## Records of the Goddess (Pure Love Version)

## Chapter 25

In Haiwu City, neither rain nor sunshine prevailed; the wind whistled wearily, carrying a fishy odor.

Haiwu City had no water, but within its expanse of a thousand miles, strange rocks abounded. There were craggy cliffs, verdant mountains, undulating ranges, and solitary, perilous peaks. Every rock was a wave, every boulder a surge; this sea was a sea of stones.

Since ancient times, massive rocks had easily been arranged into formations; the rugged cliffs of a thousand miles stretched unevenly, row upon row, yet in the eyes of a true master, they possessed their own rhythm.

Haiwu City itself was a grand formation. This formation didn't emphasize warfare, but possessed an ancient and profound aura. Nestled against mountains and beside water, it weighed a ton, and a single glance evoked a sense of utter helplessness, like an ant trying to shake a giant tree.

Haiwu City was a vital passage in the Northern Region, inhabited by the Chanshan Clan. The Chanshan Clan were enormous, roughly twice the size of an average person. They were born with supernatural powers, possessing strength capable of shaking mountains. Their bodies were not made of flesh and blood, but of rock, impenetrable by ordinary swords and blades.

Three days ago, the gates of Haiwu City had been wide open, seemingly to welcome guests.

As the sun set, a sword pierced through the city gate.

A sliver of cloud parted in the sky, boulders cracked, and sword energy, sharp and powerful, bounced over three hundred times after crashing into the city. The dazzling sword light illuminated Haiwu City, and the enormous stone monsters, barely awakened, could only catch a glimpse of the sword's afterglow.

Suddenly, numerous deafening roars filled the heavens and earth, and half of Haiwu City was illuminated by sword light, like a snow-covered mountain.

The rumbling, thunderous sounds gradually faded away in the middle of the night.

The howling wind carried a sharp, piercing sound, as if announcing the lingering echoes of that battle, a war many had never even witnessed.

Pei Yuhan stood before the last gate of Haiwu City, her long, black hair slightly disheveled, strands clinging to her cheeks, forehead, and brows, giving her a weary appearance.

A strong wind swept across the giant rocks, its desolate howling sound even louder than the roar of the waves.

If the giant rocks are the sea, then what is the sycamore tree?

Pei Yuhan looked up, and between her brows was a huge black shadow—a massive sycamore tree, casting a vast, sea-like shadow in the night.

The sycamore tree, aside from its size, seemed unremarkable. However, Pei Yuhan's expression was more solemn than ever before.

Standing before the sycamore tree was a slender man, his robes fluttering in the wind—none other than the recently departed Demon King, Chu Jiangming.

Pei Yuhan looked at him, a realization dawning on her. "So this is your true form. So you're a tree spirit too."

"Your insight is truly discerning, and I have never intended to conceal anything," Chu Jiangming said.

Pei Yuhan asked, "Do those stone demons know that their leader is a tree demon?"

Chu Jiangming shook his head and said, "Whether it's the demon race or the human race, racial differences are a huge problem. Many races would rather their entire race perish in battle than allow another race to rule them. But I'm different. Because I was born from their offerings; in other words, I am their god."

"Is there really such a thing as 'ancestral worship' in this world?" Despite the various opinions among people, she remained skeptical.

"Whether in the Northern Region or Xuanyuan, among the demon race or the human race, the concept of 'incense offerings' exists. And I know that sword cultivators are the least concerned with incense offerings. But many things cannot be refused simply because you don't want to accept them." Chu Jiangming surveyed the ancient city, his expression weathered. "Just like this Haiwu City is to me."

Pei Yuhan, being exceptionally intelligent, immediately grasped the implications and exclaimed in sudden realization, "Therefore, you have no hope of attaining sainthood in your lifetime."

"That's why I admire and envy the Demon Lord so much," Chu Jiangming said with longing.

Pei Yuhan thought for a moment and said, "I still think there's no point in you stopping me."

"I don't know either. Because I don't know what the Demon Lord is thinking, I can only speculate on her intentions. Since the Demon Lord says she wants to take your disciple away, then naturally I can only stop you from going to him." Chu Jiangming said, "I'm doing this for your own good. I respect the strong in this world. You can't possibly be a match for the Demon Lord. Stop here. There's no need to seek your own death."

