

Tang Sect 106

Chapter 106: The Eye of Life

The Life Gold before his eyes only nourished his body for an extremely short period of time, but he could clearly feel that the sum of every herbal medicine and tonic he had eaten before were not as effective as that moment he had just experienced. The feeling of sudden and smooth circulation was unprecedented. He was positive that, after this transformation, his cultivation speed would be greatly improved, and his body's endurance would be boosted as well. His capacity for higher-ranked soul rings would be raised by at least a thousand years, and this meant the power of his soul skills would be raised at the same time.

Just when Huo Yuhao was at the climax of his exhilaration, the vast aura of life paused as the sensation of comfort and pleasure receded in just a matter of seconds.

Huo Yuhao was still relishing in his comfort before his entire body started to feel empty. However, his unnaturally sensitive perception immediately told him that something was wrong – he realized, to his shock, that the Soul-Devouring Carving Knife had departed from between his eyebrows. What was more frightening was the fact that the sharp end of the blade was pointed right at his forehead, above his eyebrows.

Before he could even react, the Soul-Devouring Carving Knife stabbed down ferociously, and the entire blade sunk deep into his skull. Huo Yuhao wanted to scream and struggle under the agonizing pain, but he quickly realized that, to his intense dismay, there was nothing he could do.

Tremendous volumes of life energy instantly flooded in once the blade entered his skull. His current experience was similar to that of someone who had just eaten a strike of his Spiritual Shock – it felt like he had just been hammered on the head, and his mind was a complete blank.

It was too late for the Skydream Iceworm and the Ice Jade Empress Scorpion to save him once they felt everything. The extensive energies of life surged into Huo Yuhao's spiritual sea from his forehead and gave them an inexplicably comfortable sensation as their spiritual origins were rinsed.

Huo Yuhao's spiritual sea had turned into a green-colored ocean at this point. Dense and thick mists of life energy gradually started to condense, while his spiritual sea began to expand outwards with bedazzling speed.

Two shadows materialized in his spiritual sea – the Skydream Iceworm and the Ice Empress.

They glanced at each other, and immediately detected the shock in each other's eyes. They had been alive for hundreds of thousands of years, and even though Huo Yuhao's head had just been pierced by the Soul-Devouring Carving Knife, they could feel that Electrolux didn't harbor evil intentions.

Furthermore, that vast pool of life energy that had just poured into Huo Yuhao's spiritual sea, and the process of expansion that was triggered, was greatly beneficial to them.

The life energy nourished the spiritual sea, and this was equivalent to nourishing their spiritual origins. Therefore, they resolved to calm themselves as they focused on protecting Huo Yuhao's spiritual origin while paying attention to the changes around them.

A frail old man clad in white appeared inside Huo Yuhao's spiritual sea between shimmering grey lights.

He glanced at the Skydream Iceworm and the Ice Jade Empress Scorpion and smiled as he said, “Big bug, small scorpion – I will not fight with you for territory any longer. You can release a little bit of your sealing power to boost Yuhao’s spiritual sea and raise his spiritual power. His body can be considered pristine and impeccable after this transformation. However, don’t infuse your powers into him too quickly – it’s better to wait for his mastery of soul power to break rank 30 before you two continue fusing with him.”

Skydream watched him with astonished eyes as he asked, “You’re Electrolux?”

The old man nodded and replied, “My thread of divine sense had no foundation. It was empty and weak, which meant that it could have dissipated at any moment. However, things are a lot different with this miraculous Life Gold – it can provide me with a vector, and I will be able to sustain myself inside, and this is bound to stabilize my divine sense a little more. However, much of my memory has been lost – too much – and I can only rediscover these memories if my divine sense gets stronger, and so I need Yuhao’s help. You guys can relax – we all share the same goal, and that’s to make him stronger. When the power of his divine sense reaches the level I possessed back in the day, everything I’ve lost will return. Furthermore, I am starting to find this world a lot more interesting ever since fusing myself with his body. I need to be on my way, and you guys can communicate with me through our spiritual origins.”

Electrolux’s right hand swiped across the air as he spoke, and a green door made of light appeared before him. He waved back at the Skydream Iceworm and the Ice Empress before his shadow vanished into the door.

The Ice Empress couldn’t help but give praise as she watched Electrolux’s departure. “Such powerful control of his divine sense. This is humankind’s innate talent! I have cultivated for four hundred thousand years, but I don’t think I can condense my spiritual origin enough for it to evolve into divine sense.”

The Skydream Iceworm wriggled his body and said, “Don’t worry. We are integrated with Yuhao in order to draw upon his innate talents now. If he can succeed in the future, then we will surely succeed as well.”

They were still engaged in casual conversation when something insidious started happening to Huo Yuhao’s body.

The green Soul-Devouring Carving Knife inside his forehead was trembling faintly. However, the gash that was opened by the blade didn’t gush with blood – instead, the Soul-Devouring Carving Knife started to soften, and eventually melted into a green liquid that flowed into Huo Yuhao’s head through the opening.

Huo Yuhao’s entire being was tainted with a thick layer of green as the large volumes of life energy started to wash his body continuously, with his forehead as the central point.

The wound slashed open by the blade didn’t close up following the fusion of the carving knife. Instead, it began to open even wider under the effects of a circle of green-gold light, much like the mouth of an infant – it also seemed like a single eye.

His wound quivered, while his muscles and his bones were all being continuously distorted during the process. Huo Yuhao's body trembled from the effects of the transformation, and that was an excruciating pain that ordinary people wouldn't be able to tolerate.

Huo Yuhao's mind had been awake this whole time. He could even hear the conversation between the two powerful soul beasts and Electrolux inside his spiritual sea. However, there was nothing he could do to interrupt the process, or truly understand what was happening to him at this moment.

The green-gold light gradually stabilized. A single tiny grey pearl materialized at the gash on his forehead and began to fuse intricately with the broken flesh, tendons and bones around the hole.

The harrowing pain pierced Huo Yuhao's nerves like countless numbers of needles. The pain he was feeling now was perhaps ten times greater than what he had experienced during his fusion with the bones of the Ice Jade Empress Scorpion.

Huo Yuhao's soul and spiritual origin were screaming incessantly as he felt as if his spiritual origin was being torn apart. One could also say that his spiritual origin was being ripped to shreds before it was pieced back together. That kind of pain was truly indescribable. No matter how vast the pools of life energy were, Huo Yuhao couldn't feel a single ounce of comfort at this particular moment. The pain he was feeling seemed to drag him into the deepest and darkest abyss, and he was just sinking ever deeper.

Terrifying ripples of soul power erupted at this moment. Huo Yuhao's Mysterious Heaven Technique soul power instinctively tried to protect his body, but that soul power had no way of entering this particular region of his spiritual sea.

An unknown duration of time passed, and just when he was becoming numb to the agonizing pain, and his spiritual origin already felt like it had been torn to pieces, he suddenly felt a trace of light.

It was a dull, gentle and tender golden color.

His shattered spiritual origin was seamlessly covered and enveloped by this all-encompassing golden light. That feeling was strange, as if he was thrown into a warm lake, and his fractured spiritual origin was progressively softened and agglutinating within.

The lake was golden, and glued his spiritual origin back together while it injected a mysterious kind of energy inside.

The numbness slowly became warmth. Huo Yuhao's mind was also recuperating along with the convalescence of his spiritual origin.

He reached out with his senses at once. The first thing he saw was that he was sitting by his bed, cross-legged, and his waist was erect while his entire body was extremely silent. There was suddenly an extra eye on his forehead.

This eye didn't radiate with green light, and the socket was a little smaller than his original eyes. There appeared to be faint and pale flickers of green light around the socket.

The pupil itself was grey. However, there was a subtle flicker of golden light deep within the patches of grey. His strange third eye moved a little, and Huo Yuhao instantly realized that he was staring at himself – he saw the vicissitudes, the abstruseness, and a life and purity that was difficult to describe.

Huo Yuhao's spiritual power returned to his body with a whistle. This time, the things he was looking at started to change – he could see his bones, his muscles, and his veins and capillaries.

The circulation of blood was like a flowing river as it trickled along, and the dense essence of blood was permeated with vigorous life energies. His skeleton, his muscles, his veins and his organs were all covered by strange layers of green, and this layer was currently fusing with his body while its color gradually receded.

Huo Yuhao couldn't wait as he directed his spiritual energy back into his brain and back into his spiritual sea, as he wanted to see what was different about it.

The changes in his spiritual sea fell into his eyes very swiftly.

Describing it as world-changing was as suitable as it could get.

His spiritual sea was drastically different from before. If one could say that his original spiritual sea was a patch of nothingness, his current spiritual sea was now transformed into a patch of real space.

This space was white, with no end in sight. The first thing he saw the moment he entered it was a large green lake. This lake was filled with vitality and vigor, and its surface was calm and gentle like a mirror. Dense auras of life energy nourished his spiritual sea.

Such a vast space! Huo Yuhao perceived the boundlessness of his spiritual sea in shock. His spiritual sea was at least three times larger than before, and it was hard to say how much more stable it had become.

He refocused his eyes, and noticed a single pearl drifting on the surface of the azure lake – it could also be said to be the Sun of the spiritual sea.

This pearl was also jade-green in color. It was totally transparent, crystal-like and radiated a gentle light, much like that of the Soul-Devouring Carving Knife. It changed when Huo Yuhao cast his gaze upon it, transforming into an eye that gradually opened and looked back at Yuhao with a tender gaze.

Lights flickered as Huo Yuhao discovered, to his intense shock, that he suddenly had a body. His spiritual power created a figure that was identical to himself in the blink of an eye, and he was just standing there by the lake.

It wasn't just him. The plump and robust white bug, the Skydream Iceworm, and the enchantingly beautiful Ice Jade Empress Scorpion appeared beside him as well.

