

When God 781

Chapter 781 Tunnel_3

Li Xiu rode for several hours to get here, seeing nothing along the way, but after riding for just over twenty minutes inside, he suddenly saw a light ahead.

"There is definitely something wrong with this tunnel." Li Xiu slowed down and continued pedaling forward, soon seeing clearly what that light was.

It turned out to be a miniature train stopped in the tunnel, and the light he saw was the train's tail lamp.

Calling it a miniature train because it was so tiny, each carriage was about the size of a metal bucket, and counting the locomotive, it only had seven carriages in total. The entire train was about ten meters long, yet it eerily floated in mid-air, with the wheels not touching the ground.

The miniature train was entirely carved from jade, and there were actually people inside the carriages.

Upon closer inspection, what he saw inside were not people at all, but jade dolls carved from jade.

The jade dolls had very peculiar shapes, at first glance they seemed quite beautiful; some wore tuxedos, others dresses, and there was even an old man with a pipe and a mother holding an infant.

However, these jade dolls all seemed to have defects. The one wearing a tuxedo with a tall hat had only one eyeball.

The doll in a dress, resembling a lady, had a smooth surface at the mouth's location, without even a single line.

The old man had no ears, and the mother's head was bald, with neither hair nor a hat.

Even more bizarre was the baby doll, its eyes were like a dead fish, open but without pupils.

Every jade doll in the carriage had some defects, and a whole carriage full of such dolls appearing in this place gave an increasingly creepy feeling the more he looked at them.

"The Happiness Train is about to depart... please hurry aboard if you haven't..." As Li Xiu was examining this eerie jade train, suddenly a strange voice like that of a circus clown rang out.

On top of the locomotive, something like a police light started flashing, blinking like a police light, only the light was green.

"The Happiness Train is about to depart... please hurry aboard if you haven't..." Along with the sinister green light flickering, that voice kept repeating the same sentence mechanically.

"May I ask, where is this train going?" Li Xiu cautiously walked to the side of the locomotive, examining it as he asked.

The locomotive was entirely enclosed, making it impossible to see if there were any jade dolls inside, or to determine where the voice was coming from.

However, no matter how many times Li Xiu asked, no one answered him, and the voice kept repeating.

After that voice repeated ten times, it stopped sounding, and a whistle sounded from the miniature train, and the wheels began to move slowly.

Seeing the train about to leave, Li Xiu quickly rode the Masked Emperor, following along beside the train.

But as the train started, Li Xiu was amazed to find that, although it did not seem to be moving fast, the Masked Emperor, which was already running at full speed, was gradually being left behind.

Initially, the Masked Emperor was parallel with the train's locomotive, but as soon as the train started, even before it picked up speed, the Masked Emperor was already trailing two carriages behind.

Even after twisting the throttle to its maximum, breaking the sound barrier, Li Xiu found himself still being distanced.

Gritting his teeth, Li Xiu leaped off the Masked Emperor, landing on top of the train, straddling the carriage as if riding a horse, with his feet on either window edge and his hands gripping where the carriages connected.

The Masked Emperor was also recalled by Li Xiu, transforming into a ring and returning to his finger.

The train slowly started up, soon stabilizing, seemingly reaching its maximum speed, yet curiously, sitting on top, Li Xiu did not feel the train moving particularly fast, perhaps at most thirty or forty kilometers per hour.

Riding atop the carriage felt no faster than a miniature tourist train ride.

"Why is it that the Masked Emperor can't catch up at this slow speed?" Li Xiu couldn't help but ponder.

The train continued moving forward, and Li Xiu suddenly felt something crawling on his right ankle, which sent a chill down his spine, prompting him to quickly pull his leg back, changing from a straddling position to crouching on the carriage.

Looking down at his ankle, he saw nothing, and his white jumpsuit was still intact.

Li Xiu tilted his head to look inside the carriage below, seeing on the right the jade doll dressed like a lady in a dress.

He examined it carefully, finding nothing unusual about the lady doll; its posture was no different from before.

Then, craning his head to look at the left side of the carriage, he saw the gentleman doll in a tuxedo, which also showed nothing unusual.

The carriage was small, with just enough space for those two dolls and the seat; there was nothing else in it, nor could he find anything strange.

Frowning slightly, Li Xiu was sure he hadn't imagined it; something must have touched his ankle, but with nothing to find now, he couldn't help but miss Chu Jun's skill.

If he had Chu Jun's Inspiration Skill, he might have figured out what was going on.

But as far as Li Xiu could see, these jade dolls were mere inanimate objects, without any trace of magical aura or light energy fluctuation, unlike the Jade Warriors; who knew if something might be hidden within them.

Regardless of having something or not, Li Xiu dared not let his leg dangle any longer and just crouched on top of the carriage.

Fortunately, the train's speed wasn't alarming, so crouching like this, there was no worry of being thrown off.

The train moved forward continuously, with the headlights on top of the two green lamps casting a light that was barely noticeable amid the tunnel's green glow.

So this unusual miniature train silently advanced along the mysterious tunnel, not even making the clattering sound normal trains should produce, giving Li Xiu an odd sensation as if he were riding a train heading for the Netherworld.

Toot! Toot!

As Li Xiu's mind wandered, the whistle blew again from the locomotive, and the green alarm lamp flashed once more.

"The Happiness Train is soon arriving at Happy Hometown Station, please prepare to disembark, and make sure to bring your belongings..." that eerie voice sounded once again.

"Happy Hometown Station..." Li Xiu felt peculiar just hearing the name.

Faintly ahead, there was a light different from the green glow, and from a distance, Li Xiu saw a platform appearing inside the tunnel, and next to it, a solitary figure standing.

"Are there actually others here?" Li Xiu focused on the figure on the platform, but couldn't make it out clearly.

As the train approached the platform, its speed noticeably decreased, and Li Xiu was finally able to see the figure's features, his eyes widening in surprise.

Chapter 782 Ruining Childhood

The figure on the platform was a girl as pristine as an ethereal spirit, surprisingly, it was Li Xiu's sister.

When the little train came to a complete stop, the carriage Li Xiu was in happened to stop right in front of Han Ling'Er.

"Xiao Xiu, let's go home." Han Ling'Er reached out her hand, smiling gently.