"I insist on going."

Chu Jiangming suddenly looked at Pei Yuhan, his gaze sharp as lightning. Pei Yuhan returned his gaze, and in an instant, their expressions clashed, the tension escalating as if they were about to come to blows.

Chu Jiangming had already closed his folding fan; his slender fingers were now hidden within his wide sleeves, which billowed and danced in the air, filled with wind.

"Elsewhere, I might not be a match for Fairy Pei, but this is Haiwu City; you cannot defeat me no matter what."

At the edge of Haiwu City, the shadow cast by the enormous sycamore tree rooted among the rocks expanded rapidly, obscuring the view. Chu Jiangming was no longer visible.

His voice still echoed faintly in the air. "That day, the Demon Lord broke this formation in just thirty moves. Fairy Pei, you can still turn back now."

Pei Yuhan stared straight ahead; she saw no shadows that blotted out the sky and swallowed the moonlight, nor did she hear that eerie and desolate voice.

She simply remembered that snowy night.

She tugged at his sleeve, and he reached out to touch her cheek. At that moment, the lights of every house were dim and still; he was clearly a celestial being, yet he showed no disgust at being dirty.

Amidst the imperceptible gains and losses of life, they walked through a desolate, snowy night, and past the gentle lights of countless homes.

The sounds of laughter and chatter from those grand mansions seemed so desolate amidst the wind and snow.

Many years later, in the desolate Biluo Palace, she repeatedly stretched out her empty arms, as if trying to embrace something.

But the night in her arms was forever a cold, desolate sea.

Inside the palace, every piece of furniture was just as it had been back then, but time could never turn back to that snowy night.

Her chin tilted slightly upward, and her long, glossy black hair suddenly billowed. Amidst the deafening roar, the rubble of the entire city of Haiwu shook and rose, forming a vast, starry river.

The gleaming sword light illuminated the long night, like an indomitable yet sorrowful cry.

The sword light ignited her eyes; in her clear, mirror-like pupils, the starlight faded, the moonlight dimmed, and even the sky seemed so distant.

After a day of rest, Lin Xuanyan and Lu Jiajing began planning their trip south again.

Su Lingshu's emotions had softened slightly, but she still didn't give Lin Xuanyan a friendly look.

However, it seemed that after their warm embrace that day, Su Lingshu and Lu Jiajing's relationship had inexplicably become very good. She always liked to sit next to Lu Jiajing, and would occasionally kiss and hug her, like a younger sister snuggling up to her older sister, which made Lu Jiajing both amused and exasperated.

During a casual conversation, Lu Jiajing asked Su Lingshu where she was going. Su Lingshu hesitated, clearly preoccupied, and only said that they would soon part ways; she was going to another place in the Northern Region to take care of something very important.

Lu Jiajing couldn't help but think of the declining Embroidered-Clad Clan. With Su Lingshu's extraordinary talent, she must bear the weight of the clan's revival; the burden she carried was unimaginable.

Her mood darkened further. The woman in the sky must be in dire straits; otherwise, how could she have watched the Embroidered-Clad Clan suffer such hardship in the Northern Region?

But these weren't things she should have cared about, yet without realizing it, Lu Jiajing felt a subtle change in her temperament.

She had always believed that nothing else mattered but the Dao, so she cared nothing for her own body. She reasoned that cultivation was about transcending life and death, so what did the physical body matter?

Therefore, during the Trial of the Dao, she remained indifferent to the dirty schemes of those in power. Even when Wang Jiu proposed a physical examination, she made a move that shocked everyone present. That moment was, in fact, a self-examination for her. The Great Dao is cruel and ruthless; she wanted to know just how far she was willing to go for the sake of the Dao.

On the day of the Trial of the Dao, that unknown little girl unleashed the Sun-Supporting Sword Technique, and she was moved.

On the second day afterward, when the Envy-Fish Sword arrived from afar, she could no longer remain calm.

Nothing could be more volatile than this.

