliance reemerged, just as dazzlingly radiant as ever.

Now she stood surrounded by celebration, with a vibrant and festive mood inside and outside Nightmare Residence.

Yan Shuangzi, by contrast, had fallen into complete silence.

For all her taciturn, reclusive nature, Yan Shuangzi's recent advancements were known only to Lu Ran.

Ran Sect members seemed unaware that the Evil Shadow Guardian had also successfully advanced.

Lu Ran debated internally—should he summon her to share in the joy with everyone?

"Hmm?" Suddenly, Lu Ran's heart tightened, his gaze shifting boldly.

Not far away, Deng Yuxiang was watching him.

"Sect Leader."

"Sect Leader..." One by one, everyone greeted.

Lu Ran gave no immediate response, his gaze fixed on the familiar yet unfamiliar woman.

Although Deng Yuxiang bore no trace of hostility, Lu Ran could feel an immense pressure.

It was the terror-inducing aura of a Yangyang Sea.

Even as a Jiang Realm-Third Rank, Lu Ran found himself struggling to breathe.

Perhaps due to Deng Yuxiang's recent ascension, her sharp edge overwhelmingly eclipsed the other Sea Realm figures nearby.

"We can exact our revenge now." She suddenly said.

"Huh?" Lu Ran hadn't anticipated that Deng Yuxiang's first words after emerging from seclusion would be this.

Deng Yuxiang strode forward.

Yet in Lu Ran's perception, it felt like a frightening existence was advancing toward him with a crushing aura.

Far more terrifying than the Angry Sea Flame Flood Dragon days ago...

Deng Yuxiang stopped before him, her eyes brimming with a startling intensity of killing intent. Her lips whispered three words:

"Tiantu Mountain."

"Tiantu Mountain." Lu Ran repeated softly, stabilizing his thoughts.

The place where the dream began?

...

Chapter 513: loser

Deng Yuxiang hated Tiantu Mountain to the core!

When she and Lu Ran first arrived, they were harshly taught a lesson by the people of Tiantu Mountain, led by Lady Luo.

If not for their formidable strength, the two of them would've met a gruesome end in the mountains on only the second day they entered Spirit Mountain!

Deng Yuxiang's hatred for Tiantu Mountain went far beyond that.

After that ambush, the two encountered the people of Tiantu Mountain again, this time led by Village Chief Luo Tiantu and a group of thugs.

Unlike last time, Luo Tiantu and Lady Kong, both Sea Realm Great Powers, had no interest in putting on a facade.

From the lofty Yangyang Sea, they condescendingly ordered Lu Ran and Deng Yuxiang to surrender their Divine Weapons, and even sought to take their lives.

Deng Yuxiang would never forget the faces of those people.

Nor would she ever forget the feeling of utter helplessness.

On the battlefield, she was the first to retreat.

Though Deng Yuxiang was following Lu Ran's order, it was an humiliation she couldn't erase from her memory.

She wanted to protect Lu Ran, but...

She had become a burden.

For a Martial Artist as proud as she was, this humiliation became a knot in her heart.

Lu Ran had once promised her that they would return to face Tiantu Mountain once she ascended to the Sea Realm.

Now, the time had come!

"You should return to your seclusion room first and stabilize your realm," Lu Ran said softly.

Deng Yuxiang suddenly raised her hand, startling Lu Ran into full alertness!

There was no helping it—her newfound Sea Realm presence, even an inadvertent movement, carried an overwhelming pressure...

Deng Yuxiang's hand gently landed on Lu Ran's chest, her movements soft as she tidied his disheveled cloak. Her voice was equally soft:

"And then, we'll head to Tiantu Mountain?"

Lu Ran looked at the woman before him, her eyes steady and unwavering as they quietly met his gaze.

Before others, Deng Yuxiang was always respectful and deferential toward Lu Ran.

The Ran Sect's top protector led by example, showing everyone how to treat their Sect Master.

But at this moment...

While Deng Yuxiang's actions couldn't quite be called impudent, this level of closeness was a privilege they only allowed themselves in private.

In a way, it was a kind of spoiled familiarity, carrying a hint of urging.

"I thought impatience was my exclusive flaw," Lu Ran said with a faint smile.

Deng Yuxiang's fingers, which were adjusting Lu Ran's collar, paused ever so slightly.

She lifted her gaze and looked at him with a playful reproach in her eyes.

That one light glance sent Lu Ran's heart into a panic!

What a true Sea Realm Great Power!

So full of majesty!

And yet, the glance wasn't angry or stern—not even close to a glare...

Lu Ran froze entirely!

He steadied his mind and spoke gently, "It's already the end of June. Let's set the mission for early July. Your recent breakthrough has left everyone quite worn out; they need rest.

It's also a good opportunity for you to stabilize your realm and practice the Sea Realm Technique of the Night Charm Clan."

Deng Yuxiang, still considerate, averted her gaze, sparing Lu Ran any further embarrassment.

"You should return to the seclusion room first," Lu Ran said softly.

"Mm." Deng Yuxiang nodded lightly, brushed down Lu Ran's clothing one last time, and turned to leave.

Lu Ran watched her retreating figure and exhaled slightly.

It was clear—the impact of ascending realm levels significantly affected one's state of mind.

However, the shift from River to Sea Realm wasn't the most dramatic transformation for the Human Clan.

The true qualitative leap came when people progressed from River to the River Realm Second Rank...

[By the way, Evil Shadow also ascended to River Realm Second Rank during your breakthrough.]

[Oh?] Deng Yuxiang halted midstride and glanced back at Lu Ran.

Lu Ran nodded lightly and suggested, [If you have the time, you should congratulate her.]

[Alright.]

"Thank you, everyone," Lu Ran said, clasping his fists and scanning the group. "Take the next few days to rest well! We'll discuss our next mission at the beginning of July."

"Yes!"

"Yes..." The group echoed and dispersed one by one.

Yu Changsheng and Si Xianxian stayed behind.

With a dramatic "swish," Yu Changsheng gracefully opened his folding fan, lightly fanning himself while smiling at Lu Ran.

Lu Ran felt his scalp tingle under the gaze.

"Mr. Conglong, why are you laughing?" Lu Ran eventually couldn't resist asking.

"Sect Master, you seem quite intimidated by Nightmare Guardian," Yu Changsheng commented with a smile.

Lu Ran immediately rolled his eyes.

"Hahaha!" Yu Changsheng let out a hearty laugh. "After a few more days, the aura of her Sea Realm breakthrough will fade, and things will get better."

"I hope so," Lu Ran replied indifferently.

Yu Changsheng, Xun Yifei, and Luo Ying were all Sea Realm, and higher ranked than Deng Yuxiang.

Lu Ran had already gotten used to interacting with these Sea Realm Great Powers, so naturally, he could adjust to Deng Yuxiang as well.

However, Lu Ran was keenly aware that Deng Yuxiang was different—she was the pride of all prides!

She was an unparalleled, razor-sharp blade!

Among the original three Seas of the Ran Sect, Yu Changsheng was elegant and unrestrained, Xun Yifei was weathered and composed, and Luo Ying was a gentle motherly figure.

They surpassed Deng Yuxiang in realm levels, but in sheer presence...

Deng Yuxiang's sharpness was unmatched.

Sigh...

Hopefully, life would get a bit easier, Lu Ran thought to himself.

"Sect Master, tell me about Tiantu Mountain?" Yu Changsheng suddenly inquired softly.

"Oh." Lu Ran nodded slightly and began narrating.

Si Xianxian, standing quietly to the side, listened carefully, her frustration growing as her grip tightened on her Black Luminous Stone Hammer—fondly nicknamed "Mad Mad Hammer."

The name had an amusing origin.

Si Xianxian had long lived under her mother's strict control, constantly being told what she could and couldn't do.

Her mother even insisted on naming the hammer "Mount Tai Hammer," hoping that her daughter would remain as calm and steady as Mount Tai.

Si Xianxian despised this name, and in an act of rebellion, privately renamed the hammer "Mad Hammer."

However, she once let the name slip in front of her mother, which resulted in a lengthy scolding.

Enraged, Si Xianxian stomped her feet and decided to go all out: Fine, it's not just "Mad Hammer" anymore—it's "Mad Mad Hammer!"

Keep scolding? Then it'll be called "Mad Mad Mad Hammer!"

Lu Ran still remembered how incredulous his expression had been when he first heard this story...

"Those vile scumbags are unbearable! They deserve death!" Si Xianxian cursed vehemently as she listened to Lu Ran's story, unable to restrain herself any longer.

Yu Changsheng: "..."

Lu Ran cautiously eyed Si Xianxian and spoke in an unusually gentle tone: "Calm down, I'm talking with Mr. Conglong here."

"Oh." Si Xianxian pouted, shifted her gaze to the Mad Mad Hammer, and ran her fingers over its engraved patterns.

Yu Changsheng lightly fanned himself with his paper fan. "No wonder Nightmare Guardian harbors such hatred. If that's the case, we should eradicate this thorn as soon as possible.

Avenging this grudge will not only provide closure but also aid her growth."

Lingering obsessions and past grudges can serve as an individual's driving force for growth.

Some obsessions, like overthrowing North Wind, were irrational to pursue prematurely.

But other goals, once achievable, must be pursued relentlessly!

"Mm." Lu Ran nodded in agreement and went on to describe Tiantu Mountain's general strengths to Yu Changsheng.

Though, these details were from half a year ago and might no longer be accurate—they could only be regarded as a reference.

Once finished, Lu Ran spoke again, "Mr. Conglong, please rest for now. Meanwhile, help me draft a revenge plan. In a couple of days, we'll reconvene in the Council Hall to discuss it."

"Understood!" Yu Changsheng replied softly before turning and leaving.

Lu Ran turned to Si Xianxian. "Sister Xian'er, did you need to speak with me?"

Si Xianxian raised her gaze to meet Lu Ran's. "Don't we need to have a proper chat about you looking down on me last time?"

"No, no, no!" Lu Ran waved his hands hurriedly. "I wasn't looking down on you—that was just a tactic to motivate you to train harder."

Si Xianxian didn't press the issue further, instead huffing indignantly: "You'd better take me along for this mission! I'm going to blow those scumbags to pieces!"

Lu Ran's expression turned odd. "You seem to be getting more and more volatile."

"Hmph." Si Xianxian sneered. "This breakthrough made things abundantly clear to me:

To progress at lightning speed, I just need to say screw it and let loose!"

Lu Ran: "..."

Si Xianxian exuded confidence. "In any case, I'm no longer Lie Tian's servant, nor am I under the gods' control anymore!"

No matter how volatile I get, there's no external interference. I have full control over myself."

Lu Ran remained silent, withholding any judgment.

"What, you don't believe me?" Si Xianxian raised an eyebrow slightly.

"It's best if you're confident," Lu Ran said, patting her shoulder. "But be careful not to attack indiscriminately—be kind to your allies."

In June's ever-changing skies, Si Xianxian's expression shifted abruptly from her prior glare to a sweet smile. "Oh, young master~ How could I not be good to you!"

Lu Ran: "..."

"So that's settled—you're taking me on this mission!"

"We'll see how you perform," Lu Ran replied absentmindedly, his thoughts flashing to a few familiar faces.

Luo Tiantu, Lady Kong...

Deng Yuxiang was filled with hatred, and Lu Ran wasn't any different.

From intel gathered from previously captured members of the Tiantu Mountain faction, Lu Ran knew full well—they were a band of vile, murderous thieves.

They deserved nothing less than destruction.

It was time to end it!

Up until now, Lu Ran had mostly faced individuals or small squads from certain organizations.

This time marked his first battle of annihilation between factions since entering the mountains!

Lu Ran licked his lips; his gaze hardened with icy resolve.

Meanwhile, in the eastern-central part of the Holy Spirit Mountain Continent, within a dense forest...

A pair of men and women, dressed in intricate white robes and surrounded by floating Jade Tokens, soared through the woods.

Flanking them were no less than ten men and women in dark attire, acting as their escorts.

Another pair of men and women moved swiftly on foot, darting through the forest like shadows.

These two did not possess the surrounding Jade Tokens, yet both wielded Sky-piercing Halberds.