Li Xiu stared blankly at Han Ling'Er. He knew it was impossible for Han Ling'Er to be here, but the Han Ling'Er in front of him was the spitting image of his sister from his memories, down to every subtle expression, and even Li Xiu couldn't find a flaw.

Li Xiu didn't move, but Han Ling'Er walked over, took his hand, and pulled him down from the little train.

Li Xiu wanted to resist, but suddenly found himself completely powerless, being directly pulled off the train by Han Ling'Er.

This startled Li Xiu tremendously, because he found not only was he weak, but his body had undergone a strange transformation.

His originally robust arms had become short and thin, and the clothes he wore were no longer the snug outfit, but rather the clothes he wore when Han Ling'Er brought him back from the orphanage as a child.

The Demon Spirit Ring, Symbiotic Contract, and such were nowhere to be seen. No matter how Li Xiu summoned them, there was no response.

Li Xiu was horrified to discover that his body had turned into the small form of his childhood, only reaching Han Ling'Er's waist in height.

Looking around, there was no little train or Jade Tunnel; this was clearly the small town where he grew up.

"Xiao Xiu, let's go home. From now on, sister will take care of you," Han Ling'Er said tenderly, holding Li Xiu's small hand.

Li Xiu sighed inwardly. Looking at the gentle-faced Han Ling'Er, he found himself somewhat unable to distinguish whether this was an illusion or reality.

Li Xiu, led by Han Ling'Er, walked towards the old house. Every plant and tree on the street was a familiar sight to him.

These scenes played out like a historical recollection, just as he had followed Han Ling'Er home back then.

Everything was the same, the only difference being that it was just him and Han Ling'Er in the town; the residents who once lived there were nowhere to be found.

Han Ling'Er took Li Xiu back to the old house, washed his face, and then let him sit on a small stool.

"Don't worry, dinner will be ready soon," Han Ling'Er sat beside, with a pile of firewood in front of her, roasting a sizzling little beast over the fire.

This scene was exactly the same as before. Li Xiu looked at the roasting meat over the fire, which looked somewhat like a little pig, yet somewhat different.

Back then, Li Xiu was too young to know what Han Ling'Er was roasting. He thought it was a suckling pig, but now he realized it was something he had never seen before.

After a while, Han Ling'Er took a small knife, sliced a piece from the fragrant roasted meat, placed it on a plate, and presented it to Li Xiu, smiling, "This little thing was really sly. It took me a lot of effort to catch it from a very deep hole. Try and see if it's good."

Li Xiu stared blankly at Han Ling'Er and the roasted meat on the plate. He remembered, Han Ling'Er had said the same thing back then, but he didn't understand the meaning and just drooled over the roasted meat.

Back then, Li Xiu immediately began wolfing down the meat after receiving the plate, not thinking much, just feeling the roast was too delicious.

But now hearing it again, his mind was no longer on whether the roast was fragrant or not.

"Could this roasted little beast be the King of the Bottomless Pit?" Li Xiu accepted the plate, looking at the aromatic roast with a complicated expression.

"What are you waiting for? Eat up." Han Ling'Er rested her chin in her hand, looking at him with lively, smiling eyes.

Li Xiu hesitated for a moment, then picked up the roasted meat with chopsticks and tasted it.

It was, surprisingly, still the unforgettable flavor, truly delicious.

Even though he knew everything happening now wasn't real, he still felt a bit of warmth in his heart.

This was the beginning of his happy childhood, and it seemed like his memories started to become clearer from here.

Before Han Ling'Er took him from the orphanage, Li Xiu couldn't remember much. Perhaps because he was too young, he only vaguely remembered his parents being killed by demons and being sent to the orphanage; everything else was too blurry.

After Li Xiu swallowed the piece of meat, he felt a strange warmth filling his body, feeling as comfortable as if he had just soaked in a hot spring.

This was different from before, because Li Xiu clearly remembered that back then, after eating this piece of roasted meat, he rushed to the outhouse multiple times throughout the night, fell severely ill, and ran a high fever.

He vaguely remembered that Han Ling'Er took care of him for several days before he gradually recovered.

"What's fake is ultimately fake." Li Xiu sighed inwardly.

After seeing Li Xiu finish eating that piece of roast, Han Ling'Er cut another piece from the little beast and placed it on his plate.

"Xiao Xiu, eat slowly, don't rush, there's plenty. Tell sister if you want anything in the future."

Li Xiu looked at Han Ling'Er and continued eating the roast. This time the roast tasted the same, but it lacked that warm sensation.

Chapter 783 Destroying Childhood_2

Li Xiu sat quietly, eating the roasted meat, silently watching Han Ling'Er.

During his childhood, Li Xiu wished Han Ling'Er could always be by his side, but unfortunately, Han Ling'Er often left the old house, sometimes for a day or two, sometimes for several days, and the longest time, she was gone for more than a week.

"Little Xiu, you need to eat more so that your wounds can heal quicker." Han Ling'Er placed another piece of roasted meat on Li Xiu's plate, still speaking with a gentle smile.

These words suddenly opened Li Xiu's sealed memories, and some of the blurred images in his mind began to clarify.

Magnificent spring flowers, a young couple playing by the riverside with their child.

A boy resembling a cute doll ran into the flower bushes nearby to catch butterflies. As he was playing happily, he suddenly saw an intense white light appear on the river's surface.

The boy stopped catching butterflies and curiously looked at the river, only to see what appeared to be a crack of light in the air above the river.

The blazing white light was released from that crack, and the crack continued to grow larger, spreading like a spider's web across the river surface.

The boy's parents also saw the light fissure, their faces changed drastically, and they turned to run towards the boy, shouting something.

But before they could reach the boy, the spider-web-like light fissure shattered, and the blazing white radiance flooded everything like a torrent.

The boy watched as his parents, rushing towards him, were swallowed by the blazing white light, wanting to reach out to grab them but catching nothing, only seeing a figure bathed in light stepping out from the blooming fissure in the radiance.

Then the boy himself was engulfed by the blazing white light and lost consciousness.

Li Xiu stared blankly at Han Ling'Er in front of him, his expression turning peculiar.

He remembered everything, those vague memories became incredibly clear, he was indeed injured, and his parents did indeed die, all rooted in that blazing white radiance.

The figure in the blazing white radiance gradually overlapped with Han Ling'Er in front of him.

Toot!