Su Lingshu sat beside her and suddenly asked, "Sister Lu, do you think if a tree bears two completely different kinds of fruit, and those two kinds of fruit fall to the ground and grow into two different trees, then which one is truly…?"

She couldn't find the words to describe the thought, but Lu Jiajing understood what she meant. She didn't know why Su Lingshu would ask such a question. After a moment's thought, a thought flashed through her mind, and she suddenly thought of Lin Xuanyan. She wondered if Lin Xuanyan was also a kind of tree that had borne fruit.

Seeing her silence, Su Lingshu thought to herself, "Why force others to answer a question I myself couldn't answer, even when I was in that situation?"

She gently comforted her. "Sister Lu, don't overthink it. It was just a thoughtless question."

Lu Jiajing snapped out of her reverie, nodded, and said, "Be careful after we part ways."

Su Lingshu said, "It's alright, there's plenty of time. Once I've finished my business there, I'll come find you in the Xuanyuan Dynasty."

Lu Jiajing smiled and nodded. Su Lingshu, however, unconsciously turned her head away, sighing inwardly, hoping that they would truly have a chance to meet again in the future.

These days, her mind grew increasingly restless, like the approaching autumn, the chilling winds blowing, and the remaining lotus flowers in her heart's lake withering more and more. Those lotus flowers were the foundation of her Dao; if all the lotus flowers in her heart's lake withered, then her Dao heart on the other side would sink, and her inner self would be caught in the crossfire, with no good outcome.

She sat cross-legged, forcefully dispelling the chill in her heart.

Lu Jiajing looked at her with some surprise, vaguely sensing that this young girl was hiding a great secret.

But who among us, living in this world, doesn't have a few secrets?

Now she thought more about herself.

Now that her Dao heart had been repaired and everything had returned to a blank slate, she could start anew. What path should she choose?

Beyond the cliff, the mountains stretched clear and verdant, their green hues reaching the horizon. Sunlight streamed down, casting a pale glow on Lu Jiajing's pupils.

Su Lingshu sat quietly for a moment to regulate her breathing, then stood up and said, "I'm going out for a bit."

Lu Jiajing didn't ask any further questions, only humming in response.

As Su Lingshu walked along the cliff face, she happened to brush past Lin Xuanyan, who was returning. Their eyes met, but neither of them spoke.

After passing by, Lin Xuanyan paused slightly. He turned his head to look at the girl's delicate back and the soft purple hair draped over her shoulders, remaining silent. In that instant, it was as if lightning had struck his heart, and a bizarre and terrifying thought suddenly popped into his head.

After a moment, he chuckled self-deprecatingly, thinking he must have been overthinking things.

Back on the cliff, Lin Xuanyan saw Lu Jiajing sitting cross-legged, eyes closed, resting.

He smiled and walked behind Lu Jiajing, putting his arm around her waist, resting his head on her shoulder, and gently brushing his nose against her soft hair.

Lu Jiajing snorted coldly, abandoning her pretense of cultivating. She opened her eyes and said coldly, "Why are you behaving like those spoiled brats now?"

Lin Xuanyan said, "People always change."

"But you'll only become more and more indifferent," Lu Jiajing said softly.

Lin Xuanyan chuckled softly. "The one who's indifferent is Ye Linyuan; now I'm Lin Xuanyan."

"Is there a difference?"

"I'm just a seventeen or eighteen-year-old boy now, starting my life anew. Can't I afford to have a bit of youthful spirit?" Lin Xuanyan asked with a smile.

Lu Jiajing shook her head and said, "Youth never returns."

Lin Xuanyan ruffled her hair, and Lu Jiajing subconsciously frowned, but didn't pull away.

She pondered for a moment, then finally asked the question that had puzzled her for so long. "Why have you become like this? What have you been through?"

Lin Xuanyan asked, "How much do you know?"

Lu Jiajing said, "Many years after you went into seclusion, I learned that your seclusion was part of a scheme."

Lin Xuanyan nodded, looking at her and gesturing for her to continue.