"Village Chief Luo, a wisp of Holy Spirit Energy has been detected nearby!" reported one of the dark-clad figures.

"Understood," Luo Tiantu responded, descending gracefully to the ground.

"Village Chief Luo!" came a resolute voice. It belonged to the halberd-wielding woman.

Luo Tiantu turned an impassive gaze toward her.

The majesty of the Yangyang Sea exuded unmistakable dominance!

Yet, the pair of halberd-wielders showed no sign of fear—not outwardly, at least.

"You've already taken several wisps of Holy Spirit Energy!"

A furious feminine voice rang out from behind Lady Kong.

The halberd-wielding woman cast a cold glance at the young maid-servant who had dared to bark out her grievances, refusing to dignify her with a response. Instead, her focus returned to Luo Tiantu.

Such disdainful behavior only infuriated the young woman further!

"Please proceed," Luo Tiantu said with a slight nod.

The pair nodded in thanks. The man, surrounded by crackling lightning, dashed off toward the direction of the Holy Spirit Energy.

Behind Lady Kong, the young maid servant seethed with anger but dared not speak up again.

Lady Kong turned her gaze to the new maid servant by her side. "The two from Thunder Mountain were specifically invited by us. Since the rules were established beforehand, they must be followed."

Suppressing her frustration, the maid servant pursed her lips, unwilling to voice her inner fury.

But, in her heart, a storm of curses raged:

A single ambush was all it took to break your courage!

Sea Realm Great Powers? What a disgrace!

Every time we go out to gather resources, we have to hand some over to East Thunder believers. It's absurd! Are we mere runners tagging along for scraps?

You two were ambushed ages ago—

What, nearly half a year by now?

Who knows if that person is even alive anymore! Yet here you are, trembling like mice!

I can't believe I ended up serving such cowardly fools...

...

Chapter 514: The Deadly Weapon is Unveiled

The terrain of Tiantu Mountain is perilous, with three sheer cliffs and one side facing the river.

On the steep peaks and amidst dense forests, a sizable mountain stronghold is hidden.

On the morning of July 3rd in the lunar calendar, the sunlight was exceptionally bright.

A man and a woman dressed in dark clothing were patrolling the stronghold, laughing and talking as they went.

Shortly after, the pair arrived at the entrance of a cave.

The cave was dark, humid, and unusually deep, without any lighting tools.

Using the dim light at the entrance, they could faintly make out a wooden prison deep inside, where an elderly blind man knelt.

The old man appeared pitiful—not blind in the traditional sense, but with hollow eye sockets, entirely devoid of eyeballs.

He wore ragged grass clothes, his long white hair strewn messily down his back, and his emaciated face was crisscrossed with deep-set wrinkles.

Judging by his looks, he must have been seventy or eighty years old.

"Old Bai, report the situation," the pair approached the prison, and the woman covered her nose to inquire.

A hint of disgust flashed in her eyes; evidently, the air around the prison was not pleasant.

Inside the prison, the blind old man remained knelt in silence, head lowered.

"Hey! Old blind man!" cursed the man angrily when he saw the old man remain unmoving, kicking one of the wooden posts of the prison. "I'm talking to you! Are you dead?"

Still silent, the old man slowly extended his aged hand and formed a strange seal with his fingers.

Seeing the old man obey, the man snorted derisively and urged impatiently:

"Hurry up. Stop dawdling!"

"Hoo~"

With a surge of energy, an ethereal "Heart" character expanded from the blind old man's body.

Caster Divine Skill·Heart Sense Spell!

This skill could predict danger.

Instantly, the old man's heart was gripped by a heavy tremor!

Yet, his emaciated face betrayed not a trace of change.

The man glanced at the woman, noticing her disdainful expression as she covered her nose. "Hurry up!" he urged again, kicking the prison's wooden post once more.

The woman smiled at the man and playfully chided, "Don't rush. Old Bai's casting a spell."

The man smiled back at the woman, eager to please. But when he turned back to the prison, his impatience visibly grew.

"Nothing to report today." The old man finally spoke, his voice hoarse as sandpaper.

"What a waste of time coming here!" The man motioned for the woman to leave.

"Let's go." The woman took one last glance at the filthy, foul-smelling old man, her face filled with disdain as she turned to leave.

The cave was damp and dark, and the old man reeked. Unless strictly necessary for routine questioning, who would willingly step foot here?

"That decrepit bastard—it's like he's doing it intentionally to disgust us," the man mumbled complaints under his breath.

Such remarks did seem to bear some truth.

After all, the Believers' Water Flow Armor possessed a cleansing capability.

More importantly, River Realm Believers didn't need to eat, relying entirely on energy to survive—meaning their cleanliness came from within.

And yet, the old man stubbornly refused to activate his Water Flow Armor, as though he intended to rot away here...

"Enough." The woman stepped outside the cave, finally drawing a breath of fresh air. She smiled at the man and said, "Why get mad at some half-dead old guy..."

Before she could finish, a sudden, deafening explosion echoed.

The pair whirled around and looked to the east.

Before either could figure out what had happened, an overwhelming pressure swept forth, crashing into them fiercely.

"Sss—"

A sound like the surge of Immortal Fog!

The man's pupils contracted sharply as he looked behind the woman. Immediately, he summoned a blood-red robe.

The woman reacted quickly as well, turning her body with lightning speed, eight radiant Golden Jade Stone Plates spreading from her waist.

But the shadow arrived faster!

Wearing a wide bamboo hat that concealed the upper half of her face, the figure darted through the air, her bamboo clothes fluttering wildly in the slipstream.

In her hand was a broken blade, already tearing through the air to leave long Sword Trace wounds as it slashed across the two's necks!

Night Charm Evil Technique·Night Shadow Charm Trace!

"N—" The woman's expression changed drastically; she only managed to spit out a syllable.

The autonomous defensive Golden Jade Stone Plates, in the blink of an eye, shattered two pieces!

The blood-red robe's hem that the man had whipped out was similarly shredded by the Sword Trace left behind by the broken blade!

Jade Talisman Divine Skill·Golden Jade Eight Talismans.

Prisoner Demon Divine Skill-Blood Sha Robe.

These two techniques were both renowned defensive techniques, with formidable effectiveness!

But before the figure cloaked in green bamboo clothes and wide-brim hat, their famed defense was nothing more than fragile papier-mâché!

"Whoosh!"

The Sword Trace streaked through, and the woman's head flew high into the air.

Her headless body stood still, the cut at her neck unnervingly smooth, blood spurting outward in gushes.

The scene wasn't just terrifying; it sent chills into one's very soul!

A River Realm Jade Talisman Believer... utterly obliterated in an instant?

Crisp and clean!

"Who are you?" The man had lost all semblance of composure, crouching instinctively to dodge—a move that saved his life.

"Ssss—"

The cloaked assailant's movements flowed seamlessly; Immortal Fog surged beneath her feet as she sprang forward, her knee smashing into the Prisoner Demon Believer's face.

"Ahhh!!" The man screamed in agony, flying backward.

The flying knee seemed vicious, but it wasn't empowered by Divine or Evil Techniques.

Thus, the man suffered a collapsed nose bridge and severe facial injuries, yet his Water Flow Armor remained intact.

"You! Why attack our Tiantu... Wait, let's talk...!" The man struggled through the pain, frantically waving his blood-red robe.

"Screeech!"

The supposed impenetrable Blood Sha Robe still failed to perform miracles, getting torn apart effortlessly by the broken blade.

"Ahhh!!" Another blood-curdling scream erupted from the man, agonizingly loud.

The Blood Sha Robe and Water Flow Armor proved utterly incapable of protection; his chest was ripped open by a long, gaping Sword Trace.

Deng Yuxiang's attacks were precise, her gaze sharp.

She was akin to a god of slaughter!

The so-called "vast river" was nothing more than ants before her...

The once-deep cave tunnel now seemed absurdly short; in a mere flash, the Prisoner Demon Disciple had flown backward, smashing hard against the stone wall.

And what was even more terrifying was Deng Yuxiang's extraordinary speed!

Sea Grade-Immortal Hoof, in essence a high-speed movement skill, performed akin to Instantaneous Movement when executed...

Before the Prisoner Demon Disciple even hit the wall, Deng Yuxiang's broken blade had already been driven viciously into his heart!

"Bang!!"

The man was embedded into the rock wall, his chest speared by the broken blade, his face twisted in terror.

Deng Yuxiang turned her gaze to the prison not far away.

The oppressive aura she exuded swept across the small prison, enough to make the hearts of all living beings tremble.

And yet, the blind old man remained silently knelt, his deeply wrinkled face still void of any emotion.

"Buzz~"

Deng Yuxiang activated the Rebirth Money on her wrist, harvesting the man's soul, her voice cold and calm: "A slave?"

The old man said nothing.

Deng Yuxiang furrowed her brow slightly. As the Rebirth Money vibrated softly, she remarked casually, "If you wish to live, stay here."

With that, she flicked her wide bamboo garment and left briskly.

The old man finally showed a reaction, lifting his head slowly and "looking" with his hollow eye sockets at the departing mysterious woman.

"Hoo~"

Once again, a "Heart" character expanded from his body.

Deng Yuxiang paused her steps, glanced slightly over her shoulder to gaze at the prison behind her.

She did not intend to linger here!

Upon realizing the old man was merely a harmless Spellcaster Believer who had only released the Heart Sense Spell, Deng Yuxiang resumed walking toward the cave entrance.

When she reached the entrance, the headless woman's corpse was still standing there, diligently "standing guard."

Deng Yuxiang activated the Rebirth Money once again.

At that moment, a hoarse voice echoed from the depths of the cave, "I've been waiting here for you."

Deng Yuxiang raised an eyebrow slightly.

If the old man spoke the truth, then it sounded like a spoiler.

When a powerful Spellcaster Believer explicitly states he's waiting for you...

Chances are, he'll wait for you!

Without responding, Deng Yuxiang followed Rebirth Money's guidance and dashed off.

"Boom, Boom, Boom!!"

Explosions erupted far into the east, thunderous and relentless.

Clearly, the Mad Immortal Guardian had gone berserk.

Deng Yuxiang suddenly closed her eyes, listening intently. She adjusted her direction slightly, traversing dozens of meters through the forest before coming to an abrupt halt.

Panic-stricken footsteps drew closer and closer.

Two black-clad men fled in disarray, glancing backward as they ran, but suddenly realizing something amiss.

"Ah!" One of them turned his head and was startled out of his wits.

A mysterious figure in a bamboo hat and bamboo clothes stood not far away, blocking their path.

The overwhelming killing intent bursting forth and the terrifying aura froze them in their tracks, filling their hearts with despair.

Where had this terrifying accursed group come from?

Since when had Tiantu Mountain provoked so many Sea Realm Great Powers?

"Thud!"

One of the men's knees gave out, collapsing to the ground as he begged relentlessly, "My lord! Please, spare me! I am willing to serve as your slave... for life..."

The other man, seeing this, hurriedly knelt as well, his face pale as death.

Extreme circumstances create extreme measures.

And in this realm, even groveling was practiced to perfection as if by the teachings of Holy Spirit Mountain.

Deng Yuxiang said not a word, her gaze icy cold.

Serve me.

Heh,

Your kind joining the Ran Sect? I wouldn't defile myself.

Seeing the men quake with terror, Deng Yuxiang casually waved her hand.

"Sss!"

Two sharp Night Charm Blades shot out, one piercing straight through one man's skull.

"Damn!" The other man, quicker to react, cursed furiously as his expression darkened.

With the aid of Nuosha Divine Technique-God and Ghost Entanglement, his movements became lightning-fast. As Deng Yuxiang initiated her attack, he abruptly retreated backward.

"Whoosh, Whoosh, Whoosh!"

Countless Sha Blades shot from his body, densely packed, an all-encompassing output with no safe angles!

Nuosha Sect River Realm Technique·Sha Blade Thousand Blades!

Deng Yuxiang sharply raised her hand.

Sea Grade·Night Wind Assault!

In an instant, a gale swept through!

The Nuosha Disciple, blades and all, was forcibly flung backward.

Meanwhile, as Deng Yuxiang raised her hand, a series of Night Charm Blades flew out.

Sea Grade·Night Charm Blade—32 blades in total!