"This... What's all this? What just happened?" Huo Yuhao was clueless about everything before his eyes. However, there was a feeling tingling at the bottom of his heart that told him he was in control of everything here. This kind of change that he had never experienced before gave him a strange and incomprehensible sensation.

The giant eye in midair stared at him, and Electrolux's decrepit voice rang out, "This are the effects of the Life Gold. Don't worry, for I will explain everything to you slowly."

“Let’s talk about what Life Gold is. Life is as the name suggests. All beings have life, and can called living beings. It’s the same whether it was me in the olden days or you guys. Every living being is separated by intelligence, and the original force of all living beings is life energy, or vitality.”

“Life Gold is the material representation of life energy. Put more simply, it’s the product of condensing copious amounts of life energy, and a treasure of the world that only can come about after many years of gestation and incubation. I was not originally from your world, but from another parallel dimension – however, Life Gold shares the same existence no matter which world you’re in. The vast amounts of life energy contained within Life Gold are extremely beneficial to any living being. Every living being represents a life, but every piece of Life Gold represents an entire world.”

Huo Yuhao became more perplexed as he listened on, and a look of confusion came over his eyes. He still didn’t really understand the existence of this Life Gold.

At this moment, the Skydream Iceworm asked, “Old man, you still haven’t mentioned how Life Gold came about. And what does it mean by gestating copious amounts of life energy over many years? Don’t make it so abstract and get to the point.”

Electrolux replied plainly, “It’s easy to be direct. Even though your origins are nothing impressive, it’s a rare sight for someone like you to live for so long, and you’ve been alive for a million years. Put simply, the sum of your million years of age is about the size of a teardrop of Life Gold.”

“You can’t be serious!” The Skydream Iceworm and the Ice Empress exclaimed at the same time. Even though the Ice Empress didn’t think too highly of the Skydream Iceworm, she knew that she was ultimately inferior to him in terms of life energy, as the Skydream Iceworm had been alive for over a million years.

Electrolux continued, “This is already holding him in high regard. You guys have to know that Life Gold exists initially in a gaseous form, and following the passage of time, gradually transforms into a liquid – much like the one Huo Yuhao has obtained, except it had already become a solid. You guys will understand as I explain. Big bug, do you remember the forest in which we fused together with Huo Yuhao?”

The Skydream Iceworm muttered through his teeth, “Of course. The Great Star Dou Forest. I was tortured by those bastards in that cursed place!”

Electrolux said, “That forest is host to a plentitude of lives. When my divine sense descended, I could feel the intense vigor and vitality of the giant forest. If we used that to measure Life Gold, forming a lump of solid Life Gold about the size of a carving knife would require about twenty thousand years – and that is already under the assumption that nothing is damaged or interrupted. Furthermore, you guys need to understand that the formation of Life Gold requires a great many objective conditions. For example, for the forest to produce a piece of Life Gold, there has to be a place inside that is dense and concentrated with life energy.”

Huo Yuhao nodded and said, “I think I roughly understand. You’re trying to say that this carving knife was made entirely from Life Gold.”

Electrolux replied, “Yes, that is correct. Life energy is beneficial to any force of existence; evil beings can also enjoy the benefits of vast amounts of life energy. My divine sense is too dilapidated – therefore, I

had no choice but to take the majority of its power when we obtained this piece of Life Gold. I used its power as the foundation to open a third eye for you, which is the same one you saw with your consciousness. My consciousness is contained within this third eye. Under the nourishment of this Life Gold, I don't think my divine sense will ever run the risk of dissipating anymore."

"With the nourishment from this enormous pool of life energy, my divine sense will be healed continuously, and I will also be able to manipulate some of its power. You're too weak at the moment – when you're stronger, I will give you a choice, and you can decide whether you want to inherit my powers."

"I can still remember three different powers from the remnants of my broken memory. Two of them were passed down to the people from my original plane, but my last inheritance – also my highest one – is still being withheld. When you reach the fifth ring, you should have the ability to attempt this inheritance. Of course, you have to be willing."

The Skydream Iceworm snorted and said, "So you are taking the lion's share of the benefits of this whatever Life Gold?"

Electrolux couldn't help but laugh and answered, "Are you blind, you bug? I have even transformed his spiritual sea into such a beautiful place. I dare say that there will never be such a beautiful spiritual sea inside this plane ever again. I have just said that every single piece of Life Gold is an entire world, and I used the power of this Life Gold to seal its original life energy into this spiritual sea. After today, the growth of Yuhao's spiritual power will be at least three times faster than before, and his spiritual sea will be as good as eternal. Even his physical body has been influenced by this Life Gold – whatever his injury is, as long as his mind is still functional, it will regenerate on its own. It won't be so easy for him to die anymore."

"You have to remember a few things, Yuhao. Firstly, that carving knife hasn't disappeared. Your third eye, and also the Eye Of Life that I just spoke of, is its current metaphysical existence. When you're in need, you just have to focus your consciousness into the Eye of Life, and you will be bestowed with the power of the carving knife. However, this carving knife will possess certain qualities of the Life Gold and a portion of my own qualities as well. You'll have to try it out to know exactly what those are."

"Secondly, my existence from now on can be counted as one of your martial souls – a very special martial soul. However, this martial soul cannot be fused with soul rings. You have to be clear that my strength comes from you, only my control is probably superior to yours. The most I can give you is intelligence and wisdom – therefore, you can't have too high hopes of me."

"Thirdly, I hope you will shut yourself in for a while after you've finished with the things you have at hand. You should attempt to experience and understand the profundities this Life Gold has brought to you, and truly integrate with the life energy inside of you. You have to allow it to become a part of you like your finger or your arm, and this will be extremely beneficial for your future development."

"Lastly, following the transformations made by the Life Gold, both the strength and flexibility of your body has been greatly improved – do make use of that. Oh, and you have to try your best to control it however you can. Your spiritual sea can now contain a greater volume of spiritual power. However, no matter how powerful your spiritual powers are, it's all wasted if you don't know how to control them. This is also one of the reasons why I wish for you to shut yourself in to cultivate and meditate in silence."

“Alright, that’s all I have to say. I have to integrate with the Eye of Life as soon as possible. You will also regain command of your consciousness very soon. After this episode, your consciousness, your body and your spiritual sea will be flawlessly integrated. It will be very difficult for us to take over your bodies after this – all we can do is help you in your growth.”

The eye closed, and Electrolux’s aura swiftly vanished. In the next moment, Huo Yuhao felt his world spinning like a top around him, and he fell into a daze. When he opened his eyes in the next moment, he was back on his bed.

His first action was to reach up to touch his forehead subconsciously. What caught him off guard was that his forehead was smooth – where was the third eye?

Perhaps all this was due to the unbearable intensity of pain that he had just experienced, but his mind ended up in a trance – could everything that had just happened be nothing but a hallucination?

He tossed his head from side to side as he attempted to reorient himself before he focused and looked inwards once again.

It wasn’t a hallucination after all. At this point, his spiritual power enabled him to see every corner of his body when he looked inwards, to the point where he could see the circulation of the pure white color of the Mysterious Heaven Technique’s soul power. Every detail within his body fell into his perception – the life energy that belonged to the piece of Life Gold was currently being fully absorbed by his body.

Huo Yuhao stood up and stretched a little. He immediately discovered, to his amazement, that every single joint in his body felt incredibly flexible. He turned his head, and found that his neck could almost rotate a full hundred and eighty degrees. He lifted his right leg backwards; it didn’t take much effort at all to touch his head.

What stunned him the most was the circumstance of the Mysterious Heaven Technique’s circulation. He no longer needed to engage in meditation – its circulation had practically become a part of his breathing process, and followed the huff and puff of his every breath. The Mysterious Heaven Technique was actually following the paths of cultivation and circulating automatically. His own blood essence was flowing vigorously, and was integrated impeccably with his soul power, as if they were being boosted with every second that passed.

Huo Yuhao watched the rays of sunlight coming in through the window. He immediately felt as if his mood was overcome with an incredible sensation of optimism and cheerfulness, as if his entire being was immersed and integrated with nature.

The Life Gold was so powerful! His body seemed to have risen to another level under its effects.

He concentrated on his spiritual sea. Everything that he saw before was still there – the serene Lake of Life, the dense essence of life energy, and the Pearl of Life hovering in the sky could all be seen with great clarity.

Both the Skydream Iceworm and the Ice Empress remained at the lake, as if they had felt the probing from Huo Yuhao’s spiritual power. They turned their gazes into the sky, and Huo Yuhao immediately sensed that they were watching him.

At this moment, these two powerful soul beasts started to radiate with pale brilliance. Especially the Skyream Iceworm, who was emanating a tender golden light that flooded his spiritual sea. It looked like he was fusing his vast pools of soul power with himself to boost his expanded spiritual sea.

The Ice Empress was emitting layers of light that were a mix of icy-white and green. These layers of light were first infused into the Ice Jade Empress Scorpion's skeleton before they were spread all around Huo Yuhao's body.

Neither the Skydream Iceworm's nor the Ice Jade Empress Scorpion's power could increase Huo Yuhao's soul power, as they had already become Huo Yuhao's martial souls, but the Mysterious Heaven Technique's soul power had also taken two different forms of existence. There was no question that the changes they were currently undergoing were meant to boost Huo Yuhao's spiritual sea, his physical strength and the power of every one of his soul rings.

Huo Yuhao could still use his spiritual detection to perceive his surroundings before his absorption of the Life Gold. However, there was no way he could be clairvoyant, and his personal senses were only slightly superior to those of normal people. The Life Gold had triggered an almost sublime transformation in his body, but his powers didn't appear vastly improved, as the effects worked to develop his potential while giving him a boost to his senses.

Huo Yuhao rushed into the bathroom to cleanse his body and changed into a set of clean clothes the moment he witnessed the changes that were happening to the Skydream Iceworm and the Ice Jade Empress Scorpion. He checked himself in the mirror and made sure that there wasn't a third eye on his forehead, as if that eye had only existed in his sensations – but the feeling of its existence was just too real.