Lu Jiajing smiled bitterly. "That happened three hundred years after you went into seclusion. I went to the Floating Island to investigate this matter. But I discovered that the things involved were becoming increasingly vast, and your seclusion seemed to be just the first move in this game. However, later, for some reason, someone seemed to discover my investigation, and from that day on, I have never had peace. Masked men in black often come to assassinate me. After I kill them, they vanish without a trace. However, I still found some clues, and behind these clues, it turns out to be…"

"What is it?" Lin Xuanyan already had the answer, but his heart was still in turmoil.

Lu Jiajing smiled wryly. "The Divine King's Palace."

The main temple of the Floating Island, the palace where the supreme deity resides, is the most revered position in the world.

And now, the temple's master happened to be his closest friend from back then.

"And then?" Lin Xuanyan asked.

Lu Jiajing pursed her lips, as if the past was too painful to recall, and finally said indifferently, "That's all."

Lin Xuanyan naturally knew the immense suffering hidden behind the absence of those three words; only Lu Jiajing truly understood the bitterness and hardship she had endured.

He gently embraced her and said softly, "You've suffered; I've let you down."

"What's the point of saying all this now?" Lu Jiajing gently pushed him away.

Lin Xuanyan remained silent for a moment, looking into Lu Jiajing's eyes. The past five hundred years flashed through his mind. He let out a soft breath, his smile somewhat forced. He reached out and touched Lu Jiajing's hair, recalling, "More than five hundred years ago, the Dragon Abyss Tower opened. He and I, in our pursuit of the Great Dao, entered that ancient tower on the sea together."

Lin Xuanyan didn't reveal his identity, but Lu Jiajing knew that the person was none other than Yin Yang, the current Palace Master of the Divine King's Palace.

Back then, Ye Linyuan and Yin Yang had both been genius disciples of the two major sects in the world. They achieved great fame at a young age and had a decade-long, fifty-year-long battle, with Ye Linyuan consistently maintaining the upper hand.

An ordinary genius who loses for fifty consecutive years should have had his Dao heart shattered long ago.

Yin Yang, however, was extremely resilient, and the two eventually developed a mutual respect and even feelings for each other.

Over those fifty years, their levels of attainment rose higher and higher, climbing at an unimaginable speed.

Their final battle was in the seventieth year, a battle that shocked the world and was unprecedented in history. Because of that battle, they, who had been stuck at the peak of the Transcendent Realm for many years, both broke through their previous levels and advanced to the Saint Realm.

Over the next decade or so, their cultivation levels rose higher and higher, and within just a few decades, they both reached the peak of the Saint Realm.

The following year, the Dragon Abyss Tower opened. Although legend had it that many arrogant masters had perished within its walls, how could one resist the allure of the Great Dao?

At that time, Ye Linyuan had a vague premonition that his great destiny lay within the Dragon Abyss Tower.

Lu Jiajing asked solemnly, "What exactly did you see in the Dragon Abyss Tower back then?"

Lin Xuanyan remained silent for a long time. Finally, just as Lu Jiajing was about to ask again, he murmured softly, "There are many things I haven't figured out yet. What I saw in the Dragon Abyss Tower back then was too bizarre; even now, the memory sends chills down my spine. It was that experience that made me unable to continue my seclusion. And at that time, Yin Yang gave me that ancient sword,

supposedly retrieved from the Dragon Abyss. I know this trial is dangerous, but the allure of the Great Dao is too great; even if the hope is slim, I cannot refuse."

Lu Jiajing's expression remained calm. She had rehearsed this scenario many times over the years, and she had already guessed many of the key points.

In reality, this matter was quite simple, and didn't even require elaborate scheming.

"He set a barrier for you, and you glimpsed the Great Dao. Unable to resist the temptation, even knowing it was a death trap, you still secluded yourself. Five hundred years in that barrier—five hundred years is enough for him to do many things." Lu Jiajing asked, "It's that simple, right?"

"Yes."

"But in the end, you still saw nothing," Lu Jiajing sighed. "In the end, you just changed people and things, time passed, and you gained nothing."

"Yes."

"But what you've lost is five hundred years."

Lin Xuanyan remained silent.

Lu Jiajing continued, "Or do you think five hundred years means nothing to you at all?"

"That's what I used to think," Lin Xuanyan said without hiding anything. "Back then, my mind was solely focused on the Dao beyond the Saint Realm. Swordplay, friends, interests, even my disciples and lovers—none of these were as important to me as the Great Dao."