A sudden whistle startled him, the surroundings abruptly froze, Han Ling'Er stopped mid-carve with the meat, the entire scene froze, even the flames licking the roast seemed paused, and the sparks from the splitting coals hung motionless in the air.

Except for Li Xiu, nothing moved.

A small train appeared out of nowhere next to Li Xiu, the warning light on its engine blinking green.

"The Happiness is now departing for the next station, passengers who haven't boarded please do so quickly." A peculiar voice sounded from the small train.

This time, the eerie voice continued, "Before boarding, please choose whether to destroy the Happiness hometown. Once destroyed, all beings, except the passenger himself, appearing in the Happiness hometown, will also be annihilated."

Li Xiu found that he had returned to his normal form, and items like the Demon Spirit Ring had all returned to him.

Even more astonishing, a warm current roiled within him, transforming into infinite Light Energy that merged into his Light Seed, driving its continuous growth.

Li Xiu immediately realized that this warm current was likely from the piece of roasted meat he ate.

His Light Seed, initially halfway to advancing to the Spirit Forging, now surged anew under the terrifying energy influx.

Li Xiu's entire body exuded a fierce transparent Light Flame, twisting and deforming around him, as if about to shapeshift into some creature.

Boom!

With the dreadful Light Energy's aid, the transparent Light Flame finally solidified, transforming into a humanoid light figure hovering before Li Xiu.

Li Xiu could clearly feel that the light figure was connected to his bloodline, containing unparalleled Light Energy fluctuations.

In just a moment, he ascended to the Spirit Forging Level.

The peculiar voice on the train echoed again, "Attention, passengers, if you choose not to destroy the Happiness hometown, everything you obtained there will disappear after reboarding the train."

Li Xiu glanced at the Spirit Casting before him, then at the frozen Han Ling'Er.

He asked the train, "If I choose to destroy the Happiness hometown, will the people in reality be destroyed as well?"

"Cause and effect go hand in hand; without the cause, there can be no effect." The eerie voice indeed answered Li Xiu's question.

In fact, Li Xiu had already guessed this outcome, because the existence of that piece of roasted meat made him realize that everything he experienced wasn't merely a simple Illusion Realm.

The first piece of roasted meat he used to eat had such a terrifying effect on Light Energy after eating it again, indicating it was not merely an Illusion Realm.

Only the first piece of meat he ate took effect, none of the subsequent pieces provided Light Energy, proving that only what he ate as a child was effective here.

The later pieces, having not been eaten in his childhood, were ineffective here.

This eerie place seemed intimately linked to his childhood; should he kill Han Ling'Er here, perhaps Han Ling'Er in reality would also disappear.

Chapter 784 Ruining Childhood_3

As the mysterious voice said, Happy Hometown is the cause; if this cause is eliminated, the connected effects will naturally disappear together.

According to the images Li Xiu recalled, Han Ling'Er is the true culprit behind his parents' deaths. Killing her would not only avenge his parents but also preserve the Light Energy from that piece of roast meat, which, for Li Xiu, is undoubtedly beneficial without any downside.

"Choose whether to destroy Happy Hometown," the eerie voice on the train sounded again, urging Li Xiu.

Li Xiu ignored it and extended his hand towards the frozen image of Han Ling'Er.

"Of course, you can also understand everything firsthand," the eerie voice sounded again.

Li Xiu still paid no heed, simply grasped Han Ling'Er's hand, placed it on his face, and felt the warmth transferred from her palm.

"Decide whether to live in false happiness or face cruel reality. Think it through," the mysterious voice continued. "Of course, if you can't decide yourself, just choose yes or no, and I can do it for you."

Li Xiu slowly lowered Han Ling'Er's hand and then turned to move towards the train.

"You..." The eerie voice on the train sounded again, but before it finished speaking, Li Xiu kicked up directly, aimed at the green warning light blinking on the train's engine.

"To hell with you," Li Xiu growled, his foot gathering brilliance which failed to destroy the warning light. The massive force tilted the train's body to one side.

The town and Han Ling'Er's figure immediately vanished. In front of Li Xiu, only the icy Jade Tunnel and the train remained, and even the Spirit Casting that had just formed disappeared; his cultivation level was exactly the same as when he entered.

Li Xiu kicked the train engine repeatedly, cursing coldly, "I just wanted to relive some childhood bliss, and you give me this? You must be tired of living."

After several kicks, the train engine only wobbled a bit without damage. Frustrated, Li Xiu drew the Fire Lotus Sword and unleashed beams of sword light at the train engine.

The sword light struck the train engine with clanging sounds, but failed to leave any marks on it.

"Warning... Warning... Please stop damaging the Happiness... or passengers will be eliminated..." The green warning light on the train's engine constantly flashed.

"Smash it for me. If you're not up to it this time, I'll throw you away right now," Li Xiu threatened, failing to harm the train engine, directly pulling out the Longevity Treasure Chopsticks. Holding one end with both hands, he aimed at the blinking annoying warning light, stabbed fiercely.

Crack!

The Longevity Treasure Chopsticks suddenly emitted a purple light, like a regular Light Saber, piercing through the green warning light directly.

The green light inside the warning lamp immediately stopped flickering and went out completely.

The eerie voice abruptly ceased, and the train became completely silent, its wheels began to move slowly again.

Li Xiu pulled out the Longevity Treasure Chopsticks, tucked it back into his coat, and leapt onto the train engine, riding on top of it.

The train gradually departed from Happy Hometown Station. Li Xiu looked back once and murmured, "What Happy Hometown Station, more like Destroy Childhood Station."

Li Xiu's Spiritual Sense is immensely strong; he'd long sensed that Happy Hometown Station had merely processed into his blurred memory fragments.

The events in those memory fragments had indeed occurred, but because Li Xiu was too young then, with a head injury, he couldn't remember clearly, and the memories were extremely fuzzy.

Happy Hometown Station used those blurred memory fragments, edited them like a film, forming a complete new story.

Perhaps those things happened, but not necessarily at the same time.

However, there were some benefits—a lot of Li Xiu's previously blurred memories became clearer. One thing Li Xiu could ascertain now: in his childhood, he really saw the dazzling crack on the river surface and saw the sister walking out from the crack; it was also when he got injured.

But he believes his parents' deaths had nothing to do with the sister; if it did, she would have undoubtedly told him.

The train gradually moved away from the platform, silently traveling through the tunnel.