He refused to mull over it too much, and returned to his bed. He started to channel the Mysterious Heaven Technique and activated his soul power to begin his cultivation, as he had a faint feeling that cultivating at this time would be most beneficial to himself.

All Wang Dong saw when he slunk back into the room was Huo Yuhao, who was deep in meditation.

Wang Dong was a little surprised as he watched him. Even though Huo Yuhao didn't seem any different on the surface, Wang Dong had a feeling that there was something different about his friend, and it felt like his temperament was different. Huo Yuhao's physical appearance was originally slightly above average, but he suddenly seemed to have a new and unique kind of charm.

Self-confidence, steadiness and a few measures of depth – yet, he was still filled with liveliness and brimmed with vitality.

"This guy is just too hardworking. He can still be so involved even when he's cultivating alone – he can even enter deep meditation."

Soul masters generally experienced two different states during their cultivation – meditation and deep meditation. Standard meditation could typically be interrupted, and the soul master would wake up naturally when there was external stimulus, or if the soul master detected any change in his physical surroundings, so any adverse effects would be highly limited. Therefore, this form of meditation was also referred to as light cultivation.

This was the state that they would typically enter when Wang Dong and Huo Yuhao teamed up to concentrate the Haodong power. After all, they had to pass the Haodong power around, and thus they couldn't let their soul power course around freely.

On the other hand, deep meditation was a serendipitous occurrence that only came about when one had an epiphany in the process of normal meditation. The meditator's consciousness would sink deep into his or her cultivation, and their entire being would be fixated – one would no longer be able to experience any changes in the outside world and, would only wake when it was time.

The soul master's soul power would be circulating automatically during deep meditation, and at a speed that was much faster than during normal meditation. At the same time, the soul master would experience a higher level of absorption and perception during deep meditation. Many things that were typically perplexing or difficult to fathom would become a lot more transparent and understandable during deep meditation.

Any soul master would wish that he or she could enter deep meditation during cultivation, especially when they were breaking through a bottleneck. If the soul master was lucky enough to encounter deep meditation, he or she would experience a success rate of higher than eighty percent.

Because of the very reason that deep meditation encompassed a profound level of comprehension and cultivation, soul masters in deep meditation were most afraid of being interrupted. They ran the risk of going insane if they were interrupted, and it could even be reflected in real and severe bodily harm.

It was easy to differentiate between normal and deep meditation. There was no change in physical state or appearance during normal cultivation, as soul power was only circulating inside the soul master's body. There would only be a slight external aura or release when there was a special or esoteric technique in play, or if the soul master was breaking through a bottleneck – for instance, when Huo Yuhao and Wang Dong were cultivating with Haodong power, Huo Yuhao's body would radiating with golden light under the effects of the Golden Light Left Arm Bone.

Due to the need for personal protection, the soul master's soul power would be automatically released to protect himself or herself during deep cultivation, and mask his or her aura at the same time.

Huo Yuhao was currently in this exact state. There were layers of white light shimmering outside his body, as if his entire body were a jewel that sparkled with plain rays of light.

It was natural for other people to develop some sense of envy or jealousy when they witnessed others in deep meditation. However, Wang Dong was different, and he only felt glad for Huo Yuhao. He made a few mischievous expressions before he took a chair, discreetly departed the room and took his place outside to protect his friend and prevent Huo Yuhao from being affected by anybody from Shrek who came around looking for him.

Huo Yuhao felt a wave of warmth course through his body the moment he woke up from his deep meditation. The green colors in his body had vanished completely, and his soul power was vastly improved. He had just reached Rank 28, but he was now clear of a third of his journey into Rank 29. Besides cultivating with Haodong power in his daily activities, this episode of deep meditation proved to be of great help.

His speed of cultivation during deep cultivation was higher than when he channeled Haodong power with Wang Dong. However, this was only a state that came around solely by chance.

Huo Yuhao leapt down from the bed, and he felt light as a feather. There was an inexplicable feeling of comfort, as if his entire body was a lot lighter than before – this was a feeling that couldn't even be fully described with the word "beautiful".

Everything seemed to be different, and his self-confidence returned – was he finally getting closer to greatness?

Huo Yuhao clenched his fists tightly together as he glanced outward. It looked like it was still midday, but he felt as if he had been renewed, and the flames relit inside him.

"Why hasn't Wang Dong returned? He's taking too long to bathe," Huo Yuhao didn't feel that he had taken a long time to cultivate, and distinctly remembered that they had been cultivating together in the morning before he took back the Soul-Devouring Carving Knife. Afterwards, Wang Dong went ahead to take a shower while he continued to cultivate – he should be back by now!

He walked out as these thoughts turned in his head. The moment he pulled the door toward him, he felt a pushing force coming from the other side.

Huo Yuhao was caught off-guard, and subconsciously reacted as he leapt backwards and quickly released his martial soul – but what came next left his mouth agape.

"Bam-"

"Ouch."

Wang Dong fell backwards along with his chair, and Huo Yuhao immediately hurried forward to help him up. "What are you doing? Why are you waiting outside? Why didn't you come in?"

Wang Dong had been sitting outside this whole time, and his body had been leaning against the door. He was already starting to doze off, and when the door opened, Wang Dong fell backwards onto the ground with his chair.

Wang Dong was furious. "You're terribly ungrateful! I was protecting you, and all you do when you wake up is let me fall back onto the ground. Are you going to take care of me if I cripple myself because of this?"

Huo Yuhao chuckled and said, "Have I not been taking care of you in the dorm? When have you cleaned up the dorm? Or swept the floor? Or mopped the floor? When have you even done anything at all? Even your wardrobe is cleaned by me. You're like a big boss figure every day."

"I..." Wang Dong wanted to retort, but he couldn't find a suitable argument to make. He scowled and said, "Stop with your loud rhetoric and your fallacious arguments. I'll let you off the hook this time. You seemed to be having a good time with all that deep meditation, while my ass was about to break into several pieces."

Huo Yuhao reached out and pressed against Wang Dong's butt cheeks. "It's all good. Let me massage you."

Wang Dong was still young, but his little butt cheeks were firm and springy. Huo Yuhao squeezed a few times, and immediately realized that the feeling in his hands was pretty good.

Huo Yuhao was quick. Before he even finished his sentence, his hands were already in action, and Wang Dong's entire body froze. He even felt a little immobilized.

Huo Yuhao squeezed a few more times, but faintly realized that something was amiss. He glanced at Wang Dong out of the corners of his eyes – Wang Dong was glaring at him, and his face was black while his eyes were spitting flames.

"Does it feel good?" A chilly voice floated out from between the gaps in his teeth.

"Oh, it's not so bad." Huo Yuhao's answer was almost subconscious.

"Go to hell." Wang Dong tossed his head and raised his left leg for a high kick that was aimed straight at Huo Yuhao's forehead.

Huo Yuhao tilted his head backwards hurriedly and dodged his kick. However, Wang Dong's body was extremely nimble, and his right foot, which was supporting his body, rotated like a fulcrum, and his left foot returned once again – and swept across Huo Yuhao's body at once.

Huo Yuhao didn't even need to see with his eyes as he swung his body backwards and avoided Wang Dong's kick once more while his entire body became like a plank.

Wang Dong's sweeping left leg paused in the air and slammed downwards at Huo Yuhao's abdomen. Huo Yuhao spun around in midair as he dragged his right leg upwards and pressed his kneecap against the calf of Wang Dong's left leg to stop its movement. At the same time, his right leg sprung up and back down again and wrapped around Wang Dong's right leg like a whip. He pushed against the ground with both hands and pulled backwards – instantly, both of them fell down together with their legs still intertwined.

It was clear that Wang Dong had never expected Huo Yuhao to be so adaptable. He watched Huo Yuhao with an astonished look and said, "When did you become so agile and flexible?"

"I've always been flexible," Huo Yuhao answered proudly, "and a gentleman uses his mouth, not his fists."

Chapter 107: The Semifinals Lineup!

Huo Yuhao, utilizing the strength in his legs, quickly stood up from the ground, then reached out and grabbed Wang Dong's ankles.

Wang Dong's body bent forwards as he pointed his downwards-facing legs forwards in order to wrap them around Huo Yuhao's neck and trap his head between his legs.

Huo Yuhao immediately retracted both of his arms to beside his neck, then reached out and grabbed Wang Dong's ankles again.

"Your arms can't twist my thighs." Wang Dong snorted. He didn't dodge Huo Yuhao's strike, instead leaning his upper body backwards and supporting his body with both hands on the floor. At the same time, he tried to encircle Huo Yuhao's neck with renewed vigor.

However, Huo Yuhao had an iron grip on Wang Dong's ankles; no matter how much Wang Dong struggled, he couldn't move his legs forwards even an inch.

Huo Yuhao laughed and said, "You're still too weak. You call these matchstick-thin legs thighs?"

Wang Dong continued to exert his strength in disbelief, but Huo Yuhao's grip remained firm. Huo Yuhao was even slowly prying Wang Dong's legs apart.

"That's impossible! You only have two soul rings, how could you be stronger than me?" Wang Dong said, unconvinced.

Huo Yuhao laughed again. "I have a soul bone."

"So do I!" Wang Dong rebutted, refusing to yield to Huo Yuhao.

Huo Yuhao became speechless when he heard this, and thought about telling Wang Dong about the Ice Jade Empress Scorpion's trunk bones. He'd also felt his strength increase palpably once he'd absorbed the Life Gold energy. If it hadn't been for that, he wouldn't have been able to resist Wang Dong's legs so easily.

Don't think that Wang Dong, who possessed the Radiant Butterfly Goddess, was weak. On the contrary, his abilities were much greater than his slender frame suggested, due to his second martial soul being one of the strongest strength type martial souls on the continent, which once belonged to the continent's first hereditary martial soul of the sect—Hao Tianchui!