Lu Jiajing sneered, "You deserve it."

Lin Xuanyan gently shook his head. "So I came back. Or is this just fate?"

"Then who exactly are you?" Lu Jiajing asked calmly.

She wasn't asking who he was, but rather who he wanted to become.

Lin Xuanyan no longer hesitated. He looked at Lu Jiajing and smiled. "I am Lin Xuanyan."

From this moment on, the peerless swordsman who had tested the world's swordsmanship five hundred years ago drew his sword and cut himself down, leaving only Lin Xuanyan in the mortal realm.

The boy's snow-white clothes were covered in dust, but his sudden smile was radiant, a smile that had remained unchanged for five hundred years.

He suddenly embraced Lu Jiajing's soft, delicate body, whispering sweet nothings in her ear. "This trip to the Northern Region, whatever we encounter, let's treat it as sightseeing, conquering mountains and slaying demons, okay?"

Lu Jiajing's thoughts were still somewhat scattered, but she subconsciously whispered, "Okay."

Her cherry lips were no longer pale; a hint of color had appeared, making them look as smooth and lustrous as jade.

The passionate encounter of the past two days suddenly flooded back to him. Lin Xuanyan leaned in and kissed her lips. Lu Jiajing's body stiffened instinctively. She struggled slightly for a moment, then stopped resisting. Her stiff body gradually softened, her waist arched, and her pink back pressed against the ground. In her watery eyes, she saw the handsome face of the young man.

Su Lingshu wandered around outside for a long time, only heading back to the camp when she felt it was about time. Even so, as she reached the cave entrance, she still heard those heart-pounding moans.

It was broad daylight! Couldn't you two young lovers be a little more reserved?

Su Lingshu felt deeply indignant. She listened at the cave entrance for a while, her heart pounding faster and faster. She muttered to herself, "Lu Jiajing, you stole my man from me back then! Even though five hundred years isn't a short time, your change of heart is too easy! Now, under another man, you have no restraint whatsoever, and you can even utter such lewd words!"

Su Lingshu cursed inwardly, while Lu Jiajing's surging breasts churned violently in her vision, even more beautiful than the sea of clouds atop a mountain peak. For a moment, she couldn't bear to look away.

The two people inside the cave became increasingly skilled in their positions, switching between woman-on-top, front-entry, and rear-entry in a dazzling array of variations, while the beautiful female voices inside repeatedly cleansed their souls.

"Want more?"

"Stop talking nonsense and continue."

"You beg me."

"You… uh… um… uh…"

"Sister Lu, your skin is so soft here."

"Why aren't you moving?"

"Is that what you think?"

……

Su Lingshu watched their live sex show with bated breath, from the climax of their intercourse until Lu Jiajing collapsed weakly to the ground, being relentlessly thrust into from behind by the white-clad youth. Her large breasts had already been kneaded open, their rosy nipples standing erect and firm.

The purple-haired girl blushed crimson, her body burning with fever. Lu Jiajing's soft moans and gasps were so intense they pierced the soul, even making her breathless and her heart flutter with restlessness.

A sudden, inexplicable irritation welled up within her, and at that moment, Lu Jiajing's moans pierced her ears like sparks, causing her emotions to boil over.

Countless suppressed emotions surged forth, a torrent of emotion spanning thirty thousand years.

Su Lingshu's emotions surged. She looked up, and before her eyes, another version of herself seemed to stand, coldly looking down.

She knew it was a demon within her.

"Hmm… slower…"

"Don't touch there, ah… um… stop, I don't want to anymore…"

"You… um…"

"Fine… please spare me, okay? Don't move."

Seeing the usually aloof and cold Lu Jiajing surprisingly beg for mercy, Lin Xuanyan felt a great sense of accomplishment. He increased his speed and force, thrusting in again and again, causing Lu Jiajing's flower core to surge, her juices flowing freely and overflowing beyond measure.

She lay limply on the ground, her delicate arms resting softly on the floor. Her buttocks were raised, her waist arched, while Lin Xuanyan lay on top of her, his body thrusting rapidly in and out of her noble body, making the tender beauty beneath him cry out in ecstasy and soar to the heavens.