With overwhelming force and speed, they tore through the Sha Blade Thousand Blades, piercing the Nuosha Disciple's heart.

Deng Yuxiang stepped leisurely forward to the man pinned helplessly in place, summoning Rebirth Money. A voice echoed in her mind: [Rebirth Money is full.]

[No problem. Souls ascend on their own; I'll capture them myself.] Lu Ran's voice sounded in her consciousness.

[There's a Spellcaster Believer here—likely just a slave.]

[Clear out the west first. Focus on wiping out the bandits; everything else can wait!]

[Understood.] Deng Yuxiang acknowledged crisply, her gaze sweeping across the surrounding forest.

"Boom, Boom, Boom!!"

Explosions rang out again.

Amid the Mad Immortal Guardian's devastating bombardment, the forest fire raged, and flames devoured the stronghold, their glow illuminating the night sky.

Murderous intent burned even fiercer in Deng Yuxiang's eyes, outstripping the relentless blaze by far!

What a pity.

The captured guards had informed her that Village Chief Luo and Lady Kong had led their team out on a mission seven or eight days ago.

Hmm... no matter.

Deng Yuxiang's striking eyes narrowed slightly. Suddenly Immortal Fog surged beneath her feet, and the broken blade in her hand emitted a low, ominous hum.

Then I'll slaughter your stronghold first.

Stand at your doorstep,

And wait for your return!

...

Chapter 515: Annihilate the stronghold!

Eastern Tiantu Mountain, at the gate of the stronghold.

Si Xianxian stood proudly, activating the Divine Technique-Fiery Fire Sky Leader, embodying a force that could hold back an army single-handedly!

She was already breathtakingly beautiful, and even clad in a green cloak and a bamboo hat, her slender and graceful figure was impossible to hide.

Under the blaze of flames, she resembled a goddess burning brightly.

Behind Si Xianxian, Yu Changsheng was supporting her from the rear, activating the Divine Technique-Rain-Praying Carp.

If not for this Sea Realm Great Doctor, Si Xianxian might have been left paralyzed by electricity.

"Die, die, all of you just die!" Si Xianxian swung her hammer madly, cursing furiously, "Bullies! You'll get what you deserve!!"

Yu Changsheng: "..."

Earlier, Si Xianxian had been chased by a pack of wolf cubs, running in deep humiliation.

Yet now, facing Tiantu Mountain, which had insulted Lu Ran before, her rage seemed even greater?

Yu Changsheng lifted his gaze and looked into the sky.

There, a Jade Talisman Disciple was fleeing in a panic, surrounded by a flurry of elemental White Jade Stones, scattering them downward like they were worthless.

Si Xianxian unleashed explosive firepower, hurling one after another of ethereal Flame Warhammers upward, also like she had nothing to lose.

"Bang! Bang..."

"Boom, Rumble!!"

The Fierce Heavenly Divine Skill·Bursting Sky Vault was terrifyingly overwhelming!

The hammer shadows shattered chunks of White Jade Stones, painting the sky in brilliant colors.

Flames surged, electricity crackled, sandstorms roared, and frost spread everywhere.

The horrifying part was that even as the White Jade Stones were obliterated one by one, the hammer shadows remained unbroken.

The Divine Technique·Fiery Fire Sky Leader's boost to offensive skills was simply all-encompassing.

As the rapidly spinning Flame Hammer Shadow approached the Jade Talisman Disciple...

Si Xianxian widened her beautiful eyes and spat out a single word from her lips:

"Explode!"

"Boom!!"

The ethereal hammer shadow detonated into layers of flames, surging like a sea of fire, instantly engulfing the Jade Talisman Disciple's figure.

"Aaaahhh!!" From the sea of flames high above came a shrill, agonized scream from the Jade Talisman Disciple.

Before the screams subsided, the following hammer shadows had already arrived.

One hammer struck directly at the disciple's body, erupting in an explosion.

"Boom!!"

The Jade Talisman Disciple's screams ceased abruptly, as their body was blasted away like a cannonball, torn and bloodied, with blood splattering everywhere.

"Die!" Si Xianxian swung another hammer.

Ruthlessly delivering the death blow, leaving no room for doubt!

Yu Changsheng's gaze swept past the speeding hammer shadows and landed on the highest peak of Tiantu Mountain.

The entire stronghold was ablaze with Si Xianxian's fury.

Only the summit of Tiantu Mountain remained cool and untouched.

Perched there was another figure, also clad in a green cloak and bamboo hat.

She had thick, jet-black hair braided into a chunky plait, looped around her neck and hanging in front of her.

The woman stood atop the peak, with a hundred-meter radius surrounding her filled with countless suspended water droplets, through which small Canglong swam leisurely.

In her hands, she held a vibrantly colored bow, firing Water Mist Arrows in clusters, and even rows of small Canglong followed her shots.

The imposing Luoshen stood proudly at the summit of Tiantu Mountain, like a god ruling over life and death.

"Thrum!"

Each time her bowstring vibrated, it resembled King Yan marking another soul for death.

Meanwhile, in the central stronghold beneath Tiantu Mountain's main peak, two Evil Dogs were taking lives.

Who were these two Evil Dogs?

The Master of Ran Sect and his Evil Shadow Guardian.

The two of them fought fiercely, yet methodically herded the entire Tiantu Mountain's forces into the central stronghold, surrounding them there.

Why? Because this was under the feet of Ran Sect's First Divine General·Luo Ying!

Moreover, it was within the perception range of the Divine Technique·Canglong Sea Domain!

"Damn it, get lost!"

"Turn off Blood Sea Chaos, turn it off already... damn it!"

"Don't, don't kill me, plea..." Furious curses and trembling pleas for mercy echoed continuously.

Lu Yan was an Evil Dog, a mad dog!

The two of them flickered wildly, relying on their overwhelming techniques, holding back as many as nine opponents with just the two of them!

The oppressive Canglong Sea Domain enshrouding the area further heightened the pressure on Tiantu Mountain's forces.

The mountain stronghold chaos was palpable, everyone's defenses in disarray, scrambling to unleash their lifesaving techniques!

Prisoner Demon Divine Skill·Blood Sea Chaos!

Jade Talisman Divine Skill·Electric Confinement Talisman!

Nuosha Divine Technique·Nuosha Dance!

What did it mean to say "Better my friend dies than me"?

The Prisoner Demon and Nuosha disciples were electrocuted into paralysis and frozen stiff.

The Jade Talisman and Nuosha disciples were disrupted by the dense blood mist impeding their spells, unable to maintain even the Jade Talismans surrounding them.

The Jade Talisman and Prisoner Demon disciples were further manipulated by the dancing Nuosha's Residual Image, causing their limbs to betray them occasionally – convulsing, twitching, even breaking into dance...

To be honest, the chaos created within Tiantu Mountain itself caused far more trouble than Lu Yan and his companion ever did.

"Evil Shadow Flash!" Lu Ran transmitted mentally.

The pair flickered together, escaping the battlefield.

Then both simultaneously activated the Evil Technique·Evil Teeth!

"Crunch!"

"Crunch!" Row upon row of fanged teeth materialized out of thin air, savaging their enemies.

In comparison, the Master of Ran Sect clearly held the upper hand.

He was one small rank above Yan Shuangzi in level, but more importantly, Lu Ran had been continuously using the Divine Technique-Fiery Fire Sky Leader!

The Evil Dog Evil Skill-Evil Teeth was an offensive technique that obviously benefitted from Fiery Fire Sky Leader's power boost.

"Ahhh!!"

Piercing screams echoed horribly.

A Jade Talisman Disciple was torn in half at the waist by Lu Ran's Evil Teeth!

Another Nuosha Disciple had her head bitten clean off.

The unfortunate Nuosha female disciple, disrupted by the Prisoner Demon Divine Skill-Blood Sea Chaos, had her Divine Power flow destabilized. Her Water Flow Armor became erratic, and her movements were restricted by the Sand River stirred up by Jade Talisman Divine Method-Quicksand Talisman.

With one strike of Yan Shuangzi's Evil Teeth, the woman's neck was instantly snapped.

"Crunch! Crunch..."

Uneven canine teeth continued to emerge, row by row.

Small Canglong roared in, sweeping away enemies.

Lu Ran distanced himself from the battle, casting spells from afar, transmitting thoughts: [Nightmare Mad Immortal, status report.]

Deng Yuxiang: [Still searching the western peak. Six enemies slain so far.]

Si Xianxian: [We've held the eastern gate, no one escaped. We blew apart a squad—four of them!]

Lu Ran calculated silently. Including the nine surrounded in the central stronghold, there were 19 enemies from Tiantu Mountain.

Adding the six guards killed earlier downhill brought the count to 25.

But there were still a few unaccounted for!

"Thrum!" The bowstring vibrated once again.

Small Canglong continued ravaging the stronghold, as another volley of arrows rained down.

No matter how the River Realm followers exerted their utmost, how could they resist the terrifying means of the Yangyang Sea?

Lu Ran lifted his gaze and released another Evil Teeth strike.

Within mere seconds, the last Nuosha follower, writhing in desperate resistance, was finally shot down by the hail of arrows.

"Luo." Lu Ran's figure flickered as he arrived atop the mountain, "Excluding these, how many enemies did you slay?"

"Five."

"Five?"

"Five arrows shot, five dead." Luo Ying confirmed confidently.

"Still one missing!" Lu Ran frowned slightly, "Search!"

Even as he spoke, he sent messages to three guardians.

[Found him, he's over here.] Deng Yuxiang's voice suddenly came through.

Tiantu Mountain had cliffs on three sides and a river on the fourth.

On the western cliff of Tiantu Mountain, a Nuosha disciple was currently clinging to the rock face, sliding down rapidly.

Nuosha followers lacked the ability to fly.

The towering peak made directly leaping down foolish; this was his only way off the mountain.

However...

The man's heart pounded heavily; he suddenly felt an ice-cold gaze locking onto him.

Looking up sharply, he saw a few pebbles fall from above the cliff edge.

A figure in a green cloak and bamboo hat stood at the edge, peering down at him.

"Gulp." The Nuosha disciple's pupils trembled, and he swallowed hard.

The woman stepped off the cliff, descending.

"No..." The man's face paled, and his lips quivered slightly.

The scenes he had witnessed prior had already scared him out of his wits. He knew these mysterious figures included several terrifying Sea Realm Great Powers...

Slaughtering the stronghold's people like chickens and dogs!

The woman falling toward him now was undoubtedly another Sea Realm!

The man clung to the cliff, ceasing even to slide down, as though already in a state of near-death. Everything before his eyes seemed painfully slow.

With each meter the green-cloaked woman descended, the crushing aura weighed increasingly heavily on him.

He trembled uncontrollably, his eyes filled with despair.

Pure, unadulterated despair.

He saw no glimmer of survival.

"Hoo~" The green-cloaked woman landed gracefully, standing on his back.

A cold hand pressed against the back of his head, smashing his face into the cliff.

A similarly icy broken blade plunged into his back, piercing through his chest.

"Shhk!"

Deng Yuxiang remained expressionless as she grabbed the enemy's lifeless body and returned to the cliff top.

It was as effortless as reaching into a sack and pulling out an item, a matter of course.

In this world where strength is law, the moment she ascended to the Sea Realm, everything changed.

Absolute power and an extraordinary realm granted her fearsome authority and presence.

During this operation, Deng Yuxiang had become deeply aware:

In her presence, some people didn't even have the courage to resist!

So...

Deng Yuxiang pressed her lips together.

Standing at the cliff's edge, she transmitted lightly and softly: [It's done. You can come and harvest the soul at any time now.]

Unexpectedly, she heard Lu Ran's concerned voice: [Sis, are you alright?]

Deng Yuxiang: "..."

How could I not be?

She belatedly realized she should perhaps treat this little River Realm brother of hers with more gentleness.

As for others... Hmm, they didn't matter.

Lu Ran: [Are you hurt? What happened?]

Deng Yuxiang, half annoyed, half amused, casually tossed the dead man's body to the ground: [Nothing! Now that the fight's over, just get over here already before the souls start scattering.]

[Alright, on my way.] Lu Ran replied hastily, adding, [Then clean up the battlefield and continue searching the mountain afterward.]

