

Old Gods 88

Chapter 88: Is it my turn?

After both squads registered, an accompanying drill instructor arrived.

This was a middle-aged soldier named Cai Yunfei, not as stern as imagined, and even spoke with a Jinmen accent.

Lu Ran really liked this accent!

It had an inextricable link to the special times.

Jinmen, being a hub for folk art, produced cultural products that were practically spiritual nourishment for the people of Da Xia.

On the night of the fifteenth, month after month, it came.

Many of those who spent anxious nights in shelters or at home relied on listening to comedy sketches and storytelling to relax their nerves and find joy amidst hardship.

Lu Ran was once among them.

"Don't fucking—cough—don't chicken out if we encounter a Soul-splitting Demon."

Instructor Cai's style was vastly different from that of Instructor Dou from Rain Alley City.

He led the way while reminding them, "The more you run, what's going to happen? Eh, it will chase you more!"

Everyone: "..."

Cai Yunfei: "Once you start running aimlessly, the formation breaks down. With the formation gone, heh, tactics go out the window."

Lu Ran: "..."

Just say it, why are you always looking at me?

Surely, it must be the "Immortal Sheep Believer" that led to this.

Before entering the Demon Cave, students naturally had to register their detailed information.

Although Lu Ran had made a bit of a name for himself, it was limited to the small Rain Alley City.

In the territory of Jinmen, Lu Ran was a nobody.

In the midst of conversation, everyone wound around pillars and descended spiraled steps, arriving at the Demon Cave Gate.

It was also a curtain of starry sky, mysterious and enchanting.

The first person to see such a spectacle would never imagine that behind the dazzling stars, hid so many fierce and terrifying creatures.

"Hoo~"

As everyone entered the Demon Cave Gate, a gust of night wind arose, whisking everyone's clothes into disarray.

Looking down,

A hundred meters below, Lu Ran saw a vast Blackwood Camp with flickering torches.

Looking afar,

He saw the torches trailing off into the deep night, like winding dragons of fire.

The scene was set!

All that was missing was an epic background score...

"Let's go," Jiang Ruyi said softly, her hand resting on Lu Ran's back.

"Okay," Lu Ran came back to his senses and started descending, employing his Extreme Vision.

Inside the Demon Cave stood vast expanses of black forests.

These trees were pitch-black and immensely thick, some even reaching a hundred meters.

Lu Ran knew that this black giant wood, known as "Black Soul Wood," was tough and highly flame-resistant; it was a special product of this Demon Cave.

The wooden camp they were stepping into must have been constructed by the military using local materials.

"Over here." Cai Yunfei led everyone down the stone pillars, heading straight for the south gate.

Outside the camp gate were staggeringly arranged anti-cavalry stakes made of blackwood.

It seemed to prevent a desperate charge by the Soul-splitting Demon Clan.

"Be bold in action! And if all else fails, you've got me!" Cai Yunfei suddenly transformed into a raven, soaring straight into the night sky.

"Let's go." Qiao Yuansi, carrying the Cold Night Sword in one hand, reached forth with the other.

With a surge of energy, an antique eight-sided lantern materialized out of thin air.

Lantern Divine Skill·Miao Fire Cage!

Its structure was exquisitely crafted, with dragon and phoenix carvings on the wooden frame, complete with a handle.

However, the ancient lantern's eight facets were all blank, without any design, which seemed incongruous with the beautiful frame.

Incongruous?

No matter, once Qiao Yuansi had the power to seal Evil Demons, it would be a perfect match.

"Go." Qiao Yuansi held the lantern's handle and gently pushed it forward.

The eight-sided lantern flew off on its own, heading toward a pitch-black wilderness.

As the Miao Fire Cage drifted slowly ahead, it cast a dark red glow around it.

Exquisite as it might be,

Inside this dark and eerie place, it seemed quite bizarre.

"Hmm..." Lu Ran's expression was somewhat strange.

Why did he get the feel that this ancient lantern, glowing with a dark red luster, matched the style of Yan Zhi paper figures?

It's an absolute must-have for a wedding!