To think that Huo Yuhao could defeat Wang Dong when he had not cultivated as much power as Wang Dong, it must have been a victory purely in terms of an increase in his physical body. Of course, neither of them had used their soul power either.

Wang Dong had already used all his strength, yet he still wasn't able to clamp his legs around Huo Yuhao's neck. Instead, his legs were being pulled further and further apart, causing the both of them to look rather comical. One was standing there with his hands apart beside his head, while the other was doing a handstand with his legs apart. Furthermore, half of Wang Dong's body was outside of their room.

"Wow, what're you guys doing? Do you need to be so affectionate?" Xu Sanshi's voice could be heard as he, Bei Bei, and Ma Xiaotao emerged from the room. All of them could tell with one look that Wang Dong's body was the one sticking out of the room.

Wang Dong was both ashamed and annoyed as he said, "Let go of me."

Huo Yuhao finally let go, then immediately took a few steps backwards as Wang Dong flipped backwards and stood upright, glaring at Huo Yuhao. Wang Dong then turned to face Xu Sanshi and the rest and said, "We're just practising our fusion skills, is there anything wrong with that?"

He definitely couldn't say that they were fighting because Huo Yuhao had touched his butt.

Huo Yuhao touched his nose with a smile.

Ma Xiaotao burst out laughing, then said, "Go on, young people should be lively."

Wang Dong humphed, then said, "You aren't so old yourself, Ms. Tao!"

Ma Xiaotao replied, "Alright, let's go. Teacher Wang has called for a pre-battle meeting. We'll have to compete tomorrow, so we need to make our final preparations now." After being lectured by Wang Yan the other day, Ma Xiaotao's temper was much more restrained. She had become less of a maniac, and was acting more calm; she was finally showing some semblance of a team leader's qualities.

"Tomorrow?" Huo Yuhao gasped, surprised. "You must mean the day after. We just competed yesterday, so the other teams should still be competing in the quarter-finals today. We should get a day's rest after the end of the competition, right? Ms Tao, you must have remembered the dates wrongly."

Wang Dong snapped, "Ms Tao didn't make a mistake, it's you who got confused. You were in deep meditation for an entire day and night, and I'm dead tired from trying to protect you, yet you still bullied me."

"Er..." Huo Yuhao didn't expect that a day and a night had already passed. In light of this revelation, he noticed the dark bags under Wang Dong's eyes and felt deeply touched.

Bei Bei gave Huo Yuhao a thumbs up, then said, "My Little Junior is amazing. Let's go."

Wang Dong said, "Senior, you're being biased. I'm obviously the youngest one; shouldn't you be calling me your Junior?"

Bei Bei gave him a strange look and said, "Really? Are you certain that you want to be my Little Junior?"

Wang Dong felt rather sheepish after getting stared at like that, so he stuck out his tongue and said, "Who cares, let's go." He then rushed out of the meeting room before the others.

Huo Yuhao followed, rather confused as he asked, "Big Senior, what's gotten into him? Why'd he just let it go?"

Bei Bei chuckled and said, "Don't ask so many questions, it's fine like that for now. Let's go, we have a meeting to attend. Tomorrow's competition is no joke."

Huo Yuhao was still in shock about how he'd managed to stay in deep meditation for a full day and night. Previously, he thought that he had only meditated for a very short while—only a few minutes. Now, he realized first-hand how amazing the results of deep meditation were. Besides, it was also a great way to evade monotonous training. No wonder every soul master yearned for such an opportunity.

As these thoughts ran through his mind, Huo Yuhao followed the others into the meeting room.

Wang Yan was clearly the first to reach the room, and had been waiting for everyone. Seeing that everyone had arrived, he said, in a deep voice, "Alright, let's begin the meeting."

"Now that the quarter-finals have finished, the semifinals will start tomorrow. We will undoubtedly be in the first match. Another round will take place tomorrow. After the semifinals, there will be 3 days till the final.

"Teacher Wang, who's our opponent in the semi-finals?" Xiao Xiao asked curiously.

Wang Yan replied, "I'm still unsure. For fairness' sake, the semi-finals pairings are to be decided through lot drawings. As the reigning champions of the tournament, we'll definitely compete tomorrow. Thus, we can't make any specific preparations to target our opponent. Our only option is to consider everyone in our preparations. Even though this is a drawback, all of our opponents have to face the same situation as us. They're also not sure whether or not they'll meet us."

"The remaining 4 teams are us, the Sun Moon Imperial Soul Engineering Academy, the Star Luo National Academy, and the Imperial Mystical Academy."

"It's fair to say that the other 3 academies are all old rivals of our academy. They're all very powerful, with our strongest rival undoubtedly being the Sun Moon Imperial Soul Engineering Academy. Even if we don't meet them in the semifinals, we'll meet them in the finals. Thus, we need to aim our strategies at them."

"Let me brief you all on these 3 teams, as well as what we'll have to take notice of when we compete, and the specific strategies against them."

"The Sun Moon Imperial Soul Engineering Academy is definitely our strongest opponent out of these 3 teams. Their team leader, Ma Rulong, hasn't appeared yet. However, based on previous tournaments, Ma Rulong should be a soul emperor. Luckily, he's the only soul emperor from the Sun Moon Imperial Soul Engineering Academy."

"Of the 14 people in the Sun Moon Imperial Soul Engineering Academy's official and preparatory teams, only Ma Rulong, Xiao Hongchen and Meng Hongchen haven't competed yet. Both Xiao Hongchen and Meng Hongchen are from the preparatory team. For reference, Meng Hongchen is that young lady that Wang Dong tried to pick up back then." Wang Yan couldn't help but grin and look at Wang Dong as he said this.

Wang Dong did not seem to take this awkwardly at all.

Wang Yan continued, "The rest of their official team are all soul kings, but only 2 of them are above Rank 55. The rest of them are below Rank 55 but above Rank 50. They've also all inherited martial souls with some useful characteristics to soul engineers, that not ones that are too outstanding. They're main strongpoint is their soul tools. As for the 5 preparatory team members who've already competed, 2 are soul ancestors and 3 are soul elders. However, we shouldn't see these preparatory team members at all."

"The Sun Moon Imperial Soul Engineering Academy isn't our strongest rival because they have nurtured students that can match us, but due to the countless changes in their soul tools. Without a doubt, they must have many soul tools that they haven't used in this tournament, and they have kept these soul tools to use them against us. This has always been the case in previous tournaments. Over these past few decades, the Sun Moon Empire's soul tools have been changing at a faster rate, and are becoming increasingly difficult to handle. That's why our strategies have to be able to adapt against them. In the team round, we'll likely be at a disadvantage because of the group advantage of their soul tools. But in the individual round or the 2-2-3 fight, we won't be at a disadvantage. We'll have our chance their."

Huo Yuhao asked, "Teacher Wang, are there any more changes in the rules for the finals?"

Wang Yan nodded and said, “A team round will be organized, along with an individual round and a 2-2-3 fight. Furthermore, these 3 competition segments will be completed in one go after both teams have chosen all 7 competing members. There will be no intermission. The eventual champion will be the one that wins 2 out of the 3 segments.”

Huo Yuhao was stunned when he heard his words. It wasn’t easy to become the champion of the Continental Advanced Soul Master Academy Soul Dueling Tournament!

Wang Yan said, “However, the Imperial Mystical Academy from the Heavenly Soul Empire is also our rival. Only us, the Sun Moon Imperial Soul Engineering Academy, and the Imperial Mystical Academy have soul emperors amongst everyone in the tournament. The Imperial Mystical Academy is the royal academy of the Heavenly Soul Empire. All the royal members of the empire will enter the academy to learn. Their lineup for this tournament is very strong: 1 soul emperor and 6 soul kings. However, soul masters are their main force. Their soul engineers will provide support to their soul masters. Among their 7 official team members, 2 of their soul kings are soul engineers. From my observations, they shouldn’t even be Class 5 soul engineers, and are instead most likely Class 4 like He Caitou.”

“Our last opponent is the Star Luo National Academy from the Star Luo Empire. Among these 3 rivals, the Star Luo National Academy is the weakest. But this doesn’t necessarily mean that they are the easiest to deal with. This is the Star Luo Empire, their home turf. Furthermore, the overall power of the Star Luo National Academy isn’t that weak either. Although they don’t have a soul emperor to hold down the fort, they still have up to 6 soul kings. Things have gone smoothly for them so far, or at least, they’re finding it smoother than us.”

“The last 2 rounds will be very tedious for us. Even though we have two soul emperors—Xiaotao and Yueheng—our rivals still possess a greater overall strength in numbers. Their overall abilities aren’t inferior to ours. The Sun Moon Imperial Soul Engineering Academy and Imperial Mystical Academy are even somewhat superior to us in terms of overall abilities. The only we’ll become champions is by giving it our all. It’s like the first time we faced Justsky Academy.”

Wang Yan didn’t sound relaxed at all. Everyone from Shrek Academy also felt heavy in their hearts.

Indeed! Even though they had two soul emperors and Ling Luo Chen, who was a control-type soul king, their preparatory team members were still much weaker than their rivals.

Among their 4 soul ancestors, Xu Sanshi’s soul power was only Rank 47. The rest were even worse. As for the last 3, Wang Dong was only a soul elder, Xiao Xiao had barely become a soul elder, and Huo Yuhao was only a soul grandmaster. While they all had twin martial souls, their cultivations were still very weak! How much could they truly contribute in the top-ranked team competition of the tournament?

According to Wang Yan’s arrangements in the previous round, it was more likely that Huo Yuhao and Wang Dong wouldn’t participate in the team battle. Even if the two of them were sent out together, it would still pull Shrek Academy’s overall power down. Although Huo Yuhao’s soul skill was very practical, and the Golden Road was a rather decent crowd-control skill, could their powers be fully unleashed against tough opponents? This was also under the circumstance that their opponents were entirely unaware of their capabilities.