[Understood!] Deng Yuxiang responded, removing the Divine Power Bead Chain from around the enemy's neck.

Her thoughts lingered on Lu Ran's string of concerned inquiries.

Suddenly, Deng Yuxiang chuckled and shook her head.

Compared to him, she indeed fell short as a sibling.

Meanwhile, at the central stronghold...

Lu Ran was directing everyone to extinguish fires and clean up the battlefield while proceeding to harvest souls himself.

During the battle, he avoided souls, fearing the buzzing in his mind would impair his hearing.

"Buzz!!"

As expected, as the Dead Souls entered his vision, the Jade Talisman Divine Sculpture in his mind began expanding in scope.

Second Rank River Realm... Third Rank...

Lu Ran licked his lips in excitement.

Yes, keep growing stronger for me!

This boss has had enough of those damn White Jade Stones!

If I can unleash a River Grade-Jade Talisman Formation capable of perfectly absorbing the frost, fire, sand, and lightning released by other River Realm-Jade Talisman Believers...

I'll dive straight into the crowd of Jade Talisman Disciples, without so much as dodging!

Damn, I'll annihilate them all!!

...

Chapter 516: Is it raiding a house?

River Realm Fourth Rank... River Realm Fifth Rank...

"Don't stop, don't." Lu Ran prayed silently, naturally hoping the Jade Talisman Divine Sculpture would keep vibrating.

But in the very next second, Lu Ran let out a sigh.

The Jade Talisman Divine Sculpture stopped at River Realm·Fifth Rank, then fell silent.

No further expansion?

Damn!

Not counting the six guards at the mountain base, Ran Sect members had taken down a total of 25 bandits in the stronghold.

Among them, 11 were Jade Talisman disciples, yet they couldn't push the Divine Sculpture into River Realm?

It's widely known that upgrading a River Realm sculpture is relatively easy.

You only need 100 River Realm dead souls to help a River Realm sculpture advance one minor rank.

To break it down, that's just 10 River Realm dead souls or 10 wisps of pure Holy Spirit Energy.

These 11 Jade Talisman believers have been wreaking havoc here for years, and yet haven't even collected a few dozen wisps of Holy Spirit Energy?

Lu Ran felt quite puzzled.

Unless... all the Holy Spirit Energy was absorbed by Luo the Village Chief and Lady Kong?

How much Holy Spirit Energy must be contained in the souls of those two scoundrels...

Lu Ran's heart thudded!

If he could kill them both and seize their souls... Hold on!

"Smack!" Lu Ran slapped his own forehead.

That explains the nagging feeling something didn't add up — turns out he missed three!

His brain was indeed rattled by all the chaos.

The ancient copper coin hanging on Big Nightmare's wrist still held three captive souls!

[Big Nightmare, where are you?]

[Searching the mountain.] Deng Yuxiang responded, [Haven't found any fish that escaped the net. The intel from the guards at the base seems accurate.]

[Give me a location so I can find you.]

[100 meters west of the main peak, the largest house. This should be Luo Tiantu's residence.] Deng Yuxiang transmitted the message while kicking open the door.

She stepped inside, glancing around, noticing the furniture—quite abundant, crafted with exceptional skill.

Eight Immortal Table, wooden stools and chairs, vanity, canopy bed...

It seems Tiantu Mountain's bandits included talented craftsmen?

"Heh." Deng Yuxiang snorted coldly, her gaze settling on meticulously polished stone teapots and cups atop the table.

Clearly, they knew how to enjoy themselves.

After a brief search, her attention fixed on a large wardrobe.

She yanked the wardrobe open, her fierce eyes betraying a hint of surprise.

The wardrobe, naturally, was filled with clothes.

The problem was—the clothes were overwhelmingly white!

Though some were long or short, robes or skirts, every single piece was white.

"Huh?" A rather astonished voice sounded behind her.

Deng Yuxiang turned around to see Lu Ran entering, curiously eyeing the wardrobe.

She gestured at the wardrobe: "Well, now you've got clothes to wear."

In this primitive world, elegant garments from the Human World were considered a valuable resource.

Lu Ran gestured to his own outfit: "My current attire—a smoke-gray cape and a rain bamboo hat—is the Holy Spirit Mountain Chapter·Ran Shen limited-edition skin. How could I change it easily?"

Deng Yuxiang was speechless, turning away and continuing her search of the house.

"Seriously!" Lu Ran took off his bamboo hat, pointing to the small braid at the back of his head. "You braided it for me this morning, remember? That's part of the limited-edition skin too."

Deng Yuxiang rolled her eyes, both annoyed and amused, as she walked over to the vanity table and opened a drawer.

"Rustle~"

The sound of items clinking together was crisp and pleasant.

The lower drawer of the vanity was packed with various gold and silver jewelry.

Golden glimmers, silvery gleams, treasures shimmering brilliantly!

In the Human World, this would ensure a care-free life for decades.

Lu Ran glanced at it from afar, inwardly cursing: "True bandit behavior!"

Not everyone who climbed the mountain was adorned with gold, silver, or jewels, nor dressed in white robes or skirts.

But for Luo Tiantu and Lady Kong to collect so much... How many people did they rob?

And in the Holy Spirit Mountain Realm, did these bandits limit themselves to mere robbery?

Murder and plunder! Murder, of course, always comes first...

"Rustle~"

Deng Yuxiang casually stirred the contents of the drawer, picked up a gemstone earring, examined it briefly, then tossed it back.

She bent forward, reached out, and pulled open the lower drawer.

Compared to the upper drawer filled with jewelry, the lower one contained only a single dagger.

An exceptionally ornate dagger!

Its hilt, made of pure gold, was embedded with several multicolored gemstones. The blade, about the length of a forearm, gleamed coldly.

Deng Yuxiang played with it for a moment before tossing it to Lu Ran.

"Oh?" Lu Ran's eyes lit up.

Could this be the Seven Stars Saber wielded by Cao Boss to assassinate Dong Zhuo?

Of course, he was joking; Lu Ran had no idea what the Seven Stars Saber actually looked like.

The dagger in front of him featured a pure gold hilt embedded with seven thumb-sized gemstones—red, orange, yellow, green, blue, indigo, violet. Quite opulent and exquisitely crafted, it practically screamed money!

"No wonder people have always been eager to raid bandit dens—they're dripping with wealth." Lu Ran muttered to himself.

And this was merely by casually rummaging through the house.

Keep in mind, Luo Tiantu and his gang carried at least four Divine Weapons!

Lu Ran remembered clearly!

There was the Heaven Trace Sword, Earth Trace Sword, Blood-Weeping Saber, and the Jade Blossom Hairpin worn by Lady Kong.

If Ran Sect successfully decimates this bandit stronghold, those treasures...

The sect would be swimming in wealth by then!

"Tsk~" Lu Ran clicked his tongue in admiration, his fingers brushing across the dagger's steel blade, convinced this ornate weapon belonged on the battlefield.

You can't just lump it with jewelry because it looks lavish.

"Ha." Deng Yuxiang chuckled, watching Lu Ran's shining eyes, then turned and continued looting the bandit leader's residence.

Moments later, Lu Ran stowed the "Seven Stars Saber," walked to the vanity, opened the top drawer, and found the gemstone earring.

Big Nightmare's earlier movements hadn't escaped his notice.

Her taste has always been consistent.

From their first meeting at the high school gate, she wore a pair of ruby earrings on her earlobes.

Within this pile of gold and silver, the only item catching her attention was this ruby earring, which she had picked up to examine briefly before placing back.

Lu Ran rummaged through the drawer and found the matching ruby earring, casually picking it up: "Sis."

"Hmm?" came the woman's voice from outside.

"Give me the souls contained in Rebirth Money. By the way, what kind of believers were they?"

"One Prisoner Demon believer, one Jade Talisman believer, the other unknown."

"Unknown?" Lu Ran looked toward the doorway.

"That one didn't dare resist, kept begging for mercy. I executed him." Deng Yuxiang walked back inside, speaking nonchalantly.

Good grief~

Lu Ran smirked.

Really, upon reflecting... it's somewhat understandable.

Because when Lu Ran himself faced Deng Yuxiang, he wasn't in a much better state.

Even though he knew in his heart she'd never harm him, her intimidating aura still caused his pulse to race.

"Not planning to keep the souls for further intel gathering?" Deng Yuxiang shook her wrist.

Lu Ran: "Keep the Prison Demon disciple, I'll take the other two souls."

Deng Yuxiang: "..."

Rebirth Money, merely a Magic Artifact fragment, lacked a complete Artifact Spirit.

While capable of generally understanding Deng Yuxiang's intent, it was incapable of more precise operations.

Luckily, Lu Ran possessed the Pupil of the Dead World!

After identifying the Prison Demon disciple's appearance, he instructed Deng Yuxiang to activate Rebirth Money and release all three souls.

He quickly recaptured the Prison Demon disciple.

"Buzz!!"

As two souls entered his body, Lu Ran beamed!

Within his God Demon Sculpture Garden, the Jade Talisman Divine Sculpture stirred once more.

This Divine Sculpture had already reached River Realm·Fifth Rank, and now its expansion seemed poised to reach River Realm!

Deng Yuxiang observed Lu Ran's delighted expression and vaguely pieced together what was happening.

"Here." Seconds later, despite enduring the vibrating discomfort in his head, Lu Ran casually tossed the pair of ruby earrings over.

Deng Yuxiang caught them, surprised by the exquisite jewelry in her palm.

Lu Ran smiled: "If you like them, keep them. Switch them out with your studs occasionally."

Life in Holy Spirit Mountain was already tough.

Everyone lived with uncertainty day by day.

If something small could bring her even a bit of joy, she might as well take it.

Deng Yuxiang's gaze shifted slightly, murmuring a soft "Mm" before gently clutching the ruby earrings in her palm.

Lu Ran added: "By the way, you mentioned earlier finding a slave?"

"Yes, an old man, a Spellcaster believer."

"Let's go, show me. Raiding the house can wait until we've taken Luo Tiantu's soul and let him help us with his own raid." Lu Ran declared.

Deng Yuxiang's lips curled slightly: "Alright."

The duo promptly exited the residence. Under Deng Yuxiang's lead, Lu Ran arrived at a fairly concealed cave entrance.

The cave interior was dark and damp, and his sharp nose caught the unique scent of an elder.

After walking a few dozen steps, Lu Ran spotted a wooden cage in the distance.

Inside knelt an old man, ragged and unkempt.

The elder seemed to sense their arrival, slowly raising his head, his deeply sunken eyes "staring" at them.

Lu Ran furrowed his brow: "Old man, may I ask your name?"

The elder remained silent for a moment before speaking softly: "Bai."

Lu Ran stepped closer, patting the wooden pillars of the cage: "Your strength is already at River Realm. This wooden cage shouldn't be able to hold you."

The elder Bai said nothing further.

If the cage couldn't imprison the slave, then its purpose...

Lu Ran speculated silently.

Perhaps this wooden cage existed solely to humiliate or remind the elder that he had fallen so low?

From this perspective, the elder's prior status must have been quite lofty.

If he had originally been a simple servant, such treatment wouldn't be necessary.

The cave was eerily quiet, Deng Yuxiang leaned against the stone wall and kept her gaze fixed toward the entrance, quietly keeping watch.

Her hand rested in her pocket, fingers fiddling lightly with the ruby earrings.

Lu Ran suddenly broke the silence: "I heard Elder Bai is a Spellcaster believer. Given that, shouldn't you be honored as a guest?"

The elder finally spoke, his hoarse voice cutting through the damp air: "I once belonged to Sinless Valley."

...

Chapter 517: geese return in formation

"Sinless Valley consists of eighteen members, all of whom are Weak God believers."

Lu Ran remained silent, having never heard of such an organization before.

What surprised him was the makeup of this so-called Sinless Valley.

Could this even work?

The elder with the surname Bai continued, "Our strength is weak, so we gather together to survive and avoid falling into the servitude of others."

Lu Ran nodded slightly.

In this cruel world, Weak God believers indeed had no rights to speak of.

Once discovered by Strong God believers, such people were either slaughtered to the last or reduced to slaves.

Jing Hong was a prime example of this.

If she hadn't been lucky enough to encounter Lu Ran and the others, she might still be enslaved by the disciples of Sword Mountain Peak.