"Pretty, isn't it?" Qiao Yuansi approached Jiang Ruyi, proud as can be.

Jiang Ruyi didn't expect Qiao Yuansi to come to her.

Naturally unwilling to dampen her spirits, she smiled and nodded lightly: "Hmm."

Qiao Yuansi's next action surprised Jiang Ruyi even more.

She took Jiang Ruyi's arm and raised her other hand slowly.

Guided by its master, the Miao Fire Cage began to drift into the night sky.

"It can even serve as a sky lantern!" Qiao Yuansi looked up at the lantern as it floated away.

Jiang Ruyi admired Qiao Yuansi's pretty profile and whispered, "You're in the Stream Realm·First Rank, you must have learned the Fiery Fire Cage by now?"

Qiao Yuansi, with her palm already raised, suddenly opened her fingers and mouthed a sound: "Boom!"

Lantern Divine Skill·Blazing Fire Cage!

"Bang!"

In the night sky, the Miao Fire Cage turned into a ball of flames that burst open.

The Miao Fire Cage, being the Lantern Sect's most basic divine skill, primarily served for illumination.

Its "ingenuity" lay in the fact that its properties could be altered at any time, making it a carrier for many subsequent divine skills of the Lantern Sect.

Qiao Yuansi: "Here, your fireworks."

Jiang Ruyi observed the blast radius and nodded with a smile.

Although they hadn't interacted for long, Jiang Ruyi had gotten to know the playful and adorable younger sister's childlike nature.

As she watched Jiang Ruyi's gentle smile, Qiao Yuansi couldn't help but feel enchanted.

Tsk tsk,

Quite nice indeed~

Beside them, Guan Yiren slightly turned her head, casting a seemingly casual glance at the two.

However, the Sword One Believer remained aloof and said nothing.

Tian Tian stood slightly behind Jiang Ruyi, observing Qiao Yuansi holding Jiang Ruyi's arm, and likewise kept silent.

"Bro Ran." Niu Zhengzheng, carrying a decorative axe, chuckled, "Heard from Yuansi that you're the top high school student in Rain Alley?"

Lu Ran was uncharacteristically modest: "It's just a small place, not worth mentioning."

He had always been friendly to Qiao Yuansi's two teammates.

After all, these two would accompany his sister through high school, and Lu Ran didn't want to ruin the squad's atmosphere because of himself.

"But you're still the top," Niu Zhengzheng insisted.

Qiao Yuansi curiously asked, "What are you trying to do?"

Niu Zhengzheng: "A competition?"

"Buffalo Head, stop fooling around!" Qiao Yuansi warned, "We're here to fight the enemy together, not to duel."

Lu Ran suddenly spoke up: "I'm game for anything."

Qiao Yuansi had already cautioned him that Niu Zhengzheng was straightforward.

Men,

A fight says more than a thousand words.

Qiao Yuansi annoyed: "Why are you joining in the foolishness!"

But Lu Ran just laughed: "He keeps calling me Bro Ran, I have to live up to the name!"

"Ha ha!" Niu Zhengzheng said, "Swords and axes do not have eyes; we'll save the sparring for later.

Let's see who can kill the enemy more efficiently!"

"That works," Qiao Yuansi immediately agreed, "But we must go for the Mist Realm·Soul Split Demon, we can't be overconfident."

Lu Ran looked at Qiao Yuansi in surprise.

Who knew the usually playful sister would be so cautious?

Yet Lu Ran failed to realize that Qiao Yuansi, fearing he might struggle against the Stream Realm·Soul Split Demon, decided as such.

Of course, Qiao Yuansi knew Lu Ran always excelled in assessments.

But she had never personally witnessed Lu Ran in battle.

And with Lu Ran being an Immortal Sheep Believer, whose divine techniques were clearly more suited for maneuvering and harassing the enemy.

Qiao Yuansi assumed that her brother achieved good results thanks to the team.

Have brother solo a Stream Realm·Soul Split Demon?

That would be asking for trouble!

Being a Believer was never about solo fights, but shining in one's role.

"Okay, I'll follow orders," Niu Zhengzheng advanced with large strides.