"Please spare me, sister, I really can't go on," Lu Jiajing murmured, her eyes clear and alluring, her breath coming in short gasps.

Lin Xuanyan pinched her delicate bottom and said with a smile, "So you're not being stubborn anymore, huh?"

Lu Jiajing rolled her eyes at him, struggled to crawl forward a couple of steps, trying to pull out his penis, but Lin Xuanyan, completely oblivious to her charms, followed her, occasionally thrusting his penis into her flower core, making her eyes roll back, her pretty face devoid of any semblance of aloofness.

"Come out…" Lu Jiajing gasped.

"Sister Lu, if you beg for mercy a few more times and say something nice, I'll let you go," Lin Xuanyan teased.

Lu Jiajing glared at him fiercely, her mind in turmoil. How could she, always so proud and aloof, utter such shameful words in a sober state?

Seeing that she refused to lower her pride, the boy behind her began to ride her body again.

"Mmm… mmm… no… mmm…"

Lu Jiajing struggled forward, trying to break free by swaying her hips, but the relentless, heavy thrusts left her weak and unable to resist.

"Spare… spare me!" Lu Jiajing whispered.

"Huh?" Lin Xuanyan pretended not to hear clearly. "What did you say?"

"You… um… you bastard!" Lu Jiajing gritted her teeth.

Lin Xuanyan raised his hand high and slapped Lu Jiajing's gently swaying buttocks twice, a gesture that was both flirtatious and punishing. Lu Jiajing arched her neck, and the slaps to her buttocks sent a surge of pleasure through her body, a wave of ecstasy that was now unstoppable. Her juices flowed freely, spraying everywhere, and she collapsed to the ground, completely limp.

Lin Xuanyan leaned close to Lu Jiajing's ear, about to say a few words, when suddenly he turned his head sharply and was shocked to see a young girl standing at the cave entrance.

Su Lingshu stood backlit, her purple hair billowing. And between her pupils, a terrifying red glint shone.

In this dimly lit corner, a woman suddenly opened her eyes. Her face was cold and aloof, yet tinged with an incongruous blush. The woman, too, had purple hair.

Footsteps sounded outside the door, followed by a flood of light entering the cave.

The purple-haired woman raised her head; though her expression remained calm, a turbulent storm raged within her.

"Saintess Xia, you are indeed quite remarkable," the shadowy figure chuckled. "If you hadn't failed to restrain my restless mind and tether my wandering thoughts, I might still be in the dark today."

The purple-haired woman gradually calmed down; her clear eyes showed no superfluous emotion.

"I know you have many questions," the voice said slowly. "You really want to know, what exactly is this illusion?"

The purple-haired woman didn't refute; she nodded, awaiting her answer. Logically, with her near-Saint cultivation, it was absolutely impossible for her to fall into an illusion, much less for the lotus in her Heart Lake to have withered so much. Unless…

"These dreams are all microcosms of reality," the person smiled. "These are events from the past thirty thousand years, such as the ghost-catching immortal master, the saintess whose kingdom was destroyed, and the empress—all of them truly happened. But the protagonist in them has been changed to you."

"What kind of evil magic is this?"

"It's not evil magic," the man said. "It's all a gift from that fortuitous encounter five hundred years ago."

"Do you really think there's no one in the world who can interfere?"

"The only thing in the world that can truly control the Floating Islands is that ancient city beyond the South China Sea. However…" the man chuckled, "that ancient city is now preoccupied with its own problems."

For the first time, the purple-haired woman's expression faltered. "The legend is true?"

The person simply smiled and did not answer.

Suddenly, the dark figure standing outside the door sprang up, and a smooth, jade-carved finger touched her brow. The moment that finger touched her brow, the purple-haired woman's eyes closed silently.

All the light dimmed again. She fell back into that dream, and wondered how many more years would pass in it.

The man stepped out of the secret chamber, a smile on his face. He glanced into the distance, looking down upon the world from the heavens. Even across the vast sea of people, he could vaguely sense the location of humanity.

"Once this matter is resolved, I will eliminate your last chance."