The elder spoke slowly, "We fled from the south to escape for our lives. While passing through this territory, we were discovered by Tiantu Mountain.

Luo Tiantu sought to annex Sinless Valley, dispatching several teams to hunt us down. Failing to capture us despite multiple attempts, he eventually led his team personally to attack."

Lu Ran had already made his calculations.

It seemed that for Sinless Valley to hold out against Tiantu Mountain for so long and escape repeatedly, they undoubtedly owed a lot to the talent of this Spellcaster believer.

Putting himself in their shoes, it was truly a despair-inducing situation.

For the weak who wished to live peacefully, it was as hard as ascending to heaven.

Adding insult to injury, Weak God disciples often possessed certain specialized abilities, which only made them more coveted by others.

"We kept moving to evade pursuit but ultimately couldn't avoid exposure." The elder paused briefly and sighed. "In the last ambush, we seized a chance to launch a counterattack, unexpectedly succeeding and causing the enemy to lose several skilled warriors."

"Oh?" Lu Ran said, somewhat surprised.

The elder's words were sparse and matter-of-fact, but the difficulty of overcoming the strong as the weak could not be overstated.

The overall strength of Tiantu Mountain was clear!

Their stronghold's members mostly consisted of Jade Talisman, Prisoner Demon, and Nuoshua believers—all of whom were from the River Realm.

The fact that the Weak God disciples of Sinless Valley managed to contend with them for so long was no small feat.

Who would have thought they could even strike back?

"I had thought we could suppress Tiantu Mountain's pursuit a bit, gain a moment's respite, at least buy time for a few groups to escape..."

The elder trailed off as he spoke.

His wrinkled face was filled with sorrow.

It seemed heaven had not granted them their wish.

Lu Ran did not think the elder would lie.

The fact that he was standing here already signaled to the elder that he had fought his way through Tiantu Mountain and may even have taken prisoners.

All it would take was a little interrogation for everything to come to light.

If the elder were lying in any way, he would be exposed quickly.

Lu Ran offered words of comfort: "Elder Bai has done his best."

The elder slowly shook his head. "Fate, just fate."

Deng Yuxiang suddenly spoke, "Are all the people of Sinless Valley dead?"

"Most died in battle; a few were executed."

Deng Yuxiang stared at the elder. "What about you? Why are you still alive?"

With a calm demeanor, the elder replied, "Luo Tiantu lost several beloved officers and was furious. The one he most wished to kill was me."

However, his wife had her considerations and pleaded for my life multiple times. Thus, I was spared.

But a reprieve from death doesn't mean freedom from punishment. I had my eyes gouged out and my Achilles tendons severed before being thrown into this prison."

Lu Ran looked at the elder's pitiful state. "So, you humiliated Luo Tiantu, and he in turn sought to utterly humiliate you."

Clearly, this elder was the leader of Sinless Valley, or at least a central figure who had orchestrated various breakout and counterattack strategies.

He had dealt a heavy blow to Luo Tiantu, the Sea Realm Great Power!

It was this defiance that earned him the admiration of Lady Kong, who wanted to recruit him.

And, in turn, it explained Luo Tiantu's treatment of him—as an outlet for his fury.

From this perspective, it seemed Luo Tiantu's tolerance couldn't even match that of his own wife.

"Young friend." The elder did not respond but instead said, "After today's battle, Tiantu Mountain will remain peaceful for a while. You and your men can rest assured and recuperate."

Lu Ran naturally understood the hidden meaning behind the elder's words and replied, "Elder, you stayed amidst the chaos to seek vengeance for Sinless Valley through me,

or perhaps you wish to join my Ran Sect?"

As mentioned earlier, this ordinary wooden prison was incapable of confining a River Realm Great Power. Even though the elder's Achilles tendons were cut, his hands were still free!

And among casters, the River Realm·Third Rank enabled the activation of a life-saving Divine Technique—Invisibility Spell!

This spell allowed Spellcaster believers to enter stealth mode, making it easier for disciples of the sect to escape.

"If you don't find me a burden, this old man is willing to serve." The elder knelt on the ground, bowed his head, and spoke in a low voice.

Lu Ran exchanged a glance with Deng Yuxiang.

Spellcaster believers were immensely functional!

If the Ran Sect could gain a strong Spellcaster disciple, it would be a significant advantage.

Suppressing the buzzing in his aching head, Lu Ran contemplated for a while before smiling:

"Elder, aren't you afraid I'll oppress or enslave you?"

"This old man possesses the Divine Technique·Heart Sense Spell." The elder kept his head bowed and spoke softly.

"Oh, right." Lu Ran smacked his forehead in frustration.

It must be noted: the Heart Sense Spell didn't allow the caster to predict the future.

Rather, it alerted the caster through emotional fluctuations, helping them sense impending danger!

A powerful Spellcaster believer could use the Heart Sense Spell creatively.

Like Spiritual Believers drawing different ranks of fortunes, Spellcaster believers could refine and distinguish various levels of their emotional states!

Calm and composed, restless and uneasy, frightened, panic-stricken, and so on.

The stronger the Spellcaster believer, the finer the distinctions they could make in their emotional states, which allowed them to deduce potential outcomes.

This elder must have received very positive feedback via the Heart Sense Spell!

Thus, he hadn't fled amidst the chaos.

Instead, he sought to follow Lu Ran!

And the Heart Sense Spell's feedback... was undoubtedly accurate!

Lu Ran and his Ran Sect were unlike the vast majority of forces in the Holy Spirit Mountain Realm.

He did not have the habit of enslaving his compatriots.

On the contrary, Lu Ran treated his comrades with sincerity.

"Elder Bai, use the Moonlight Spell to heal your legs. Let's get out of here first and find a place to talk in detail."

The elder rasped, "My Moonlight Spell, only River Grade, cannot fully heal my legs."

Lu Ran furrowed his brows slightly and mentally called out: [Evil Shadow.]

A shadowy figure suddenly appeared, kneeling by Lu Ran's feet.

"Go summon Mr. Conglong to try healing Elder Bai's legs," Lu Ran massaged his temples. "And while you're at it, fetch some clothes and shoes from Village Chief Luo's residence to bring here."

"Understood." Yan Shuangzi's figure flickered and vanished.

Donning a fatigued expression, Lu Ran added, "Elder Bai, wait here a moment. I'll have a Sea Realm doctor come and see if they can assist you."

The elder replied hoarsely, "I am deeply grateful."

As Lu Ran walked away, he suddenly paused and called back, "Elder, I didn't catch your name?"

"Bai Yanhui."

In his raspy voice, the elder added, "Bai as in white goose, Yan as in wild goose, Hui as in returning."

Lu Ran stopped in his tracks, tilting his head slightly to glance behind.

"When the wild geese return, the moon fills the western tower."

That line of poetry, steeped in Da Xia culture, left Lu Ran momentarily dazed.

It whisked him back to his school days in the classroom.

Sitting at his desk in a Chinese literature lesson, it felt like it was just yesterday.

Beside him sat a girl in a blue and white school uniform, her ponytail swaying—Ruyi...

"Buzz~"

The relentless buzzing in his head yanked Lu Ran back to the Holy Spirit Mountain, back to this dark and damp cave.

Heh.

Lu Ran chuckled suddenly.

This damned world felt so unreal...

In the prison behind him, Bai Yanhui kept his head bowed, his weathered face devoid of emotion.

A faint bitterness welled up in his heart.

Lu Ran lingered for a moment, saying no more, and continued walking out.

Deng Yuxiang, using her back for leverage, straightened herself and strode after him with long steps.

"Hoo..."

Outside the cave, Lu Ran took a deep breath and exhaled slowly.

"Let's interrogate the prisoners," Deng Yuxiang suggested softly while standing beside Lu Ran. "We shouldn't rely on one side of the story alone."

"Mm." Lu Ran nodded nonchalantly. "Find a place to do it."

"Tiantu Mountain has a Council Hall, complete with a sand table." Deng Yuxiang guided him gently. "Let's head there."

With the woman leading, Lu Ran found himself at a large building near the main peak.

The Council Hall of Tiantu Mountain exuded an air of hierarchy and order.

When the Ran Sect held council, everyone sat around one large rectangular table.

Here, however, a grand throne-like seat dominated the upper end, while two rows of wooden chairs lined either side below.

Lu Ran felt like he had stepped into Liang Mountain...

"Uh."

Lu Ran avoided the grand chair, opting for an ordinary wooden seat in the middle, and plopped down heavily.

He summoned a cloud of black mist, and Deng Yuxiang gave her wrist a light shake, releasing the last captured soul from the Rebirth Money.

Moments later, a face of sheer terror emerged within the swirling mist.

"Whoosh~" A Soul Fire ignited.

"Ah! Ahhh..." The tormented screams soon followed.

By now, Lu Ran had plenty of experience in extracting information under duress.

He no longer wasted words, starting with the fire to set the tone—soft or stubborn, they would talk eventually.

Deng Yuxiang stepped behind Lu Ran and removed his bamboo hat.

Feeling puzzled, he was about to turn his head when her hands reached out, and her fingertips began lightly massaging his temples.

"How considerate~" Lu Ran suddenly blurted out.

Deng Yuxiang lightly smacked him on the head, then continued to knead gently.

Unfortunately, the tenderness of a Sea Realm Great Power was little comfort to Lu Ran.

His head buzzed incessantly, and the wails of the captured soul filled the air.

Finally, Lu Ran extinguished the Soul Fire and said in a steady tone, "Answer what I ask."

"Yes, yes! I'll answer, I'll answer..."

Lu Ran inquired about Sinless Valley, and the information from the prisoner aligned closely with what Bai Yanhui had said.

Lu Ran felt reassured and nodded subtly to himself.

If Elder Bai were to truly pledge loyalty to the Ran Sect, leaving other matters aside, the defenses at Cloud Sea Cliff would experience a qualitative leap!

Lu Ran then asked about Luo Tiantu's team composition.

"Two East Thunder Disciples," Lu Ran muttered under his breath, his face dark.

Luo Tiantu and Lady Kong were certainly willing to pay the price!

Each time reinforcements were brought in, the East Thunder Disciples were allowed to absorb Holy Spirit Energy first.

East Thunder Disciples—sent specifically to counter Evil Dog followers?

Heh.

You dare step into this mess? Truly overestimating your lifespan.

Deng Yuxiang's eyes gleamed with a touch of icy killing intent as she continued massaging his temples. She spoke calmly, "Aiding tyrants, they deserve to die."

Lu Ran suddenly felt a chill run down his spine, his heart leaping into his throat!

He snapped to full alertness, his face no longer gloomy.

He stole a sideways glance and whispered, "Um... could you tone down the killing intent a bit? I'm cold."

Deng Yuxiang didn't respond, instead redirecting his head and softly saying, "I'll take care of those two."

Lu Ran: "..."

...

Chapter 518: Got a treasure

"Sect Leader."

"Hmm?" Lu Ran opened his eyes and turned his head to look.

Only to see Yu Changsheng leading Bai Yanhui into the council hall.

Lu Ran's eyes lit up, "Elder Bai can move now."

Bai Yanhui had already bathed and changed into clean clothes; his spirit and demeanor were completely refreshed!

He was thin, draped in a white robe, with snow-white hair and a thick white beard, giving off an air of otherworldly grace and wisdom.

"Master Lu." Bai Yanhui followed the sound, cupped his hands, and saluted Lu Ran. "This old one is endlessly grateful!"

Lu Ran turned his gaze toward Yu Changsheng, smiling, "Mr. Cong Long truly lives up to the title of Sea Realm Great Doctor, with miraculous hands that bring the dying back to life."

Clearly, Lu Ran hadn't forgotten that certain people needed frequent praise.

Otherwise, some people could get sulky!

"Swoosh~"

Yu Changsheng elegantly unfolded a paper fan, nodding with a smile, "Under the Sect Leader's command, how could I not give my all?"

Lu Ran: "..."

Seriously, you're over thirty, and one compliment makes you this happy?

"You two, please sit," Lu Ran said as he spoke.

Yu Changsheng brought over two wooden chairs, allowing Bai Yanhui to sit down.