Wang Yan swept his gaze from left to right. He naturally realized that not everyone was fully confident. He gently said, "I didn't expect us to become the champions ever since the day we came to Star Luo City, as we're not champion material. I'm already extremely satisfied that we've made it this far. All of your hard work is clear for everyone to see. All of you have already preserved Shrek's glory, thus I hope that all of you won't be pressured in the upcoming competition. Whatever the result, I will ask for all of you to receive merits when we return."

Wang Yan's words sounded normal to Huo Yuhao and the rest of the preparatory team members, as they had indeed sacrificed quite a lot. However, his words sounded a bit piercing to Ma Xiaotao, Dai Yueheng, and Ling Luo Chen.

As official team members, they faced a worse predicament than the preparatory team members in this tournament. Even though Wang Yan's words had pricked them, they didn't know how to reply.

Wang Yan seemed relaxed as he spoke; it was as if he didn't notice the burning radiance in Ma Xiaotao and the other two's eyes. "Our mission has already been completed. I shall describe our opponents now. We'll analyze the capabilities of each team member before deciding our strategies. We'll adjust who competes accordingly."

This pre-competition meeting went on for nearly 6 hours, all the way from lunch through dinner until the sun set.

Shrek Academy wasn't the only anxious one. The other 3 were also anxious. The overall victor of the tournament was about to be decided. This wasn't only a battle of glory between these 4 top-ranked academies, but was also the most crucial battle for the competing team members.

It must be known that the members of the top teams would receive the most distinguished treatment no matter which power they joined. If they were to assume positions in an empire, they would be conferred titles, and this glory would accompany them throughout their entire lives! It was fair to say that the Continental Advanced Soul Master Academy Soul Dueling Tournament had become a platform for the various empires in the continent to pick and fight for the best talents.

If not for the prestigious status that Shrek Academy held, many powers, families, and even sects would have poached their students already.

Huo Yuhao felt that his body was extremely stiff as he walked out of the meeting room. Spending the entire afternoon memorizing the capabilities and strategies of his opponents was indeed very dull and boring. He would rather run in metal clothing than do this.

After stretching his lazy body, Huo Yuhao felt much better. As his blood began to circulate more smoothly throughout his body, the fatigue he'd felt earlier disappeared. The prosperous life power in his body seemed to have been awakened by this simple action.

"Junior brother, go and get some food." Bei Bei patted him on the shoulder.

"Okay." Huo Yuhao answered hurriedly.

"Eldest senior brother, do you think we can become the champions in the end?" Huo Yuhao asked softly. While Ma Xiaotao and Dai Yueheng appeared to be the most powerful among them, Huo Yuhao was the

most convinced by his gentle-looking and refined, yet intelligent and approachable eldest senior brother.

Bei Bei smiled and said, "What? Are you unconfident?"

Huo Yuhao shook his head and said, "It's not that I'm not confident. I just think that our opponents are extremely strong now that I've heard Teacher Wang Yan's analysis!"

Bei Bei laughed. "That's right, our opponents are very strong. Their teams are almost entirely made up of at least soul kings. But I'm confident that we'll be the champions in the end."

"Eh?" Huo Yuhao was a little stunned as he looked at him.

Bei Bei retracted his smile a little and said gently, "Confidence stems from one's own abilities. Shrek Academy was able to become the best academy on the continent because the academy has never once been hasty. Every single person that was sent to participate in this tournament has achieved our skills through our own hard work. That's why Shrek Academy's soul elders and soul ancestors are different from those of other academies. Our soul kings are even more different. At the soul emperor level, the gap is even larger. Maybe our opponents can use soul tools or some strategies and tactics to close this gap, but if our true abilities can be sparked by our fighting will, and if we can light the fire of glory for Shrek, we'll win for sure."

Everyone was walking out of the meeting room sequentially when Bei Bei said this, and as he didn't lower his voice, they all heard what he'd said.

Ma Xiaotao, Dai Yueheng, and Ling Luo Chen's expressions changed. The look in their eyes as they watched Bei Bei also changed slightly.

Huo Yuhao nodded, then asked curiously, "Eldest senior brother, what do you mean by destructive enthusiasm?"

Bei Bei chuckled and replied, "Do you think there are really so many talents in the world that are able to become a soul king before they're 20 years old? Our Shrek Academy nurtures such students through a teaching model that has been built up over tens of thousands of years, as well as the extremely hard work of the talented students. Perhaps other academies can nurture a few such students, but have you ever wondered how those soul engineers with ordinary martial souls are able to do it?"

"I dare say that those from Shrek Academy will all have the ability to become a Titled Douluo so long as they're able to survive in the outside world. However, it's much less likely for people from other academies who've competed against them in the Continental Advanced Soul Master Academy Soul Dueling Tournament. That's because a lot of the increase in their powers isn't attributed to their own hard work."

"Haven't you ever realized that the most outstanding teams all come from the royal families of various empires, or are the best academies of the different empires? I'm sure that at least half of those who are competing used different types of pills and treasures to increase their cultivation. Especially the Sun Moon Imperial Soul Engineering Academy from the Sun Moon Empire, which is very wealthy! You've also seen the soul tools from the Illustrious Virtue Hall before."

Huo Yuhao immediately understood. "So their powers were enhanced through medicine."

Bei Bei nodded his head and said, "It's undeniable that several medicines are beneficial to soul masters. However, moderation is key. A lot of medicines possess poisonous components too. Apart from a select few medicines that can solidify one's foundations, it's best to consume medicine that increases one's soul power as little as possible. Ask Senior Ma and Senior Dai; they'll tell you that Shrek Academy has banned our students from consuming such medicine. That's because this form of cultivation method has no future. If one over-consumes these medicines, even by just a little bit, it can make it so that one will never be able to become a Titled Douluo."

Ma Xiaotao's voice suddenly rang out, "Junior Bei Bei, you know quite a bit. How do you know so much about the inner courtyard even though you're from the outer courtyard?"

Bei Bei turned around and smiled at Ma Xiaotao, "Senior, I can't tell you."

Ma Xiaotao was stunned for a moment. "Why can't you tell me? Tell me."

Bei Bei shook his head and said, "Saying it would offend someone."

Everyone knew Ma Xiaotao's temper. She slapped her chest and said, "So what if you offend someone? I'll protect you."

An uncomfortable expression appeared on Bei Bei's face as he said, "Alright, Sister Xiaotao. You must live up to your side of the bargain and protect me!"

Ma Xiaotao was impatient and said, "Why are you dilly-dallying like a woman? Quickly, just say it!"

Bei Bei smiled and revealed a mouthful of white teeth as he said, "You might have never eaten pork before, but you've surely seen a pig run."

The moment he said that, he violently pulled the door next to him open. Whoosh! He immediately dashed inside. It appeared that, unknowingly, he'd already arrived outside of his own room.

Ma Xiaotao was stunned when she heard this. She quickly reacted and cursed, "The nerve of you, Bei Bei! You dare to call me a pig." With that, she attempted to rush into Bei Bei's room.

Ling Luochen quickly pulled her back as she tried to stifle a laugh and said, "Don't run. If you run, you'll have fallen for his ploy. Remember, he did talk about a running pig."

Ma Xiaotao looked at her, and a chortle suddenly escaped her mouth. She couldn't help but laugh too.

After this bout of tomfoolery, the somber atmosphere from the meeting before was greatly lightened.

As Wang Yan stood in the doorway of the conference room, he couldn't help but sigh in admiration after seeing what had just happened. Bei Bei indeed possessed extraordinary leadership capabilities! As for the preparatory team, they appeared to be getting better and better.

Five years later, when the children from the preparatory team grew up, they'd probably be the most powerful team Shrek Academy had had in a long while. They would probably become the most powerful Shrek's Seven Monsters in a long while too.

"Are you going to train tonight or not?" Wang Dong nudged Huo Yuhao with his shoulder.

Huo Yuhao nodded and said, "Of course we have to train. Last-minute training has its uses too. You'll see the results of my deep meditation once you've finished eating."

Wang Dong's mouth twitched involuntarily as he said, "You've only cultivated for a single day. Do you expect some sort of earth-shattering change?"

Yet, reality proved that he had experienced an earth-shattering change.

After dinner, the two of them began to cultivate together using their Haodong Power. However, Wang Dong opened his eyes and stopped his cultivation after only a single revolution.

"How... how can this possible?" Wang Dong looked at Huo Yuhao in shock.

Huo Yuhao beamed as he opened his eyes and said, "How could it not be possible?"

Wang Dong said, "Your circulation speed of the Haodong Power has doubled. It's even faster than me, a Soul Elder. My god! What did you do? If not for the fact that I've been following you all this time, I would've thought that you'd taken some sort of precious elixir."

Huo Yuhao chuckled. "I didn't eat anything. But you'd still be shocked if I told you."

Actually, right after the two of them linked arms to cultivate, their Haodong Power circulated much faster after it entered Huo Yuhao's body. Its speed had indeed almost doubled. It appeared to be filled with a vibrant life force when it re-entered Wang Dong's body. After their soul power had completed a full revolution, Wang Dong's body became much more comfortable and relaxed. His energy rose in all aspects, and the effects of his cultivation were greatly enhanced too. While he didn't know it was from the vast life energy that the remnants of the Life Gold had left in Huo Yuhao's body, he'd still felt an obvious change!

Wang Dong looked suspiciously at Huo Yuhao and said, "Are the effects of deep meditation really so good? Next time, I'll calm myself down too, and try to achieve it."

Huo Yuhao smiled and said, "It's fine. Come on, let's start cultivating. Deep meditation is the best way to restore one's energy. I feel that my soul power has undergone a special kind of change. Let's not waste this opportunity; it will benefit you too."