After a while of travel, another platform and lights emerged ahead, only this time there was no eerie voice on the train; it autonomously traveled to the platform and then halted gently.

Without the train's reminder, Li Xiu had no idea what this station's name was, nor did he see anyone on the platform.

Just as Li Xiu hesitated about whether to get off for a look, a creaking sound suddenly came; one of the carriage doors opened unexpectedly.

Li Xiu turned his head to find that the bald woman holding a child—the Jade Doll—had come to life and stepped out from the carriage holding the child.

After alighting, she stood on the platform with the child. As Li Xiu watched, she glanced back, bowed to Li Xiu at ninety degrees.

Li Xiu couldn't fathom why she bowed to him, but while puzzled, the train started up again.

The train continued advancing through the Jade Tunnel, and at each station, one or two Jade Dolls disembarked.

Just like the child-holding Jade Doll, each disembarking doll bowed towards Li Xiu riding the train engine, seeming as if in gratitude.

Li Xiu tried talking to them, but none of the Jade Dolls responded, they merely saw him and the train off from the platform.

After passing eight or nine platforms, only the noblewoman Jade Doll and gentleman Jade Doll remained on the train.

Li Xiu pondered about the situation, lost in thoughts about the entire event when the train arrived at a station.

This time, both the noblewoman and gentleman dolls got off.

Unlike other Jade Dolls, they merely stood watching Li Xiu from the platform without bowing.

Though puzzled, the train started again, heading deeper into the tunnel.

"We'll meet again... You must wait for us..." Li Xiu suddenly heard a sweet voice from behind and turned promptly to see the noblewoman Jade Doll on the platform making a flying kiss gesture towards him, cheerfully seeing him off.

Chapter 785 Terminal Station

Li Xiu rode atop the locomotive, turning to watch the platform and the disappearance of those aristocratic women and gentlemen, before looking ahead.

The little train continuously forged ahead, passing several stations, perhaps because there were no longer any Jade Dolls onboard, the train didn't stop at the platforms.

Li Xiu kept observing those platforms but found nothing unusual about them, as if each station looked the same, with no clue as to where they each led.

He was unsure whether he should disembark, eventually choosing not to and continued riding the little train forward.

The little train proceeded silently, it had been a while since he'd seen a station, like there was nothing in the world except this endless tunnel.

Li Xiu keenly noticed the green light of the Jade Tunnel ahead seemed to be weakening, growing darker, the two headlights of the locomotive cast beams into the darkness ahead, only illuminating a stretch in front of the train, beyond which the light vanished, as if swallowed by some dark beast.

The little train journeyed through that darkness, Li Xiu couldn't even see the Jade Tunnel, surrounded entirely by endless dark, giving him a feeling the train was flying through a pitch-black night sky.

"Where is this little train headed?" Li Xiu wondered intensely, unable to fathom its destination.

After a long time, Li Xiu finally saw a glimmer of light in the darkness, soon realizing it emerged from a station.

The little train approached the station and gradually halted, Li Xiu noticed this Jade Station appeared to be the final destination, where the train stopped seemed like a garage, with no other exit except the entry door.

Seeing the train had come to a stop, Li Xiu disembarked and walked out of the empty garage.

Li Xiu surveyed the entire station, besides the garage, there was also a low building nearby resembling an office, otherwise there was just the platform and the lanterns hung on it.

Within the garage, there was nothing besides the little train, the office-like building's door was closed, leaving its contents unknown.

This office's door was only a meter high, with the whole structure shorter than Li Xiu, clearly not intended for humans.

"Why are there no words here, otherwise we could know what this place is." Li Xiu examined the station in the dark but found nothing resembling writing.

Hesitating, Li Xiu crouched to try opening the small door of the office.

The small door opened effortlessly, with no resistance, Li Xiu peered inside, finding indeed a counter and window resembling a ticket booth.

Unfortunately, inside the window, there was no uniformed female ticket agent.

Li Xiu's sharp eyes noticed there were two Jade Tokens discarded atop the counter, frustratingly one side of the token was blank.

Li Xiu's mind stirred, summoning the Ice Soul Sea Demon to float inside and retrieve the two Jade Tokens from the counter.

The process went smoothly, with no issues arising, as the Ice Soul Sea Demon came out and tossed the two Jade Tokens into Li Xiu's hands.

Li Xiu examined the tokens carefully, discovering the opposite sides of the two Jade Tokens were inscribed with Demon Text.

The Demon Text on both tokens differed slightly, luckily Li Xiu could recognize the text.

One token read "Happy Hometown Station", while the other said "Terminal Station".

"Could these two tokens be train tickets?" Li Xiu pondered, turning them over repeatedly, finding no other marks or wording besides the Demon Text.

"I've already been to the so-called Happy Hometown Station, it's just a place to deceive people, what is this Terminal Station? Could it be the tunnel's exit?" Li Xiu contemplated while holding the tokens.

Typically, a terminal station would indicate two ends; this station is likely the terminus on this side, but the opposite end's location remains unknown.

If these two Jade Tokens are indeed tickets, then identifying whether the terminal station ticket refers to this location or another terminus is unclear.

Additionally, whether the tickets are functional, if useful, how they are to be utilized, is something Li Xiu couldn't determine.

"Had I known, I wouldn't have made the little train mute, at least I'd have someone to ask." Li Xiu considered, suddenly hearing a familiar steam whistle.

Remarkably, the little train that had pulled into the garage was now departing again.

To Li Xiu's surprise, the alarm light he had damaged with the Longevity Treasure Chopsticks was now functioning normally, blinking with light.

"Attention passengers, the train departing from Terminal Station to Time Avenue is about to depart, passengers yet to board please do so promptly..." that eerie mechanical voice echoed once more.

Li Xiu hurriedly mounted the little train again.

The little train slowly pulled out of the station, gradually distancing itself from the eerie depot amid the whistle sound.

From the direction the train was moving, it should have been the way he came, but given the space's peculiarity, though the direction seemed right, it might not precisely be the way back.

Chapter 786 Terminal Station_2

Li Xiu rode the little train through the darkness. After a short while, the surrounding darkness gradually receded, revealing the still-familiar sight of the Jade Tunnel.