Bai Yanhui was filled with emotion, silently reflecting on the unpredictability of life.

Without the Sea Realm Doctor's aid, he would likely never have stood up again.

Such a debt of gratitude—how could it ever be repaid?

Not long ago, he was still a prisoner, locked away in a cavernous cage day after day.

Now, he had been rescued and had become an honored guest.

Such kindness—how could it be repaid?

"Elder Bai, what is your current realm?" Lu Ran asked.

"Reporting to the Sect Leader, this old one is at Fifth Rank of the River Realm," Bai Yanhui replied earnestly.

"Oh." Lu Ran nodded slightly and continued, "Elder Bai, how long have you been in this world?"

"I don't remember," Bai Yanhui deliberated before saying, "This old one only recalls entering Holy Spirit Mountain in 1997."

"1997?" Lu Ran's lips twitched. He suddenly leaned back, looking at Deng Yuxiang's inverted face. "The two of us weren't even born yet, right?"

Deng Yuxiang stared at him, speechless. What kind of remark was that!

She gently pressed down with her hand, forcing his head to face forward.

Indeed, Lu Ran was born in 2001, and Deng Yuxiang in 1998.

Long before the duo's birth, this Elder Bai had already entered Holy Spirit Mountain, enduring endless suffering.

"Over twenty years, huh," Lu Ran sighed. "Now, it's already 2020 in the human world."

"So many years have passed," Bai Yanhui said lightly, offering no further comment.

Lu Ran asked again, "Elder Bai, how old are you this year?"

With the timeline provided, Bai Yanhui answered, "Seventy-six."

Seventy-six years old.

The descent of gods and demons had only occurred forty years ago.

This man had lived through two eras.

"It's said that having an elder in the family is like having a treasure," Lu Ran said, looking at the old man. "With Elder Bai joining the Ran Sect, our base of operations will have a more secure foundation."

Bai Yanhui spoke solemnly, "This old one will spare no effort and will not fail Sect Leader Lu's great kindness."

Lu Ran smiled and then asked, "Elder Bai, you've been in this realm for quite some time. Have you ever heard of Cheng Xin? He's an Immortal Sheep Believer."

Bai Yanhui furrowed his brows slightly, straining to recall, "Cheng Xin, Cheng Xin... Immortal Sheep Believer..."

Lu Ran's expression froze.

What does this mean?

There's hope?

Bai Yanhui suddenly said, "He's not very tall, wears a white Daoist robe, ties his hair in a bun, and specializes in a long spear..."

Lu Ran shot up—well, almost. He got halfway up before Deng Yuxiang pressed him back down.

"Yes, yes, yes!" Lu Ran nodded excitedly, ignoring everything else. "Where is he? Does Elder Bai have any news of him?"

Bai Yanhui strained to remember, slowly replying, "I once worked with Brother Cheng for some time, but he..."

Lu Ran immediately asked, "What?"

Bai Yanhui shook his head, "That was over ten years ago. This old one's memories are dim, but what I remember most is his gaze—

a steadfast gaze.

Brother Cheng, though an Immortal Sheep Believer, was not like the rest of us. He had aspirations and would not hide away, merely to survive."

Bai Yanhui paused, then continued, "In the end, he left us to venture out alone, and we've heard nothing since."

The small flicker of anticipation in Lu Ran's heart was extinguished again.

Bai Yanhui asked, "Sect Leader Lu, do you know Cheng Xin?"

"Ah, he's a great senior of my sect," Lu Ran replied helplessly.

Bai Yanhui seemed to hear something unbelievable. His expression remained composed as he asked, "Sect Leader Lu is also an Immortal Sheep Disciple?"

Lu Ran, still steeped in his loss, softly murmured, "Mhm."

Bai Yanhui: ?

A Nine-class God-Immortal Sheep Believer?

At present, Bai Yanhui still wasn't aware of the Ran Sect's full strength, but for them to crush Tiantu Mountain, they must be extraordinarily powerful!

In just this room, there were already two members from the Yangyang Sea!

This fact alone confirmed it.

Even though Bai Yanhui was blind, he could clearly sense the pressure of strong warriors.

And these two Sea Realm Great Powers were both immensely respectful to the young sect leader, Lu Ran. Bai Yanhui naturally inferred that Lu Ran must be a First-class God Believer.

Of course, even as a First-class God Believer, earning the heartfelt support of Sea Realm Great Powers was no small feat.

Thus, Bai Yanhui privately speculated many things, attributing Lu Ran's influence to strong leadership qualities, charisma, and more.

But what he never imagined—

Lu Ran really was a First-class God Believer.

The last of the Nine Classes ranking!

Bai Yanhui couldn't help but think again of Cheng Xin—that extraordinary and singular Immortal Sheep Disciple.

This Immortal Sheep Sect...

What kind of reputation do they even have?

"Wow!" Si Xianxian suddenly burst in, pointing at Bai Yanhui seated there. "A... Caster?"

Lu Ran's brow raised slightly.

Without Si Xianxian's reminder, he genuinely hadn't considered it!

The image of the Divine Caster was precisely that of a thin old man with snow-white hair and beard, draped in an oversized white robe, exuding an air of transcendence!

There truly was some resemblance between Bai Yanhui and the Divine Caster!

Alas, Elder Bai had been cruelly gouged of his eyes, leaving his eye sockets hollow.

Furthermore, the actual Caster always carried a white talisman paper, inscribed with black symbols, resembling chaotic ghostly scribbles.

It was said to be a magic artifact!

Although, this rumor remained unverified.

"Young friend, you jest," Bai Yanhui didn't know who had arrived but still offered a word of caution, "Such remarks should not be made lightly."

"Tch~" Si Xianxian pouted her lips, clearly lacking reverence for the gods.

Bai Yanhui remained composed, though mentally, he was calculating.

You can tell much by understanding a fraction!

The newcomer's attitude toward the gods was so flippant, yet no one reprimanded or stopped her. From this, Bai Yanhui deduced that Ran Sect members were not blindly loyal worshippers but instead a rather clear-headed group.

Si Xianxian then turned her focus on Lu Ran. One look, and she was utterly astonished!

Lu Ran reclined like a lord, basking in comfort, while the terrifying Big Nightmare gently massaged his head.

This...?

If it were Deng Yuxiang doing this, there wouldn't be much to say about it.

Si Xianxian thought she was overthinking things. After all, everyone was well aware of the relationship between Lu Ran and Deng Yuxiang.

Besides, the two had entered this world together and spent so much time in solitude. If they wanted to take things further, it would've happened long ago.

Someone like Lu Ran, if he wanted to do anything, external observers wouldn't be able to stop it.

Si Xianxian already knew that Lu Ran had a Sculpture Garden in his possession, and she was well aware of the dominators under his command!

Tethering Silk Shadow, Evil Mirror Demon...

Each one more alluring than the last!

Si Xianxian had to admit to herself that even someone as stunning as her had to step back when it came to competing with the Yan Paperman in looks and charm.

From this perspective, Lu Ran could almost set up a chastity monument...

He shouldn't have joined the Immortal Sheep Sect; instead, he should've become a Martial Monk Believer. He would've surely excelled on that path!

Other Martial Monk Believers, no matter how much they cultivated, could at best become monks.

But Lu Ran...

With infinite patience, he could truly become a Buddha~

Si Xianxian was lost in these idle thoughts when she suddenly heard Deng Yuxiang teasing him, "Your maid is here. Want her to take over?"

Lu Ran looked taken aback.

His head was already buzzing, and now it buzzed even more hearing those words!

Deng Yuxiang's lips curved slightly upward as she glanced at Si Xianxian's ever-changing expression, clearly understanding what was running through her mind.

Si Xianxian felt unnerved under the scrutiny but couldn't lash out.

She chose to ignore Deng Yuxiang entirely, walking quickly toward Lu Ran with a concerned look:

"What's wrong with you?"

"Headache."

Si Xianxian's eyes glinted, her tone measured as she shifted to private telepathy: [Divine Sculpture advancing?]

Lu Ran gave a slight nod.

Si Xianxian glanced at Deng Yuxiang's position, clearly eager: "Then, let me...?"

"Don't you dare!" Lu Ran was startled, quickly raising his hands to refuse. "You don't know your own strength. You'll crush my skull."

Si Xianxian immediately rolled her eyes.

Ingrate, who'd want to serve you anyway!

"Just sit, would you?" Lu Ran said offhandedly before glancing across the table, "Elder Bai, have you ever heard of Qin Yanzhi?"

He gave a brief description, but this time, he didn't get the answer he was looking for.

Lu Ran could only sigh inwardly, then pivoted, "Let's plan our strategy. Elder Bai, having contended with Tiantu Mountain for so long, do you have any recommendations?"

Bai Yanhui spoke methodically, "Luo Tiantu possesses a high cultivation, immense strength, but at his core, he is a coward who bullies the weak and fears the strong.

We can focus on exploiting this weakness."

"Oh?" Yu Changsheng, who had remained silent, now seemed interested.

Exploiting personality to crush an opponent?

Intriguing.

Bai Yanhui nodded, "Luo Tiantu is petty and cowardly, and when faced with a life-threatening assault, he will likely abandon his allies to save himself."

Yu Changsheng asked, "What makes you so certain?"

Bai Yanhui spoke in a deep voice, "When Sinless Valley dealt a significant blow to Tiantu Mountain, it was precisely because we set a trap and launched an overwhelming attack that frightened Luo Tiantu.

Luo Tiantu's immediate response revealed his true nature.

In his desperation to flee, he activated the Electric Shackles Talisman, leaving his comrades in peril."

Lu Ran and Yu Changsheng exchanged glances.

Bai Yanhui continued, "Sinless Valley was thus able to slaughter many of Tiantu Mountain's elites.

Later, when Tiantu Mountain captured us, Luo Tiantu, despite having the opportunity to enslave more Weak God Disciples and increase their overall strength, insisted on executing us instead..."

Yu Changsheng mused, "A desperate grab to save face."

"Precisely!" Bai Yanhui, suppressing his sorrow, said soberly, "When executing captives, his methods were unusually brutal!

On one hand, to vent anger; on the other, likely to reassert his authority amongst his people and compensate for his prior disgrace."

Bai Yanhui turned toward Lu Ran, "Sect Leader Lu, our forces are strong, boasting several Sea Realm Great Powers!

If we ambush Luo Tiantu on his return journey with a lethal strike upfront..."

Yu Changsheng pondered aloud, "Luo Tiantu might panic, abandon his squad, and flee?

Or perhaps he might even destabilize his formation and help us take down his own group?"

Bai Yanhui's voice rasped, "Human nature is hard to change! Luo Tiantu is middle-aged; both his personality and combat habits are deeply ingrained.

As long as we launch an unexpected and sufficiently deadly attack, Luo Tiantu's instincts are unlikely to change."

"Elder Bai's words ring true," Yu Changsheng agreed.

Lu Ran watched as the two continued their tactical discussion and suddenly realized—

He'd recruited another strategist!

This strategist was also once a leader in his own right!

Lu Ran didn't yet know Bai Yanhui's specific achievements during the past twenty-some years,

but surviving alone was already a monumental feat!

In his most recent feat, Bai Yanhui had led a group of Weak God Disciples, constantly at odds with Tiantu Mountain's forces. Even when pushed to the brink, he had orchestrated a last-minute counterstrike, taking down several powerful disciples...

Lu Ran's inner joy swelled.

Ran Sect, what a treasure they've picked up!

...

Chapter 519: Take action!

Yu Changsheng and Bai Yanhui continuously studied the battle plan, occasionally consulting Lu Ran for advice.

Time ticked by, second by second.

Suddenly, Lu Ran's face lit up with joy, and he shook his head slightly.

Deng Yuxiang immediately paused his actions, bent down a bit, and softly asked, "Done?"

"Yes, yes!" Lu Ran nodded repeatedly and immediately closed his eyes, connecting his spirit with the Divine Sculpture of the Jade Talisman.

"Shh." Yu Changsheng decisively fell silent and gestured to Bai Yanhui to do the same.

The conference hall fell into silence, everyone afraid to disturb Lu Ran.

A few minutes later, Lu Ran slowly raised his hand, drawing something with his fingertips in the air.