While the vast life energy from the Life Gold would continue to congregate inside of his body, it would gradually be absorbed by his body. It wouldn't attach itself to his soul power for long, otherwise it would be draining on his soul power. Huo Yuhao wanted Wang Dong to train with him right now so that he could pass some of the life energy to him while he still had it. In doing so, they could share in its benefits.

The two of them started to use their Haodong Power once more. This night could be said to be their most productive joint cultivation session.

After that night, more than half of the vast life energy in Huo Yuhao's soul power was absorbed by Wang Dong. The finished cultivating at dawn, and as Huo Yuhao cultivated his Purple Demons Eyes at the window, Wang Dong's entire frame appeared to be bursting with energy. His skin shone with light, and his eyes were much brighter. His handsome face was reddish, and was indescribably adorable. He appeared well-rested and energetic. After an entire night of cultivation, their cultivation speed had

more than tripled. Furthermore, after they'd connected and cultivated that vast energy, they were even more in-sync with each other. It was as if they were a single person.

Now that it was dawn, it would be time for the semifinals once they'd brushed up and eaten breakfast!

The team from Shrek Academy, clad in ink-green attire, was met with thunderous applause when they appeared in Star Luo Plaza.

There had been more than a hundred teams at the start of the competition, but there were now only four teams left vying for the top spot. The competition had taken over a month at this point, during which Xiao Xiao, Wang Dong, and Huo Yuhao had all experienced breakthroughs in terms of their soul power.

Of the four remaining teams, every single one of them had at least two major fights left. The decisive moment had come, and they would be battling with all their strength.

After some renovations, there were now only four zones left in the participants' resting area. Every single team was spread quite a distance from each other.

There was still an hour until the commencement of the competition, but all four squads were already present.

Occasionally, they would cross gazes. When that happened, sparks appeared to fly from their eyes. A powerful battling aura could be felt, and the atmosphere in the resting area became harsh and tense, some traces of killing intent even present.

The sun slowly rose through the sky, the temperature today not bad. As sunlight cascaded over the vast Star Luo Plaza, it appeared to be cloaked with a layer of light gold. However, in the eyes of the four teams, it wasn't just sunlight, but the honor of a victory that they had to stake their all for.

The first day of the semifinals would be composed of the team battles.

What no one expected was to see a red carpet, about ten meters wide, stretching from the gates of the palace all the way to the front of the arena. Ten minutes before the teams were to draw lots, the gates of the palace swung open and the Star Luo Emperor, surrounded by his guards, strode out from it and headed towards the arena.

"Long live the Emperor! Long live the Emperor! Long live the Emperor!" Every single soldier who was responsible for maintaining order cheered and waved their weapons in the air.

When the crowd noticed the appearance of the emperor, they burst into cheers.

The four teams stood up as well, and gazed at the emperor with respect.

Huo Yuhao noticed that there were four old men next to the Star Luo Emperor. They'd formed a square around the emperor. Behind them, there were no more than 20 guards. Hence, it didn't appear to be overkill.

However, every single person there clearly knew that the squad of guards there was nothing to scoff at. Those four old men were likely the Titled Douluo of the Star Luo Empire.

Ten thousand years ago, after the Martial Soul Hall—which had possessed the most powerful soul masters on the continent—had disintegrated, the many powerful soul masters within had pledged their allegiance to various states. As soul masters began to understand more about their martial souls, more and more Titled Douluo started to appear. However, some of them had relied on medicine to achieve their breakthroughs. Hence, they were comparatively weaker.

Of course, even if there were more Titled Douluo than ten thousand years ago, they were still scarce. Furthermore, different Titled Douluo had different martial souls, different ways of cultivation, different soul rings, different soul bones, and different amounts of soul bones. Thus, their individual powers varied greatly.

However, Huo Yuhao and Wang Dong couldn't find the person who'd threatened them among the four Titled Douluo below.

The 108 soul masters responsible for security all bowed to the emperor. However, they didn't kneel.

According to the rules of the Star Luo Empire, soul masters that had more than four rings and were under the employ of the empire didn't have to kneel to the emperor.

The emperor ascended the arena under the protection of the four Titled Douluo. He then faced the Star Luo Plaza, smiled, and said, "Please rise my subjects."

"Long live the emperor! Long live the emperor! Long live the emperor!"

Cheers erupted from all sides of the Star Luo Plaza. Evidently, the emperor was well-loved by his subjects.

The Star Luo Emperor didn't try to stop their cheers. Instead, his gaze was calm, and he had a smile on his face as he looked at his subjects from afar. Once the plaza had quietened down, he smiled and said, "The Continental Advanced Soul Master Academy Soul Dueling Tournament is a major event for the Douluo Continent that takes place once every five years. It's an honor for us to host the competition this time. I'd like to thank these representatives from over a hundred schools. Thanks to them, we've been able to witness many exciting rounds, as well as the ever-changing developments among the soul masters and soul engineers of the continent. This pleases both me and the general populace."

"The semifinals will commence in a moment. In turn, the Continental Advanced Soul Master Academy Soul Dueling Tournament will soon come to an end. There will be no more lot drawing after the top four teams draw their lots, thus I will personally supervise the lot drawing this time. I hope that Shrek Academy, the Sun Moon Imperial Soul Engineering Academy, the Imperial Profound Academy, and our own Star Luo National Academy will put on a grand, exciting show for all of us."

"I know that everyone is dying to watch the show. I'm very excited too. Without further ado, let the drawing commence. I wish to partake in the joy with my people, and I hope that our Star Luo Empire will prosper for generations to come."

The Star Luo Emperor's words were majestic, humorous, and not too long. The moment he finished, the crowd began to cheer once more.

Among the four old men who'd gone up with him, the front-left one took two steps forward as he faced the resting area and said in a low voice, "Will the team leaders of the four teams come up to the stage now and draw lots."

A hard-to-describe powerful energy could be felt from the body of this old man. The power that this energy held made everyone in the Star Luo Plaza feel as if the sky had darkened.

Chapter 108: The Princess

The Star Luo Emperor smiled faintly and said, "In order to ensure the safety of the semi-finalists and the finalists, I have decided that the Empire's Protector Douluo will be the judges for the subsequent rounds, and be hosts to the contest. Senior Huang Jinxu shall be the host for today's balloting and the first round. His title is the Heavenfiend Lonestar."

The emperor's introduction stirred up a wave of applause from the citizens in the audience. However, the participating teams were all slightly taken aback.

Wang Yan was surprised and remarked, "Huang Jinxu, the Heavenfiend Douluo. I thought he was long dead – who knew that he joined the Star Luo Empire instead."

Ma Xiaotao was already walking up to the stage. Huo Yuhao whispered to Bei Bei beside him, "Senior brother, what's the deal with this Heavenfiend Douluo? Is he very powerful?"

Bei Bei nodded his head without hesitation and said, "Yes, very powerful. The Star Luo Empire is trying to assert their dominance and flaunt their national strength. The Heavenfiend Douluo's martial soul is extremely special – he uses the stars in the skies above as his own martial soul. Legend has it that there was a star that was especially bright on the day he was born. His martial soul was automatically awakened after his birth. On the same night, his mother died from losing too much blood, and his father passed away when he was eight years old. After this, his friends also died one by one. It was later discovered that his martial soul was the Heavenfiend Lonestar that targeted his family and friends. Because of this, he is destined to be alone for the rest of his life."

Huo Yuhao's mouth hung open in shock. "There can be martial souls like this?"

Bei Bei smiled and replied, "Soul masters can have any kind of martial soul; what isn't possible? This elder's Heavenfiend Lonestar martial soul caused him to lose his family, but at the same time, it gave him great power. It's been claimed that he cultivated without a master, and that everything he knows is self-taught. He has continued his journey alone over the years, and eventually attained the title of Heavenfiend. He's around sixty years old this year, and he is around Rank 91 or 92. However, it's been said that star power of the Heavenfiend Lonestar enables him to hold his own against a Rank 95 Transcendent Douluo."

"He has had to rely on himself for everything, since he lost all his family and friends at a very young age. Perhaps this explains why the Heavenfiend Douluo is a very capricious person with a fickle nature, becoming extremely cruel and brutal at times. However, rumor has it that he picked a fight with several powerful sects some time ago, and they chased him down like a dog."

Just as Bei Bei was introducing the Heavenfiend Douluo's background to Huo Yuhao, the respective team leaders of the final four teams arrived on stage.

Ma Xiaotao represented Shrek Academy, while Ma Rulong represented the Sun Moon Imperial Soul Engineering Academy. The team leader of the Imperial Mystical Academy was a youth with broad shoulders and an average build; he had a calm disposition, and looked as firm as a rock. The representative from the Star Luo National Academy was a young girl. A female team leader was a rare sight. Huo Yuhao and the others from Shrek Academy had seen this girl before – she was the chief auctioneer from the Star Luo Auction, Princess Jiu Jiu.

It wasn't just the company from Shrek Academy who were astonished. The participants from the Sun Moon Imperial Soul Engineering Academy were equally surprised as their eyes widened – they had also been there during the top-ranked auction!

The Star Luo National Academy's uniform was a pale-yellow warrior robe. The princess was a lot different compared to her dignified and elegant look during the auction that day. Donning a warrior robe changed her aura, and now she seemed to emanate a rippling heroic spirit. Her flowing blonde hair was tied up in a ponytail, and she wore a faint smile on her pretty face. The yellow warrior robe was tailored to her body, and it brought out the distinct features of her perfect and alluring figure.

Even though Ma Xiaotao's aura wasn't inferior to hers- in fact, Ma Xiaotao's figure was even slightly better- there was still a feeling that she was outdone by this princess on the whole.

Ma Rulong only glanced at the princess once, and his eyes betrayed a tinge of astonishment before he turned his gaze elsewhere. The team leader from Imperial Mystical Academy stared at Jiu Jiu for a long time before he shifted his eyes away.

Wang Yan furrowed his brows as he watched the princess on stage. She hadn't appeared in the Star Luo National Academy's lineup before today. However, according to what he knew, the Star Luo National Academy's reserve team had a single vacancy.