But this time, Li Xiu didn't see any platforms. The little train traveled through the Jade Tunnel for a short distance before the tunnel vanished, as if emerging from the Mountain-Piercing Tunnel. Li Xiu's eyes brightened, and he found himself in a vast world filled with sunshine, bird songs, and fragrant blooms.

Bang!

Li Xiu landed hard on the ground, the little train beneath him mysteriously disappearing.

He quickly stood up and surveyed his surroundings, discovering he was on a grassy slope covered with green grass and flowers of various hues. His gaze could stretch far into the distance, yet aside from a few small trees, there was no sign of towering mountains, let alone the Jade Tunnel.

"Where is this place?" Li Xiu didn't recognize this location, at least he'd certainly never been here before.

This environment was quite different from that near the Jade Castle. Even if he was still within the Jade Gate, he'd likely drifted far from the Jade Castle.

Li Xiu glanced down and noticed a low stone stele nearby, severely weathered by wind and sun, its surface pitted and hollowed, with any previous inscriptions long eroded away.

Li Xiu crouched down to examine it, but found nothing peculiar about the stele.

As he was studying the stele, he suddenly heard a sonic boom from overhead. Looking up, he saw a golden Demon Spirit bird hurtling through the sky at supersonic speed, quickly passing overhead.

Li Xiu was slightly taken aback: "Could it be that I'm no longer within the Jade Gate? The spirits here should have jade bodies."

He was pondering when he heard the sound of a light energy explosion and human roars in the distance.

Li Xiu hastily summoned the Pink Nightmare and headed toward the direction of the noise.

Before long, Li Xiu arrived near the battlefield and saw several Trial Takers engaged in a battle with a group of demon spirits.

Upon seeing the Trial Takers, Li Xiu was taken aback, as they were clearly not Trial Takers from Changsheng Tian. Among them was someone he recognized.

"What's Shale doing here?" Li Xiu realized he might indeed be far from the Land of Trial within the Jade Gate.

Shale was from Tyrone City. He entered the Land of Trial near Tyrone City, separated by an unknown distance from Changsheng Tian's Trial Gate.

"Could the little train actually transport people across the Land of Trial to different areas?" Li Xiu speculated internally.

Over there, Shale and several other Trial Takers were fighting a group of wolf-like demon spirits.

The spirits had low ranks, likely only around B-level, with quality also lacking—just one or two were Flowing Color Demon Spirits.

Although their numbers were considerable, combined with the Trial Takers' own low levels—only two reaching S-level, while the rest likely fell short of even A-level—the fight was tough.

Shale was an S-level Trial Taker, and with his rich battle experience, was more than capable of handling those demon spirits.

"That Shale is quite capable." Seeing they didn't need help, Li Xiu didn't intervene and watched from afar. After they'd cleared the demon spirits, he then approached.

The Trial Takers noticed Li Xiu coming and immediately regarded him warily, even summoning spirits to block his path.

Shale saw Li Xiu and was overjoyed, running straight over.

"What are you doing here?" Shale asked excitedly upon reaching Li Xiu.

"How are things in Tyrone City?" Li Xiu didn't answer the question, as he himself didn't know why he was here.

"Don't even ask, things are getting worse. Many Tyrone City residents have fled to other cities, prices are soaring, and food and essentials are severely lacking. Basic needs aren't being met. Kun Sha has tried his best, but these problems can't be solved overnight." Shale sighed, "I fear it won't be long before Tyrone City is completely ruined."

They chatted about Tyrone City's issues, and seeing Shale knew Li Xiu, the other Trial Takers also came over.

"Shale, is this your friend? If you have friends here, why didn't you mention it earlier?" said another S-level Trial Taker, clearly the group's leader.

"He's a friend I happened to run into," Shale explained, gesturing to the others. "Li Xiu, let me introduce you. These are brothers from the Hundred Spirit Gem Hunter group. Tyrone City had no money to facilitate my entry into the Land of Trial, so I accepted their job offer to enter the Land of Trial with them."

Li Xiu sensed the wariness from the Hundred Spirit Gem Hunter members and calmly said, "No need to worry, everyone, I'm just passing by and will leave soon, not disrupting your activities."

They didn't know Li Xiu, and his words didn't ease their concerns, though they responded politely with a few perfunctory exchanges.

"Shale, I'm lost. How do I get back from here?" Li Xiu, not bothering with lengthy explanations, turned to Shale for directions.

"Surprising you're lost," Shale pointed in one direction. "Head that way, roughly forty to sixty miles, and you'll find the town you came from."

Chapter 787 Terminal Station_3

"Alright, you go ahead and take care of your business first. I'll head back to the town and check things out. Let's talk again once you're out," Li Xiu said as he prepared to leave.

A sudden explosive sound echoed across the sky, drawing everyone's gaze upward, including Li Xiu's. He noticed that the golden bird he had seen earlier was flying over, diving straight down from the sky with its brilliant Demonic Light claws, aiming at a demon spirit corpse on the ground.

The Gem Hunter members immediately summoned their contracts and demon spirits, intending to prevent the golden bird from snatching their spoils.

However, the golden bird was clearly no ordinary creature, its claws' glow tearing apart a demon spirit's body wherever it touched.

With a flap of its wings, it deflected the attacking Symbiotic Contracts, causing several Trial Takers to lose their grip on their contracts and stagger backward, blood oozing from their torn palms.

Only the S-class middle-aged man's long knife remained intact, though his strength was evidently inferior to the golden bird's. He retreated several steps before steadying himself.

Despite driving them back, the golden bird couldn't seize the demon spirit corpse on the ground. It flew into a rage, its Demonic Light surging, forming a pair of Light Wings, and launching another attack at them.

"Super Spirit!" The Gem Hunter members were aghast, knowing they lacked the power to contend with a Super Spirit.

The Super Spirit bird's body emanated golden light, its wings transforming into arrows aimed at annihilating them. Fear struck everyone.

Suddenly, a red sword light slashed through the air, piercing the body of the Super Spirit bird. The previously ferocious creature plummeted from the sky lifeless.

The red sword light flew in a circle in the air before returning to Li Xiu, revealing itself to be a sword emitting crimson flames.

"Li Xiu, has your contract attained the Super Spirit level?" Shale asked, envy evident on his face.

"It's been at the Super Spirit level for a while now," Li Xiu replied with a smile, feeling that his Fire Lotus Sword was already at the Light Base Twenty-four Veins.