Within the city of Haiwu, a woman dressed in white walked slowly. Towering stone monsters lined both sides of her, yet no one dared approach her.

She was covered in wounds.

Chu Jiangming stood beneath the sycamore tree, large leaves fluttering down, one landing precisely in front of him, refusing to fall.

A leaf before the eyes.

The woman in white dragged an ancient sword, which trembled and groaned as if in mourning.

Three more steps and she would be out of this ancient city.

As dawn broke, a sliver of sunlight appeared on the horizon, illuminating Haiwu City like a thin mist.

In the very end, Chu Jiangming sighed softly.

"A leaf may obscure the view, but it cannot cloud the mind."

As soon as the words were spoken, the large, suspended leaf slowly fell, gently landing at his feet. It could no longer obscure his view.

"I apologize for the inconvenience," Chu Jiangming said softly.

A series of disordered coughs convulsed the entire dawn.

The woman in white staggered forward, coughing up a mouthful of blood that splattered onto the ground. Chu Jiangming's fingers pressed against her back, his fingertips as sharp as swords.

She slowly knelt down on one knee, one hand covering her chest, the other supporting her on the ground.

The city gate was so close, yet she no longer had the strength to leave.

Her eyes were filled with tears, but she didn't let them fall. Because her master had once said that no matter what happened, she must be strong.

But you, after spouting so much nonsense to me, why can't you come and see me?

That tear still rolled down.

The Envy-Fish Sword no longer trembled; it lay to one side, as if its heart had died.

Chu Jiangming withdrew his finger. He looked at the white-clad woman kneeling before the city gate, remained silent for a long time, and finally sighed softly.

"Place her in the side hall's stone chamber and seal her cultivation with an ancient array. Do not neglect her." As he turned to leave, his red robe fluttered slightly in the morning breeze, his voice carrying a faint hint of apology. "Fairy Pei, it is my duty; I have offended you."

Two maids from the Chanshan Clan stepped forward and helped Pei Yuhan up, one on each side.

She was too weak to struggle and allowed them to lead her into a simple stone chamber.

The room contained a bed and lamps; the stone door closed with a dull, soft sound.

She felt the power of the magic array within her body enveloping her lower elixir field like a spiderweb, suppressing her cultivation.

In the darkness, the hand seal flickered slightly.

She closed her eyes.

At the southernmost point of the Qiongming Realm, two bright moons hung in the sky.

One moon resembled a crescent hook, another was nearly full, and the two moons together could form a full moon.

Bathed in the bright moonlight stood an ancient city that had stood here for tens of thousands of years. That was the City of Lost Day.

At the southernmost tip of the City of Lost Day stood a tranquil ancient palace. Moonlight spilled over the ground like flowing water, illuminating the already glazed tiles and bricks in a dreamlike glow.

A huge plaque hung before the ancient hall, bearing only four characters: "The Moon Hangs in the Mid-Sky."

Inside the hall was a rectangular wooden coffin. A woman sat cross-legged before it, her long hair draped across the floor like a white canvas, casting dappled shadows in the moonlight.

And in her light-colored eyes, there seemed to be a veil even paler than the moon's reflection.

She had many titles, all crowns bestowed upon her by the world.

The title of "Crown of Three Thousand Years of Taoist Magic," "Number One Beauty Under Heaven," and "Third Moon of the South Sea"—none of these compared to the last one, which was far more famous: the chief of Lost Day City.

She herself had never cared about any of this; she simply watched the two bright moons in the sky, witnessing the cycle of separation and reunion, waxing and waning in the human world.

She gently turned her head, gazing at the quiet, ancient coffin bathed in moonlight, her tone tender. "This day has finally come. Our ancestors have devoted themselves wholeheartedly to this cause; I, of course, cannot let Lost Day City down. My husband, don't you agree?"

Suddenly, a slender woman entered the hall. She gently removed her black hood, revealing an exceptionally beautiful face.

"Sister." The woman in black was indeed Nan Lingyin. "So the legend is true after all?"

"There's nothing to worry about." The woman stroked her long hair, her voice incredibly gentle, like the first thaw of a stream on an icy plain. "Demons are rampant; they must be subdued with the sword."