Whether it was him or the other three academies, nobody knew anything regarding this princess.

Suddenly, Wang Yan's eyes flickered as a trace of bewilderment flowed out from within. "I remember now. Yueheng, the Star Luo royal family's martial souls should be..."

Dai Yueheng arrived next to Wang Yan and nodded. "Your guess is correct, Teacher Wang. My father has evaluated the emperor's martial soul before, but he only said a few words – enigmatic and impossible to predict. My father also said that the emperor is the most talented and prodigious individual in the past three hundred years. However, I have never heard of the princess..."

Wang Yan took a deep breath and said, "Let's watch the lots first."

The four representatives from the final four academies were already on stage, and the lot drawing had begun.

The four team leaders arrived before the Star Luo Emperor under the watchful eyes of four Titled Douluos. The Star Luo Emperor smiled and said, "It's a pleasure to meet such outstanding youths such as yourselves. Before the competition begins, I'd like to remind all of you that friendship takes priority over anything. I hope you can finish the competition with that in mind. I will toss four inscribed balls after this, and you guys will vie for them at the same time. Are you ready?"

Ma Xiaotao narrowed her eyes slightly as she stole a glance at Princess Jiu Jiu beside her. "Ready."

Princess Jiu Jiu smiled and nodded her head as Ma Rulong and the Imperial Mystical Academy's team leader tilted their heads in response as well.

"Pay attention." The Star Luo Emperor squinted his eyes. Immediately after – and nobody saw how he did it – the four golden balls were tossed into the air at the same time.

Ma Xiaotao was already lying in wait. She shot into the air the moment the Star Luo Emperor made his move. Releasing her martial soul and using soul skills wouldn't affect her speed at such a short distance. Her choice was the same as Ma Rulong and Imperial Mystical Academy's team leader, as all of them leapt into the air towards the four golden balls in the sky as fast as they could.

Princess Jiu Jiu was the only one that didn't move an inch – she just stood there with a grin on her face.

Ma Xiaotao lived up to her status as Shrek Academy's team leader. One shouldn't underestimate her just because she was a girl– her enchanting figure was like a spring as she shot up into the air. She caught the tiny ball in an instant before she drifted back down. As she was descending, the Imperial Mystical Academy's team leader and Ma Rulong caught theirs respectively, while Princess Jiu Jiu casually reached out to catch the last remaining golden ball as it dropped down.

A faint smile appeared on her face. She glanced at the tiny ball in her hands. Even though she was the last one to catch the ball, she was the first to report.

"One."

Ma Rulong said, "Two."

Ma Xiaotao stared straight at Princess Jiu Jiu's face. "One."

Even though the Imperial Mystical Academy had yet to report their number, the results of the ballot were decided. Shrek Academy would face off against the Star Luo National Academy today, while the Sun Moon Imperial Soul Engineering Academy would go against the Imperial Mystical Academy.

After the Star Luo Emperor personally checked the lot numbers, he announced the results to the audience. The audience roared with a mix of excitement and surprise the moment they heard their home team was up against Shrek Academy.

On the surface, it appeared as if Ma Xiaotao drew the better number for Shrek Academy. According to Wang Yan's analysis the previous day, the team from Star Luo National Academy was the weakest one amongst the final four teams.

The semifinals and the finals followed the same rules as the previous elimination rounds and were carried out over two days, with both group elimination rounds and single elimination rounds. The only difference was that both rounds had to be won before they could advance. If both parties won one round each, the format would be changed to a 2-2-3 round. This meant that winning the group battle no longer gave a team any advantage.

While the semi-finals were held throughout the course of a day with breaks in the middle, the finals' group elimination, single elimination and 2-2-3 rounds were to be completed in one go. In the end, it wouldn't just be a battle of strength – it would become a battle of attrition, endurance and determination.

The Star Luo Emperor smiled and said, "I hope all four teams will give their best in the subsequent rounds of the competition. The balloting has been concluded, so make your preparations. Shrek Academy and the Star Luo National Academy will start off today's group battles, and the second match will be between the Sun Moon Imperial Soul Engineering Academy and the Imperial Mystical Academy."

Ma Xiaotao returned to the resting area. Wang Yan was the first to step up as he lowered his voice and said, "Xiaotao – what do you feel about the princess from the Star Luo Empire?"

Ma Xiaotao shook her head and replied, "I can't see through her. She's very complicated. I had hoped to gauge her mastery through her physical strength during the lot drawing, but she didn't move at all. She didn't activate any soul power either, and there was no way I could discern her abilities. Yuhao, try using Spiritual Detection."

Huo Yuhao's eyebrows creased as he said, "I've already tried. However, the princess seems to be carrying some sort of special item. When my Spiritual Detection landed on her body, there was a mysterious layer that blocked me. I couldn't detect her soul power's circulation or predict her actions. My Spiritual Detection is also affected when the gap in mastery is too great."

At this point, everybody circled around as the semi-finals were about to begin. There was a sudden and unforeseen change in circumstances with their opponents, and this wasn't good news at all for Shrek Academy. They weren't even all from the official team.

Wang Yan's expression was solemn as he said, "We will follow the original plan. Don't think too much about this, and trust your own abilities. Ma Xiaotao and Yueheng will anchor the single elimination rounds. Even if Princess Jiu Jiu is a powerful Soul Emperor, we must not let our self-confidence fall. Since this is the case, winning the group battle is a must. I will announce the order of battle for the group elimination round."

"Ma Xiaotao, Dai Yueheng, Ling Luochen, Bei Bei, Xu Sanshi, Huo Yuhao, and Wang Dong. The seven of you will start the battle. We can't let anything go wrong in the group battle. I have a feeling that Star Luo National Academy will have some sort of advantage in the 2-2-3 battle. If we lose the group battle, the competition may slip out of our control."

Everybody nodded their heads as He Caitou and Jiang Nannan exchanged a look. They both saw the surprise in each other's eyes; they had assumed that they would be part of the lineup for the group battle. He Caitou's battle prowess with his soul tools was already proven in the previous rounds, while Jiang Nannan's close-combat abilities were incredible as well. Even Soul Kings would find it hard to fight her if they let her get close. However, Wang Yan choosing Huo Yuhao and Wang Dong to fight in this crucial group battle was unexpected for everyone.

Wang Yan stepped in front of Huo Yuhao and lowered his voice. "It's fine if you don't fight, but the moment you make a move, you have to be confident of victory. I trust you know what I'm trying to say."

"Yes." Huo Yuhao nodded curtly.

Wang Yan took a deep breath as he reached out his right hand, palm face down. "I've said this before, kids. You guys have already exceeded all expectations, and fought in all the previous rounds successfully. Whether our glory will continue today in today's battle is entirely up to you. I have done all I can as the teacher in charge. Now, I can only pray for everyone from the side of the stage. You guys will be the

heroes of Shrek regardless of whether we win or lose. Do watch out for Princess Jiu Jiu— if I'm not wrong, her martial soul should be the Starcrown."

Hand after hand was stacked on top of Wang Yan's, one after another. Ma Xiaotao was the last to extend her right hand. She glanced at Wang Yan with a serious look and said, "Teacher Wang Yan, I know you are trying to bolster our fighting spirit. Don't worry— as members of Shrek Academy, our determination to guard our academy's glory is no less than the others. Even if we have to use our lives to fuel the flames of Shrek's glory, we will never let it burn out."

"To victory!" Everybody roared out in unison. The flames of their fighting spirits erupted in an instant.

Compared to Shrek Academy's energetic aura, the Star Luo National Academy appeared to be a lot quieter and calmer. The participants of this round stepped up one after another. Princess Jiu Jiu, who was standing at the forefront, glanced at Shrek Academy casually. The first person that she searched for wasn't Shrek's team leader, Ma Xiaotao. Instead, she was looking for Huo Yuhao.

Huo Yuhao was glancing over towards their camp at the same time, and their eyes met at that very instant. Huo Yuhao was slightly taken aback as he realized, to his astonishment, that the dignified princess' eyes betrayed a provocative undertone.

"Why is she trying to provoke me? I don't think I'll be the one fighting her."

Huo Yuhao was a little baffled. His eyes squinted a little as they sparkled with a green light. The two parties may have been a world apart in mastery, but that single flash of light in his eyes sent a chill up Princess Jiu Jiu's spine.

"Participants from Shrek Academy, Star Luo National Academy, please step on stage." The judge responsible for today's group battle was the Heavenfiend Douluo from before.

The Star Luo Emperor had already returned to the imperial palace under the protection of the other three Titled Douluo, and was watching the stage from the top of the city wall.

Ma Xiaotao walked in front with Dai Yueheng, Ling Luochen, Bei Bei, Xu Sanshi, Huo Yuhao and Wang Dong following closely behind as both parties stepped onto the competition stage at the same time.

The semi-finals had yet to begin, but the sharp smell of fireworks drifted through the air as both parties eyed each other.

Princess Jiu Jiu's eyes changed as well. Her originally bright blue eyes began to emanate a pale golden radiance. Her gaze felt as vast as the ocean.

On the other side, Ma Xiaotao's eyes were like two raging flames, and the scorching aura that she let off gave her opponents an intense pressure.

The Heavenfiend Douluo's swept his eyes across Ma Xiaotao's body, and betrayed a single trace of astonishment before his expression quickly returned to normal. His face was cold as he said, "Step back. Before I announce the beginning of the contest, nobody is allowed to release their martial souls."

Both parties stepped up to their respective corners, but their eyes had never left each other since the start. While retreating, both teams' formations swiftly changed.

Shrek Academy took up a different formation than the one they had always used. Dai Yueheng and Ma Xiaotao took the lead as per usual, but Xu Sanshi stood behind them guarding Ling Luo Chen, who stood behind him. Huo Yuhao and Wang Dong stood side by side behind Ling Luo Chen. Bei Bei was up at the front beside Ma Xiaotao and Dai Yueheng, establishing a three-pronged powerful attack force.