It then dawned on the Gem Hunter members that Li Xiu was a Trial Taker of Super Spirit Level strength, immensely powerful.

To slay a Super Spirit demon spirit with a single sword stroke, such prowess was unmatched by ordinary Super Spirits.

Li Xiu approached the golden bird to extract its Demon Core, only to find the middle-aged man blocking his way.

Shale immediately frowned and said, "Director Jia, if it hadn't been for Li Xiu, you all might have perished. Surely you're not going to claim the spoils, are you?"

The middle-aged man quickly explained, "Shale, don't misunderstand. The Super Spirit's certain to belong to your friend. I just want to exchange a few words with him."

The middle-aged man then turned to Li Xiu and said, "I'm Jia Ding, the director of the Gem Hunter group. Is Sir Li Xiu the City Lord of the City of Light?"

"Indeed, I am Li Xiu from City of Light. What advice do you have, Director Jia?" Li Xiu discerned that Jia Ding had something more substantial to discuss than mere conversation.

"You praise me too kindly, City Lord Li. Hosting the demon spirit tournament has vindicated us Trial Takers. I admire you greatly. Compared to your achievements, we pale in comparison. There's nothing I'd dare to advise, only a question to pose to you," Jia Ding replied courteously.

"What is it?" Li Xiu asked, looking at Jia Ding.

"Would the City Lord be interested in accepting a commission? As long as you're willing to help, the price is negotiable," Jia Ding proposed.

"Sorry, I have other matters to attend to," Li Xiu declined outright, eager to find a way out of the Land of Trial.

Moreover, even if he were interested in a commission, a mere Gem Hunter group likely couldn't afford his rate.

With that, Li Xiu intended to leave, lacking a Longevity Lamp, opting to first visit the town to see if it was possible to exit the Land of Trial from there.

"City Lord Li, as the lord of a city, ordinary wealth surely fails to catch your eye. Might you be interested in Super Spirit-level demon spirit offspring?" Yet, Jia Ding appeared confident and continued.

"Super Spirit-level demon spirit offspring?" Li Xiu paused slightly, for wild demon spirit offspring were exceedingly rare, especially of Super Spirit level.

"Indeed." Jia Ding nodded and explained, "Honestly, we found a nest of demon spirit offspring, but the place is perilous, and we can't acquire them alone. Hence, I hired Shale for assistance. Unfortunately, with just me and Shale, obtaining those demon spirit offspring remains uncertain, the risk too great. If the City Lord were to assist, your strength could effortlessly secure the nest. We would be willing to split the Super Spirit offspring evenly with you."

"Director Jia, why didn't you mention this when employing me?" Shale questioned with a dark expression.

"Apologies, those demon spirit offspring are too precious. I feared leaking information prematurely, so I didn't inform you," Jia Ding explained.

"You mentioned splitting evenly; how would that be split?" Li Xiu asked, looking at Jia Ding.

"There are six offspring altogether in the nest. You'll get three, while our group keeps three," Jia Ding answered and turned to Shale, saying, "To make up for my apology, I'll double the commission fee we agreed on."

"Director Jia, being so generous, I expect the offspring aren't easily obtainable?" Shale sneered coldly.

"Indeed, not easy. The terrain is treacherous, and demon spirit parents guard the area, making acquisition difficult. I was considering using a strategy to lure them away. With the City Lord's help, it won't be necessary," Jia Ding told Li Xiu. "What do you think, City Lord?"

"Let's take a look," Li Xiu expressed interest in the demon spirit offspring.

Chapter 788 Demon Spirit Youngling

Li Xiu finally understood why Jia Ding was willing to share half of the demon spirit's offspring to invite him along.

The place where the demon spirit offspring were located was on an enormous giant tree. The tree was several hundred meters tall, standing alone on a grassy slope. There wasn't a single small forest within dozens of miles around; there was nothing to hide behind.

Jia Ding and his team discovered the demon spirit offspring in a nest made from branches at the top of the giant tree. The demon spirit parents were active on the tree, feeding on the tree's fruit, never needing to leave it.

Trying to seize the offspring without alerting their parents was almost impossible.

Li Xiu crawled forward through the grass. Luckily, the grass around the tree was dense enough to provide cover for them.

However, there wasn't a single blade of grass under the tree, making it difficult to approach the trunk without being noticed.

"City Lord Li, those are the demon spirits. As long as we kill them, we can seize the offspring in the nest." Jia Ding was a little anxious.

When he discovered the offspring, the mother demon spirit was giving birth. Two or three days had passed since then, and he didn't know when the offspring would open their eyes. Once they did, it would be more difficult to take them out of the Land of Trial.

So after hiring Shale, unable to find any stronger Trial Takers to help, he rushed over with his team.

Li Xiu glanced at the demon spirits munching on fruit in the tree and directly told Jia Ding, "Who told you that the demon spirits on the tree were Super Spirits?"

Jia Ding was taken aback: "When I saw the mother demon spirit giving birth, the Demonic Light erupted from her body, transforming into Light Wings. That's how I judged them to be Super Spirits. Are they not Super Spirits?"

Jia Ding thought: "If they're not Super Spirits, then paying such a hefty price to bring Shale and Li Xiu over here was a huge mistake. Even S-class demon spirit offspring aren't as valuable as Super Spirit offspring."

"Of course, they're not Super Spirits." Li Xiu's words made Jia Ding lose heart, but what Li Xiu said next filled Jia Ding with surprise and delight.

"The demon spirits on the tree are at least Spirit Casting level." Li Xiu stared at the pair of demon spirits in the tree.

The demon spirits looked rather cute, resembling squirrels but larger and much plumper, with purple fur like silk and a purple gemstone on their foreheads.

Li Xiu immediately saw that the Light Energy fluctuations emanating from the gemstones on their foreheads were not those of Super Spirits, nor were they as strong as Light Base demon spirits. At the very least, they were Spirit Casting, possibly even Divine Position.

Of course, the possibility of Divine Position was low; Spirit Casting was more likely.

"Spirit Casting? What's Spirit Casting?" Jia Ding and the members of the Hundred Spirit Gem Hunter group looked at Li Xiu, puzzled.

Li Xiu then remembered that Trial Takers from outside the Longevity Heaven often weren't familiar with demon spirit levels. Knowing about Super Spirits and Light Base was already good; they had no idea what demon spirits above Light Base were called.