"Don't worry," Jiang Ruyi noticed Qiao Yuansi's concern with her keen mind.

"Huh?" Qiao Yuansi looked toward Jiang Ruyi.

Jiang Ruyi whispered, "Since becoming a believer, haven't you seen your brother fight?"

"Yes," Qiao Yuansi nodded.

Jiang Ruyi softly said, "When your brother goes wild, all six of us combined might not make it out alive."

Qiao Yuansi: "What?"

Beside her, Tian Tian was also taken aback.

From the beginning, Lu Ran had been her teammate, leading their team to soar.

Tian Tian had never considered what would happen if Lu Ran were an enemy...

The more she thought about it, the more she panicked!

She genuinely didn't know how she'd survive if faced with Lu Ran.

"Thank you for backing my brother," Qiao Yuansi said earnestly, "but Sister, don't overpraise him."

Everyone present was, at the least, a fifth-class disciple of a divine skill.

Not to mention the explosive presence of believers like those of the West Desolation and the Sword One.

How could my brother win?

Is he supposed to keep baaing and crying, begging the opponent to throw a match?

"Your brother's combat talent... never mind, you'll see for yourself," Jiang Ruyi said, rather helplessly, but she didn't blame the other.

After all, unless seen with one's own eyes, she too would find it hard to imagine that this little sheep could ride on everyone's heads, bossing around.

"Ha, here it comes!"

After a long journey, everyone finally encountered a wandering Soul-splitting Demon in the wilderness beyond the torch path.

"Bro Ran, time me!" Niu Zhengzheng called out excitedly.

Lu Ran: "..."

Indeed a brute.

We're competing, and you want me to act as the referee?

"Moo!!" Niu Zhengzheng charged with his heavy decorative axe.

Niu Zhengzheng's cow bellow,

Even baffled the opposing Soul-splitting Demon...

"Heh heh." Niu Zhengzheng grinned.

The Soul-splitting Demons were massive, even the weakest Mist Realm·Soul Split Demon stood over two meters tall.

It was pitch-black with a vicious bovine head, walking upright but with limbs ending in demon-modified hooves.

Coincidentally, Niu Zhengzheng was also robust, towering over two meters.

In the relatively dim light, Niu Zhengzheng's bellow truly startled the opponent.

"Hoo!"

Taking advantage of the Soul-splitting Demon's stupor, Niu Zhengzheng quickly closed in, whirling his axe from low to high.

West Desolate Divine Skill·Floating Sand!

Suddenly, a cloud of sand flew up, heading straight for the Soul-splitting Demon's face.

"Moo!"

Blinded by the dirt, the Soul-splitting Demon instinctively shut its eyes, bellowing in anger.

Without saying a word, Niu Zhengzheng maintained the lifting momentum of his axe and ferociously chopped down.

With a mighty swing that could cleave a mountain!

And as the axe blade descended, a massive axe shadow enveloped the weapon.

West Desolate Divine Skill·Desolate Shattering Axe!

This technique had notable characteristics.

If a believer of the West Desolation had no weapon, they could conjure an axe out of thin air, riddled with shattering patterns.

If the believer wielded a weapon, the shattering axe shadow could attach to it, enhancing the weapon's power!

"Slash—"

Blood splattered.

Like a stake, the Soul-splitting Demon was cleaved in two from head to toe by the axe!

Mighty, powerful, and decisive!

The blinded Mist Realm-Soul Split Demon could do nothing but stagger back and roar, hooves flailing without any meaningful resistance.

Meanwhile, Lu Ran silently counted to 5.

"How's that?" Niu Zhengzheng turned towards the torchlit path.

"5 seconds," Lu Ran answered truthfully.

And those 5 seconds included the time it took Niu Zhengzheng to run over.

Truly worthy of being a Second-class God·West Wilderness Axe believer.

Such brute force and violence!

Niu Zhengzheng bent down searching for the Demon Crystal, calling: "Bro Ran, your turn."

"My turn?"

Lu Ran slapped his hands downward, thrusting his double swords into the ground.

Then he reached into his pocket.

Under everyone's curious gaze, Lu Ran pulled out a red cloth from his pocket...