A peculiar thunder rune was drawn, resembling a twisted little lightning snake; a phantom White Jade Stone also appeared, carrying the rune upon it.

Jade Talisman Divine Skill·Electric Confinement Talisman!

With this skill now upgraded to the River Grade, the White Jade Stone Plate summoned by Lu Ran no longer moved in a straight line and could be maneuvered as he wished.

The Electric Confinement Talisman moved with Lu Ran's thoughts, revolving slowly around his palm under his control.

Beside him, Si Xianxian's eyes sparkled brightly.

She knew in her heart that this Divine Sculpture of the Jade Talisman was prepared for Jiang Ruyi!

"Phew~"

Suddenly, eight pieces of White Jade Stone Plates spread out from within Lu Ran's body.

When casting the River Grade Jade Talisman Formation, a Talisman member's waist would be wrapped with four White Jade Stone Plates and bestowed with the ability to fly.

As for the Jiang Grade Jade Talisman Formation, it adds four more White Jade Stone Plates.

Fully enhancing the Talisman members' output, defensive power, and other abilities.

"Ha!" Lu Ran was filled with joy, his wish fulfilled.

With the Jiang Grade Jade Talisman Formation, he could absorb the Electric Confinement Talisman, Bursting Flame Talisman, Quicksand Talisman, and Frost Talisman cast by other Jiang Realm Jade Talisman Believers!

All taught by the same master, the tricks couldn't be broken~

Lu Ran's thoughts were quite active.

You all cannot harm me!

But I have a myriad of techniques capable of slaughtering you all!

Alas, it's a pity that neither I nor the Divine Sculpture of the Jade Talisman is of the Sea Realm and unable to use the Sea Grade Jade Talisman Formation.

If otherwise, Lu Ran dared to trample on Luo Tiantu and Lady Kong's face with reckless abandon!

It's worth mentioning that as a Third-class God, the sect possesses a River Realm Technique—Angry Thunder Burning Fire Formation!

This skill can summon heavy clouds, causing the heavens to rain down thunder strikes and make the earth tremble, spewing thick columns of fire.

It is precisely because of this skill's existence that Talisman members are referred to as "late-game players".

Divine Technique·Angry Thunder Burning Fire Formation is simply a synonym for "apocalyptic"!

Once Talisman members unleash this technique, all creatures within the formation's range...

None shall be spared!

The flaw of this technique is also obvious: it requires a casting delay, making it difficult to execute smoothly if disturbed; also, this large-area attack does not discriminate between friend and foe.

Therefore, you seldom see Jade Talisman Believers using their River Realm Technique in human cities.

"Congratulations, Sect Leader, on advancing your strength once more," Yu Changsheng timely congratulated.

"Hehe~" Lu Ran chuckled.

Si Xianxian was very excited, her clever little mind turning: "Can you prepare the Angry Thunder Burning Fire Formation first, and after being ready, flash directly into the enemy camp with an Evil Shadow Flash?"

Lu Ran: ???

Bai Yanhui: ???

Why is there a casting delay for the Angry Thunder Burning Fire Formation? It's setting up for "Heavenly Thunder and Earthly Fire".

You had just established a link with heaven and earth, preparing for an attack, and then you teleport away wanting to summon Heavenly Thunder and Earthly Fire elsewhere?

Is this cutting a boat to retrieve a sword?

Lu Ran was dumbfounded by Si Xianxian's ludicrous thought.

Bai Yanhui was confused because he has no eyes, and the Caster sect doesn't have perception techniques, he couldn't tell what had happened.

Si Xianxian's statement was practically explosive information!

Using the Jade Talisman Sect·Angry Thunder Burning Fire Formation in conjunction with Evil Dog Clan·Evil Shadow Flash?

This...?

Isn't Master Lu an Immortal Sheep Believer?

How did...all these techniques become so mixed up?

Bai Yanhui's face remained calm, showing no emotion, yet his heart was stirred into a storm.

Earlier, he did catch a faint sound of electric currents.

Could it be that Master Lu...

"You're brave to think like that," Lu Ran muttered, as eight Golden Jade Talismans spread out internally again.

The River Grade Golden Jade Eight Talismans can only function autonomously against the enemy, and the caster cannot interfere.

After Jiang Grade, the caster can freely control the Golden Jade Talismans.

Back then, when Lu Ran secretly returned to Luoxian Mountain intending to ambush Jiang Fairy, he was immobilized by her with a bunch of Golden Jade Talismans and humiliatingly sent to heaven...

The Jiang Grade Golden Jade Talismans can even change size, from a palm-size to a 1-meter-sized Golden Jade Shield.

The defensive power is quite substantial!

"Here you go." With a thought, Lu Ran directed a delicate Golden Jade Stone Plate to fly in front of Si Xianxian's face, "Go and play."

Si Xianxian tilted her head, her face full of questions.

Damn it! You disdain me again!

I swear &\$%#@!!

Lu Ran's fingers gently wavered, continuously controlling the Jade Token to fly up and down, increasing skill proficiency: "Mr. Conglong, Elder Bai, please continue."

Si Xianxian was about to blow up but hearing that Lu Ran intended to discuss serious matters, she reluctantly suppressed her anger.

"Hmph!" She gripped the Golden Jade Stone Plate resentfully, you want me to play, right?

Fine, I'll play!

"Crack" a sound of shattering!

Lu Ran shuddered in fright.

Si Xianxian had forcefully crushed the Golden Jade Stone Plate and was grinding it fiercely in her palm as if trying to turn it into powder.

"Gulp." Lu Ran swallowed nervously.

Thank goodness he didn't let her press his head just now, no matter how hard his head is, it isn't harder than the Golden Jade Talisman!

Divine Technique·Fierce Sky Power is really no joke...

...

Since the third day of July, the Lu Sect members have occupied Tiantu Mountain like a cuckoo bird taking over a nest.

On this mission, Lu Ran brought along his four Great Protectors, plus one Luoshen General.

With Yu Changsheng and Bai Yanhui offering strategies, Lu Ran quickly finalized the ambush plan, and everyone was assigned their tasks.

In just two days, Lu Ran familiarized himself with the surroundings of Tiantu Mountain and carefully selected several ambush spots.

The team couldn't ambush on the mountain itself because being at the foot of Tiantu Mountain should logically have guards.

Once Luo Tiantu reaches the foothill without a welcoming guard, their cover would be blown.

Unexpectedly, they ended up waiting for over ten days.

It is often said: On the fifteenth day of the lunar month, the gates of the underworld open, bringing demons and spirits!

In the Holy Spirit Mountain territory, there's no saying of demon invasions on the fifteenth, but for Luo Tiantu and his team...

Lu Ran, leading the "demons and spirits," truly showed up uninvited!

That night, the bright moon hung high.

Lu Ran stood atop Tiantu Mountain, silently cultivating while observing the night.

"They should be here, it's late," Lu Ran muttered.

He was especially vigilant on duty today.

Because at dawn, the Spellcaster Believer Bai Yanhui had clearly told Lu Ran that something might happen today.

What could happen?

It's surely Luo Tiantu leading his team back to the mountain!

Honestly, having a Spellcaster Believer in the team is just too much of a cheat!

Elder Bai couldn't predict the future, but he could sound the alarm!

Lu Ran specifically asked Elder Bai about the outcome of this Ran Sect's ambush on Luo Tiantu.

Bai Yanhui simply smiled without a word, saying only four words: "It's up to man."

On hearing this, Lu Ran almost couldn't maintain his composure.

A man who believes in fate and practices mysticism talking to me about subjective initiative?

Regardless, Lu Ran remained very vigilant, his pair of pitch-black eyes piercing through the vast night, capturing everything within several tens of kilometers.

"Hmm?" Suddenly, Lu Ran's eyes narrowed!

In the distant western forest, upon the treetops, he glimpsed a figure flying.

Lu Ran used his Extreme Eye Power to see clearly that this person had Jade Tokens coiled around their body.

Jade Talisman Believer!

Lu Ran licked his lips; in all likelihood, this was a scout probing ahead.

Lu Ran immediately sent a transmission: [Luo Tiantu leading a team has approached from the west, everyone, convene at the conference hall!]

[Yes!]

[Yes.] Numerous transmissions flooded into his mind, and Lu Ran's figure flickered.

The members of the Ran Sect immediately sprang into action; Lu Ran repeatedly cast Evil Technique-Mirror Flower Moon, and in mere seconds, everyone arrived at their ambush positions, waiting to strike.

[Nightmare, rein in the killing intent!] Lu Ran hid atop a large tree, frowning slightly while looking at a giant tree not far away.

Deng Yuxiang exhaled slowly, trying to calm her mind.

But thinking of past grievances and how they will be avenged today, she couldn't help but let her killing intent boil over!

"Phew~"

Several hundred meters away, the scout flew past.

[Nobody move!] Lu Ran's gaze swept through the gaps between tree branches, patiently waiting.

Indeed, a large contingent followed closely!

[Get ready!] Lu Ran transmitted, his body tense.

Luo Tiantu made quite an appearance, flying side by side with his lady, while the rest of the crowd followed in front and behind.

Lu Ran squinted and saw two individuals wielding Sky-piercing Halberds advancing on the ground.

Presumably, these were the bodyguards Luo Tiantu had invited from Thunder Mountain.

East Thunder Disciple, specialized in slaying Evil Dogs?

Heh,

Lu Ran snorted coldly in his heart, fiery flames ignited around him, and he casually grabbed for a Flame Warhammer.

Divine Technique·Fierce Sky Hammer!

Divine Technique·Fiery Fire Sky Leader!

[Take action now!!] Upon Lu Ran's command, he mustered all his strength, hefting the heavy hammer forward vigorously!

Simultaneously, his figure flickered into motion.

Target——directly above Luo Tiantu's head!

In the forest, beside the giant tree.

Luo Tiantu was chatting happily with Lady Kong when suddenly he felt a wave of heat enveloping over his head.

"What the..." Luo Tiantu had no time to react, instinctively manipulating the White Jade Stone Plates circling him to defend upwards.

"Crack!!"

A Flame Warhammer engulfed in flames smashed down heavily, crashing onto a White Jade Stone Plate entwined with frost and snow.

The Jade Plate shattered, and thick frost spread.

"You will explode for me!!" Lu Ran roared inside.

"Boom!!"

The Flame Warhammer roared and thundered; under the power of the Fiery Fire Sky Leader, the explosive warhammer even raised a small mushroom cloud!

Instantly, the team was thrown into disarray, everyone was blown away.

"Enemy attack! Enemy attack!!"

"Watch out..."

With a thud, a muffled sound echoed!

"Damn!" Luo Tiantu's face turned iron-gray, after being bombarded by the blast wave, he crashed heavily to the ground.

It was utterly disgraceful.

From start to end, he couldn't see who the ambushers were!

The assailant came shadowless and vanished traceless, after smashing down a hammer from above, they disappeared again?

Fierce Heavenly believers?

But how did a Fierce Heavenly believer disappear?

Luo Tiantu was utterly stumped, and before he could react further, suddenly his body stiffened!

A violent thud drummed against his temples, as an overwhelming sense of terror surged towards him simultaneously from both sides.

"Roar!!"

Gigantic dragons roared, transforming into endless little Canglong, ferociously attacking.

Ash sect's Sea Realm Technique·Ten Thousand Dragons Quelling Sea Arrows!

"Swoosh! Swoosh! Swoosh!"

The terrifying sound of slicing through the air surged relentlessly, targeting the position where the group resided.

Countless long, thin sword traces appeared out of thin air, densely packed as if they were about to tear apart the world!

Night Charm Clan's Sea Realm Technique·Thousand Shadow Scars!

Luo Tiantu's pupils contracted violently!

Compared to anger, the terror in his heart was much greater.

Two... two Sea Realm Great Powers?

How's there an Evil Technique involved? Humans and Evil Demons working together?

How could this be possible?!

When had he ever provoked such a powerful organizational force?

Chapter 520: no one is allowed to leave!

The Canglong and Sword Trace closed in rapidly, intertwining like dragons and snakes dancing together!

Trees tore apart, rocks shattered and flew, the battlefield was in utter chaos.

"Heavenly Path!" Lady Kong gasped in both shock and fury, her reaction quicker than anyone else as a Sea Realm Great Power.