"Demon spirits above Super Spirits are divided into Light Base, Spirit Casting, and Divine Position levels. Light Base is stronger than Super Spirit, and Spirit Casting is stronger than Light Base." Li Xiu briefly explained the levels and names of demon spirits to them.

"So, those offspring are Spirit Casting?" Jia Ding's eyes shone brightly as he listened.

That was a high-level demon spirit he had never even heard of. If he could obtain their offspring, even just one, it could fetch a sky-high price.

There was no need to sell them; such high-level demon spirit offspring, if tamed, would greatly support their future.

"I'm saying there's a possibility; they could also be Divine Position demon spirits, but the possibility is smaller." Li Xiu said.

Hearing this, Jia Ding and the others were even more excited. Divine Position demon spirits sounded immensely powerful just from the name.

"City Lord Li, what do you think we should do to seize the demon spirit offspring?" Jia Ding suppressed his excitement and asked Li Xiu softly.

"I can't do anything with such high-level demon spirits. If Director Jia has a plan, go ahead and seize them yourself; I don't need my share." Li Xiu said.

"City Lord Li, if you think the share is too small, we can negotiate. How about you take four of the six offspring..." Seeing that Li Xiu was unmoved, Jia Ding gritted his teeth and said, "Five, all five will be yours. We only want one."

"Director Jia, it seems you don't understand the terror of high-level demon spirits. I don't want even one because my abilities aren't enough to snatch those demon spirit offspring. No matter how good the stuff is, I won't risk my life. If Director Jia has a way, go ahead and seize them; we can't help." Li Xiu said, then turned to Shale and said, "Old Sha, let's go."

After speaking, he turned around and, using the grass as cover, crawled away from the giant tree.

Shale did not hesitate to follow Li Xiu. The two stood up only after they were far from the giant tree.

"Are the demon spirits in that tree really that powerful?" Shale was still a little unwilling to miss such a good opportunity.

"I'm just speculating, but it's likely close. I don't want to gamble on uncertain things," Li Xiu said.

"You're right. Let's head back to the small town first." Shale knew how strong Li Xiu was, and if even he wasn't confident, Shale naturally wouldn't risk it either.

Chapter 789 Demon Spirit Cub_2

Li Xiu followed Shale back, but he was unsure of the level of those two demon spirits. If they were Spirit Forging Level, he could fight, but if they were Divine Position Level, it's best to avoid provoking them.

The two walked not far when they suddenly heard screams from the big tree. They turned their heads to look, and from afar, saw a flash of purple light followed by several more screams.

"They tried, but that wasn't necessary." Li Xiu knew Jia Ding and the others couldn't resist the temptation. They must have attempted their previous plan to lure the tiger from its den, and the outcome was predictable.

Even if those demon spirits were Spirit Forging Level, their plan to lure the tiger from its den would never work. They didn't know how terrifying Spirit Casting was; they probably hadn't even seen Light Base demon spirits, let alone understand the vast difference between high-level and low-level demon spirits. They assumed they could grab the demon spirit infant through strategy, but in reality, it was a death wish.

Moreover, after seeing those flickering purple lights, Li Xiu felt the level of those two demon spirits might be more than just Spirit Forging Level.

"Humans die for wealth, birds die for food. Everyone has to pay the price for their choices, nothing worth lamenting over," Shale said.

Li Xiu didn't say anything more. He was no different from these people, risking his life time and again. Only by surviving could one become stronger; challenging the unknown itself is an extremely risky endeavor.

It's just that those people weren't as lucky as he was and didn't possess his skills.

Following Shale back to his spoken small town, it was an inconspicuous, dilapidated place. At the town's central fountain, Shale found the Longevity Lamp they'd used when they arrived.

Originally, they entered together and should return by blowing the lamp together. But now, Shale was the only one left, so there was no need to wait for them.

Li Xiu looked around, but he didn't see any other Longevity Lamp, and for a moment, he didn't know how to return to the outside world.

"Where's your Longevity Lamp?" Shale noticed the discrepancy too; there was only one Longevity Lamp, but Li Xiu didn't have one when he entered.

"I didn't mention it earlier when many people were around. Actually, I came from another Land of Trial, and the Longevity Lamp isn't here," Li Xiu said.

Shale was taken aback: "You came from another Land of Trial? Are the Lands of Trial connected?"

"All Lands of Trial are connected. The so-called Land of Trial is essentially the Demon Spirit Realm, a complete world, so of course, they are connected," Li Xiu briefly explained the situation of the Land of Trial.

"I see. Then if your Longevity Lamp isn't here, how will you get out?" Shale asked.

"I'm considering if there's any method to get me out of here," Li Xiu said, observing the small town.

"I have an idea, but I don't know if it will work," Shale suddenly said.

"Tell me," Li Xiu was a bit surprised; he didn't expect Shale to have a solution.

Shale chuckled: "The Trial Gate we entered is called Gate of the Green Field, located in the forest north of Tyrone City. It was originally overseen by Tyrone City, but they can't spare the energy to guard the Gate of the Green Field now, so more Trial Takers are going there recently."

"Actually, several waves of demon spirits have rushed out of the Gate of the Green Field in the past few months. Can you follow those demon spirits to rush out?" Shale suggested.

"That's an idea. Do you know where those demon spirits open the gate to rush out?" In the Demon Spirit Realm, the gates are hidden; they're not like Earth's Trial Gates, which are displayed and anyone can open them.

To rush out from the Demon Spirit Realm, one must first find the hidden Trial Gate. Generally, only demon spirits can find and activate those Trial Gates.

For example, in the Land of the Sword Soul, there was no Trial Gate in the Sword Casting Workshop. Only after Li Ming'Er went there, she activated the hidden Trial Gate with her ability, and the Trial Gate was revealed.

"I've been to the Gate of the Green Field several times lately and happened to witness a demon spirit charging the Trial Gate. The gate is really in this fountain pool, but when I later searched the pool, I couldn't find the gate. It seems only when demon spirits arrive, the gate can appear," Shale laughed. "If you're not in a hurry, you can wait for the demon spirits wanting to rush out to activate the gate, and then follow them out. Since demon spirits often rush out from here lately, it shouldn't take long to wait."

Li Xiu examined the fountain pool but saw no Trial Gate, yet he wasn't surprised.

"Alright, then you head back first, I'll wait here," Li Xiu said.

"Why rush? I'll wait for you to go out and then blow the lamp. It doesn't matter if I stay, so I'll keep you company," Shale laughed.

"Fine." Li Xiu nodded.

"Come with me, we need to hide a bit. Otherwise, when those demon spirits wanting to exit the Land of Trial come, they'll fight with us first." Shale said heading to a nearby house.

Once inside, Shale closed the door and pointed to a window, "That window faces the fountain. You can observe the situation there from here. I watched the demon spirit activate the hidden Trial Gate and rush out from the fountain last time. We can take turns watching, so we don't miss the opportunity."

Li Xiu pulled up a stool and sat by the window, looking at Shale and said, "Have you read the Light Planting Technique?"

"I have, I heard it's something your City of Light came up with," Shale nodded and said.

"Interested in taking the path of planting light?" Li Xiu asked with a smile.

"I want to, but the problem is where to find a high-level Trial Taker to help me plant light?" Shale said helplessly.

"I'll help you plant light," Li Xiu said.

"You? Are you already at that level?" Shale said in surprise.

"No," Li Xiu smiled, "But I came up with the Light Planting Technique, others need such high levels to plant light, but for me, there aren't so many restrictions."

Shale was overjoyed: "Then I won't be polite, what do I need to prepare?"

"You need to first memorize a Light Planting Technique," Li Xiu taught Shale the "Zibu Yuge Monster Strength Ghost God Technique."

Shale's memory wasn't very good, often forgetting the back after memorizing the front, and when he remembered the back, he forgot the front again. A single piece of "Zibu Yuge Monster Strength Ghost God Technique," he forced himself to memorize for four or five hours before reciting it accurately.

"Memorizing this is way harder than fighting," Shale wiped the sweat from his forehead and said with a bitter face.

"Learning this will help you fight better," Li Xiu was about to help Shale light the lamp when he suddenly heard a sound from the town outside.

The two hurried to the window to look outside, and before long they saw several demon spirits coming near the fountain.

"Hmm, why is it them?" Li Xiu, seeing those demon spirits clearly, couldn't help but be surprised.

Beside the fountain were eight plump purple squirrel demon spirits, two large and six small ones, the large ones as big as a seventeen- or eighteen-pound cat, and the small ones only slightly larger than an adult's fist, exactly those demon spirits from the giant tree.

The two adult demon spirits led the way at the front, the six small ones lined up shaking their fluffy big tails, wiggling behind the two adult demon spirits as they leisurely walked toward the fountain.

"Such small demon spirits, are they planning to rush out?" Shale also found it strange, as he had never seen such small demon spirits attempting to charge through the Trial Gate.

Usually, only adult demon spirits would want to charge out, and this pair of adult demon spirits even bringing their newborn cubs to the Trial Gate is indeed quite rare.

Li Xiu observed the six small demon spirits and found that although the six small demon spirits were born from the same parents, there were still some differences.

The leading small demon spirit was the largest, a full circle larger than the smallest one, with shiny fur, and the purple gemstone on its forehead emitted the strongest Light Energy waves.

The further back, the smaller the small demon spirits and their forehead gemstones, possibly not as well-developed as the largest one.

Li Xiu also noticed that one of the small demon spirits in the middle had fur and gemstone color different from the other five.

The other five small demon spirits had fur and gemstone colors similar to the two adult demon spirits, all purple but slightly lighter in color.

The fur and forehead gemstone color of that particular small demon spirit, however, were blue, making it not appear as mysterious and noble as the purple, but a bit more lively.

Its size wasn't too large or too small, its appearance not much different from the other small demon spirits, just differing in color.

"Is there a certain probability of genetic mutation in demon spirit reproduction?" Li Xiu curiously observed that somewhat unusual small demon spirit.

Under the leadership of the two adult demon spirits, all six small demon spirits came to the edge of the fountain pool.

One adult demon spirit jumped onto the edge of the fountain pool, its forehead gemstone emitting a purple halo that shone toward the center of the pool.

Under the purple halo's illumination, a giant purple stone gate gradually emerged within the fountain pool.

"The gate is out, but are you sure you want to rush out with them? Those demon spirits are too dangerous." Shale said in a low voice.

"Let's wait and see," Li Xiu thought those two adult demon spirits were likely of Divine Position Level, not necessarily so easy to charge out.

Back when Li Ming'Er charged out, she borrowed the power of the Longevity Treasure Chopsticks, and even then, the Longevity Treasure Chopsticks developed cracks.

The Longevity Treasure Chopsticks, being the treasure of Longevity Island, and even with them, it was so difficult for Li Ming'Er to charge through, not to mention ordinary Divine Position demon spirits.

After activating the hidden Trial Gate, the adult demon spirits didn't rush towards it themselves, but instead jumped down, picked up a small demon spirit, and threw it into the fountain pool.

Both adult demon spirits acted, and before long, all six small demon spirits were thrown into the fountain pool.

Those small demon spirits didn't know how to swim. Although the fountain pool wasn't deep, only reaching above an adult's calf, for those small demon spirits with bodies only the size of a fist, that depth was quite deep already.

Just born, the small demon spirits had no abilities, once falling in the water, they struggled and floundered in the water, each choking on water several times.

The two adult demon spirits merely watched from the outside, showing no intention of rescue.

After a while, the strongest small demon spirit learned to dog paddle in the water, and the other small demon spirits also gradually learned to swim.

Only that blue small demon spirit seemed to never learn. It continuously struggled in the water, gulping and drinking down a lot of water until its little belly was round.

Seeing the blue small demon spirit almost unable to continue, no longer struggling, its body sinking, the two adult demon spirits still only watched without any intention of rescue.

"That's too cruel, demon spirit parenting is much harsher than human parenting," Shale couldn't help but say.

Seeing that the other five small demon spirits had learned to swim, and the blue small demon spirit was sinking and stopped struggling, one of the adult demon spirits made a strange sound at the small demon spirits in the pool, seemingly urging them to do something.

Under the continuous urge of the adult demon spirit, the five small demon spirits began swimming towards the Trial Gate.

The strongest small demon spirit swam the fastest, reaching the Trial Gate first, using its tender little paw to press against it, trying hard to push the gate.

Unfortunately, its strength was still too small; even though a powerful demon spirit, its strength was not yet strong enough just after birth.