Eight Golden Jade Stone Plates spread out from within her body as she immediately turned her attention to her husband.

And Luo Tiantu...

"No, I can't die!" Luo Tiantu's heart raced with fear, already knocked to the ground; he hurriedly threw out a Quicksand Talisman.

"Whoosh!!"

The mountainous forest terrain suddenly transformed, becoming a surging river of fine sand.

Luo Tiantu plunged headfirst into it, his thoughts triggering the fine sand streams within the river to wrap around his body, dragging him deeper underground.

Lady Kong's pupils shrank!

Luo Tiantu fled again!

Everything was exactly as Bai Yanhui predicted.

Luo Tiantu was a coward, obsessed with self-preservation.

When faced with an assault, the leader immediately chose to escape without attempting to stabilize morale or lead his team through the crisis.

He even abandoned his wife, let alone protecting his subordinates.

"Luo Tiantu!"

Lady Kong's face turned ashen.

A scene like this had already played out once before, during the siege of the Sinless Valley members not long ago.

Back then, Luo Tiantu was caught off guard by an ambush and similarly chose to flee instantly, disregarding the lives of his own people, even crushing an Electric Shackles Talisman to escape.

Though Tiantu Mountain ultimately claimed victory in that battle, Luo Tiantu's authority plummeted sharply.

Afterward, Luo Tiantu executed Sinless Valley's captives in front of the mountain's members with exceedingly cruel methods.

No matter what the members felt internally, they dared not voice their opinions.

In private, Luo Tiantu apologized to Lady Kong, coaxing her with endless excuses.

Taking into account their many years together as well as practical concerns, Lady Kong chose to temporarily set aside the unpleasant memories.

But now... Luo Tiantu ignored her again and fled?!

A leopard can never change its spots!

Though to be fair, among everyone present, Luo Tiantu wasn't the fastest runner.

That dubious honor belonged to the two East Thunder disciples, specially invited and pampered by Tiantu Mountain...

"Whoosh~"

Lady Kong could no longer care much; she hastily manipulated the Golden Jade Eight Talismans to expand their specifications.

River Grade Golden Jade Eight Talismans could enlarge palm-sized stone plates to dimensions of one meter in length and width.

Sea Grade Golden Jade Eight Talismans, however, could reach a maximum size of ten meters!

As a surge of energy flowed intensely, several Golden Jade Stone Plates expanded rapidly. In no time, the stone plates formed a cuboid structure, striving to shield everyone.

Relentless Canglong collided against the enormous Golden Jade Stone Plates, creating a dense cacophony of sounds.

But the problem was, the battlefield wasn't just filled with Canglong.

There were also long Sword Traces appearing out of thin air!

"Ah! Ahhh!"

"Ah..." Miserable screams sounded one after another.

The Sword Traces from the Night Charm Clan directly erupted within the cuboid, engaging in ruthless slaughter!

The bodies of the Jade Talisman disciples were split apart, limbs torn asunder, heads severed...

They were dismembered into pieces!

The catastrophic scene unfolded repeatedly.

Even the Water Flow Armor on Lady Kong was slashed open with gaping wounds; those of the River Realm had no chance of resisting.

Lady Kong's face stiffened, her palm forcefully pressing downward.

The massive cuboid formed with Golden Jade Stone Talismans slammed hard into the earth below.

Luo Tiantu was indeed cowardly, but his choice of escape path was optimal!

"Huh?" The only member of Tiantu Mountain's squad not under attack was the scout flying in the lead.

This scout held a high status within the mountain.

He was one of the Yu Family brothers wielding the Divine Weapon Earth Trace Sword – Yu Lenghe!

Yu Lenghe abruptly braked, hovering mid-air as he turned to look back.

Under the pale moonlight, the scout witnessed a scene resembling purgatory in the Human World.

Canglong danced, Sword Traces crisscrossed.

Everything had happened so swiftly that this scout could hardly react.

"Where are you looking?"

A cold voice suddenly emerged from behind.

The sentence was lengthy, yet Lu Ran's actions were swift.

Before the word "where" was completely uttered, Lu Ran, wielding the Dawn Blade in his left hand, had already slashed down!

Lu Ran couldn't distinguish whether this was Yu Lengshan or Yu Lenghe, but he vividly remembered the two brothers.

In the past, it was these Yu Family brothers and another despicable individual who forced Lu Ran onto a cliff edge.

Their greedy eyes had coveted Lu Ran's arsenal of Divine Weapons.

Not content with robbing him, they wanted him dead!

"Ah!" Yu Lenghe felt his hair stand on end.

The Divine Weapon Earth Trace Sword in his hand emitted a warning, sensing the aura of its counterpart.

But with the enemy already at his doorstep, what good was a warning?

Too late!

Yu Lenghe didn't even have the time to turn around, unleashing his skills frantically.

The Jade Talisman Formation encircling him shattered its White Jade Stone Plate symbolizing the Electric Shackles Talisman in an instant!

Simultaneously, the Golden Jade Eight Talismans burst from within him all at once.

"Crackle~ Crackle!"

A fifty-meter diameter Thunder Ball ignited, filled with countless erratic electric currents darting like tiny lightning serpents.

How quick was Lu Ran's reaction?

He could dodge.

But... why bother?

For Lu Ran, encircling him were several White Jade Stone Plates.

The River Grade Jade Talisman Formation comprised eight White Jade Stone Plates, two of which were Electric Shackles Talismans.

The erratic lightning serpents from Yu Lenghe's triggered Electric Shackles Talisman darted towards Lu Ran's Jade Talisman Formation-Electric Shackles Talismans.

As Lu Ran had foreseen: taught by the same master, the move can't be countered!

No!

Yu Lenghe was taught by Divine-Jade Talisman.

Lu Ran ordered the Fake God-Jade Talisman to forcibly deploy the sect's Divine Skill!

"Crack! Crack..."

The Dawn Blade gleamed!

Two active Golden Jade Stone Plates were sliced to pieces by the blade!

The Second-stage Divine Weapon was exceptionally sharp.

Lu Ran's Divine Power surged as he pushed the Divine Technique-Fierce Sky Power to its peak, his strength was astonishing!

"Slash!"

The Dawn Blade first cleaved through two Golden Jade Stone Plates then struck from Yu Lenghe's right shoulder to his left hip.

The Dawn gleamed first, followed by the Eight Desolates!

Lu Ran's actions were seamless. In his right hand, the Eight Desolates Blade drove through the sword trace.

The blade entered white, and exited red!

Yu Lenghe's eyes widened sharply as he saw the bloodstained blade tip pierce through his chest.

The Jade Talisman Formation and Golden Jade Eight Talismans encircling him shattered.

Only the Divine Weapon Earth Trace Sword remained in his grasp.

Lu Ran released the Dawn Blade and grabbed the Earth Trace Sword's hilt.

More precisely, his hand covered Yu Lenghe's, the two of them gripping the hilt together.

Lu Ran's icy gaze bore into him, his hand exerting enormous force!

When you tried to corner me...

Did you ever think you'd end up here?

"Crack!"

Bone shattered!

Yu Lenghe's life drained rapidly, but he wasn't completely dead. His last cry echoed: "Ah..."

Being of the River Realm, Lu Ran's strength was brute, not to mention employing the Divine Technique-Fierce Sky Power!

Yu Lenghe's hand bones splintered, his bloodied hand a mangled mess.

The Earth Trace Sword, covered in its former master's flesh and shattered bones, found itself firmly grasped in Lu Ran's hand.

The mighty Divine Weapon offered no resistance.

It seemed even it was intimidated by Lu Ran's ruthless aura.

"Boom!"

Lu Ran delivered a kick to Yu Lenghe, sending him flying like a cannonball toward the battlefield.

As he approached its edge, several Sword Traces materialized, slashing across his body.

The horrific scene unfolded again.

Dismemberment!

Lu Ran's eyes burned with the fires of revenge, while Deng Yuxiang's flames... blazed even stronger!

In the southern night sky, Deng Yuxiang stood midair, the Broken Blade in her hand pointed toward the battlefield.

The Broken Blade quivered violently.

Sea Realm Technique-Night Shadow Thousand Traces wasn't executed via the Broken Blade.

This technique's accompanying motion merely required Deng Yuxiang to extend her hand forward.

But her boiling killing intent and the crisscrossing thin Sword Traces on the battlefield made the Broken Blade react intensely!

Excluding the two East Thunder Disciples, Luo Tiantu's squad originally consisted of ten individuals.

After mere moments, the squad was reduced to only three!

Lady Kong, Yu Lengshan within the cuboid, and Luo Tiantu who first escaped underground.

Keep in mind, this squad consisted of members at or above the River Realm.

Deng Yuxiang... had already completely lost it!

"Madam!" Yu Lengshan trembled in terror, his voice shaking.

Within the cuboid formed by the Golden Jade Eight Talismans lay a pile of skeletal remains, alongside scattered flesh and dismembered parts.

Yu Lengshan knew this was what lay in store for him.

"Buzz!" The Divine Weapon Earth Trace Sword shook incessantly in Yu Lengshan's grip, seemingly trying to warn its wielder about something.

"Ah!" Yu Lengshan let out a sudden cry as a Sword Trace materialized out of nowhere, slicing off his calf.

Clean and precise.

Lady Kong gritted her teeth, her expression distorted.

She tried to shield her men but also sought her own salvation, yet the ruthless adversaries took down member after member with unrelenting force!

And all of this unfolded in less than ten seconds!

At this moment, Lady Kong's rage completely overtook her fear.

Yangyang Sea, its mighty dignity!

How could it tolerate such humiliation?

The relentless screams of her followers felt like mockery, sneering at her incompetence.

Lady Kong was consumed by fury, disregarding Yu Lengshan's fate, and detonated the Electric Shackles Talisman.

Sea Grade-Electric Shackles Talisman, its range was a staggering 500 meters!

Centered around Lady Kong, a Thunder Ball with a radius of 250 meters erupted instantly.

Lightning flashed, dazzlingly bright.

Poor Yu Lengshan couldn't even scream anymore, his entire body paralyzed.

But the members of Ran Sect...

Each and every one of them remained 300 meters away from the battlefield, outside the Electric Shackles Talisman's zone!

For this ambush, Ran Sect had clearly done exhaustive preparation.

"Thud!"

A heavily injured Lady Kong, desperately controlling the "cuboid," finally sank it into the raging Quicksand River below.

The Sword Traces lingering in the forest vanished.

But the swarm of numerous tiny Canglong continued their chase, pouring frantically toward the Quicksand River.

Luo Tiantu escaped underground?

Lady Kong escaped underground with Golden Jade Eight Talismans?

Not a chance!

Ran Sect had stayed stationed at Tiantu Mountain for over ten days, prepared for more than simply enduring the wait.

Bai Yanhui and Yu Changsheng strategized extensively with Lu Ran, meticulously selecting the perfect ambush site.

The two master tacticians ensured that Ran Sect's forces could create an inescapable trap, no matter the location.

"Rumble!"

The earth quaked.

Deep underground, Yan Shuangzi received Lu Ran's transmitted message and immediately signaled Yu Changsheng beside her.

From Dragon Guardian cast his spell swiftly, and a pale golden giant fish formed rapidly, erupting upward.

Sea Grade Divine Skill·Dragon Carp Heavenly Boat!

Escape underground?

Rest assured, Bai Yanhui and Yu Changsheng had anticipated everything!

[Mad Immortal.] Lu Ran called in his mind.

In the northern part of the forest, beside the Luoshen General.

Si Xianxian ignited intensely, raising one hand high: [Kill!]

In the distant night sky, two gigantic flaming war hammers emerged.

One belonged to Mad Immortal Guardian, the other to the Master of Ran Sect.

Lu Ran's gaze was ablaze with murderous intent! Tiantu Mountain, Yangyang Sea, Luo Tiantu, Lady Kong...

Half a year ago, when you besieged and hunted me, your planning was terribly flawed.

Today, I'll teach you what it truly means to have no way to heaven and no door to earth!

No one leaves!

"Whoosh!"

Lu Ran fiercely swung his hand downward.

The Fierce Sky Divine Hammer radiated fiery light high into the air, descending with devastating momentum to obliterate the ground beneath.