The Star Luo National Academy also had a unique formation. Six people formed a triangle, with one person in front and two members behind them, followed by three more members standing behind them. Princess Jiu Jiu stood behind this triangle formed by these six people. The golden flashes in her eyes grew stronger, as if she were the general of the company.

Xu Sanshi watched the princess with a grin. His eyes darted back and forth from her as a mischievous smile snuck up on his face.

People were already familiar with the powerful effects of his Mysterious Underworld Displacement. Still, being familiar didn't mean that they wouldn't fall for the same trick— just like when Shrek Academy faced off against Justsky Academy in the previous round.

Everybody thought that Shrek Academy wouldn't use the same tactics again. However, the moment he stepped up, Xu Sanshi played the same trick without hesitation, and forcefully swapped Ye Wuqing into his own formation.

Ye Wuqing wasn't given a chance at all before he was trampled over. Not every participating party had an expensive disposable soul tool like the Invincible Barrier. Xu Sanshi, that indecent fellow, triggered the Mysterious Underworld Quake after swapping with his opponent to slow the others down. He had then leapt off the stage before his opponents could surround him.

Justsky Academy didn't stand a chance without Ye Wuqing, and the remainder of the contest became a walk in the park.

Princess Jiu Jiu's brows creased as she watched the eager look on Xu Sanshi's face. It was clear that she was wary of soul skills that were hard to handle like the Mysterious Netherworld Displacement.

"Begin." Just as both parties were closely observing each other, the Heavenfiend Douluo announced the start of the competition as a single ray of golden light shot across the center of the stage. In just a split second, the powerful Titled Douluo disappeared without a trace.

The reactions of both parties were extremely quick, and everyone released their martial souls at the first possible instant.

Huo Yuhao unleashed his Spiritual Detection at once, and cast his gaze towards Princess Jiu Jiu. He was very curious— what was her martial soul, exactly? Wang Yan didn't have enough time to explain it to them in detail, and all he said was that the Princess was an auxiliary-type battle soul master.

"Doesn't that mean that she's a tool soul master?" Huo Yuhao already had his doubts back then, but he didn't have time to think too much before he had to get on stage.

A single ray of golden light lit up on Princess Jiu Jiu's forehead. It was a golden, diamond-shaped jewel. Huo Yuhao immediately thought about his Eye of Life the moment he noticed the position of that jewel — wasn't it oddly similar to the position of his Eye of Life?

However, Princess Jiu Jiu didn't have a third eye. The golden diamond-shaped jewel started to radiate brilliant golden light the moment it appeared before proceeding to leave her forehead and drift upwards with rays of golden light encircling it. A magnificent crown glimmered above her head just like that before it descended and landed gently on her head.

This crown seemed to have been formed by countless stars, with all the stars shimmering with a golden hue. With the diamond-shaped stone at the front of the formation, the stars swiftly retreated as eighteen relatively bigger stars on the crown flew up to form an exquisite tip.

The Starcrown. This was Princess Jiu Jiu's martial soul.

Two yellow, two purple and single black soul ring appeared around the princess' body— she was a powerful Soul King.

The six others in front of Princess Jiu Jiu were all the same opponents that Wang Yan had previously explained to the members of Shrek Academy in detail. They released their martial souls one by one; they too were all Soul Kings.

Surprisingly, the lineup from the Star Luo National Academy was comprised entirely of Soul Kings.

Xu Sanshi's martial soul was already unleashed. As if he was afraid of others not knowing, he roared into the sky, "Mysterious Netherworld Displacement!"

The Shield of the Xuanwu Turtle erupted with black light – and the rays of light were pointing right toward Princess Jiu Jiu.

At this moment, the Starcrown on Princess Jiu Jiu's head burst with light as well. The third ring on her body lit up as a flaring pillar of golden light shot up into the sky.

The inner regions of the golden pillar of light was filled with a golden-colored mist with specks of starlight spiraling up towards the sky— it was mystical sight. It was impossible to fathom what the effects of this soul skill were from its appearance.

The Shrek Academy team charged forward at once. Ma Xiaotao took the lead, while Dai Yueheng and Bei Bei followed closely behind. Ling Luochen's Icy Staff was once again in her hands as she raised it high over her head. A dense and chilly mist permeated their surroundings and enveloped Xu Sanshi, Huo Yuhao, Wang Dong and herself. This patch of icy mist began to spread towards both ends of the arena with dazzling speed, and formed a gigantic shroud that slowly clamped down on their opponents. All four of them were completely hidden within this icy mist.

This was Ling Luochen's fourth soul skill, and she had never used it before until now.

"Just kidding." Before he was swallowed by the icy mist, Xu Sanshi waved at the princess, as he never intended to use the Mysterious Underworld Displacement.

Princess Jiu Jiu's face froze as she shot a cold look at him. The golden light mist that was rising into the air started to spread in all directions and blanketed her six teammates.

In the next instant, every member from the Star Luo National Academy was covered with a layer of golden light. The golden radiance around Princess Jiu Jiu's body hadn't dissipated yet as starlight continued to surge out of her Starcrown.

Ma Xiaotao was lightning fast, and shot to the front of her opponents' formation in the blink of an eye. Blazing phoenix flames surged into the sky as she extended her enormous phoenix wings and blasted her Phoenix Fireline towards the Soul King right in front of her.

This Soul King's name was Huang Heyun. The fact that he was standing in front naturally meant that he was an assault-type soul master. Before Princess Jiu Jiu's appearance, he had been the Star Luo National Academy's team leader.

Huang Heyun's martial soul was also extremely fearsome. Following the release of his martial soul, dense black energy started swirling around his body, and his body suddenly erupted in size. His muscles grew and became more defined, while a "King" character appeared on his head, similar to Dai Yueheng. The difference between the two of them was that the hair all over Huang Heyun's body wasn't white or a yellow-chalk color. Instead, it was black, just pure black.

His martial soul was the Darkdemon Tiger. It was a rare darkness-type martial soul, but he wasn't an evil soul master. The fearsome power of darkness imbued him with natural prowess that was not much inferior to Dai Yueheng's White Tiger.

At this moment, a mist of golden light diffused from behind his back, fusing together with his black soul power. The light didn't clash with the darkness – instead, it painted his soul power a dull golden hue that flickered with specs of starlight, causing his body to no longer be just pure black. It was peculiar.

Huang Heyun howled into the sky as he faced Ma Xiaotao's Phoenix Fireline. He rushed forward without hesitation and punched out with his fist. His first soul ring radiated with yellow light, and a dull-golden arc of light with a diameter of over one meter instantly burst out into the sky.

Sparks crackled and flew, but the Phoenix Fireline was surprisingly not able to pierce even a single inch through that arc of light before it was stopped in its tracks. It was the Darkdemon Tiger's first soul skill – Aphotic Darkwave.

Ma Xiaotao was still a little bewildered by what had just taken place before the Aphotic Darkwave, which now flared with a fiery red color due to the Phoenix Fireline, arrived before her.

Even though the Phoenix Fireline under the Soaring Phoenix's amplification was only Ma Xiaotao's first soul skill, she was a powerful Soul Emperor with extremely solid foundations. How could her opponent even compare to her? Nonetheless, her opponent still managed to fend off her Phoenix Fireline with just his own first soul skill.

However, the Aphotic Darkwave was right before her eyes, and she no longer had time to contemplate. Ma Xiaotao held out her right palm out against the Aphotic Darkwave, and it shattered into pieces in an instant with a "puff" sound. Ma Xiaotao's right hand flared with raging flames once more as abundant phoenix flames poured out and surged towards her opponent – this was her second soul skill, the Phoenix Baptism.

Faced with Ma Xiaotao's ferocious onslaught, Huang Heyun made a retreating motion as his body appeared to sit down. His third soul ring lit up, and his soul power, which sparkled with dull-golden starlight, accompanied a bright tiger roar as it surged out as well and transformed into the form of a tiger while it crashed towards Ma Xiaotao's phoenix flames.

This was the thousand-year soul skill of his third soul ring– the Demontiger’s Heavenshock.

Ma Xiaotao’s sensations were much more acute as they clashed once more at close quarters. She discovered that when her opponent’s soul skills collided with her phoenix flames, the golden starlight in her opponent’s soul skills would break out first. Those tiny specks of starlight were like miniature bombs that continuously detonated inside her phoenix flames, and these unassuming explosiveness actually grinded down Ma Xiaotao’s offensive power. The full force of Huang Heyun’s soul skills clashed with Ma Xiaotao’s phoenix flames only after the dampening of the golden starlight.

This shocking realization caused Ma Xiaotao to cast an astonished look at Princess Jiu Jiu behind her opponent. What kind of martial soul was that? She could actually provide such powerful group auxiliary support for her entire team. This rivalled the effects of even the Seven Treasures Glazed Pagoda, which was widely claimed to be the most powerful auxiliary-type martial soul.

Ma Xiaotao concentrated as she searched her mind for a suitable answer to the Starcrown. As a student from Shrek Academy, Ma Xiaotao’s knowledge was especially abundant, and she finally recalled what the Starcrown martial soul was.

This martial soul was simply too rare in the continent, even though it had existed for a long time. The number of times it had appeared in the past thousand years was just too few, and thus it was forgotten. Still, one of the lessons she had once taken in Shrek Academy had introduced the Starcrown before. Huo Yuhao, Wang Dong and Xiao Xiao had spent too little time in the academy, and had yet to reach that level.

The Starcrown martial soul used to be held in high regard within the Douluo Continent. It had been around since more than ten thousand years ago, and could be considered the most ancient amongst the top-ranked martial souls.

Over ten thousand years ago, the entity that handled soul masters was an organization called the Soul Hall. Back then, the Star Luo Empire and the Heaven Dou Empire, the only two most powerful empires at that time, had to pander to them. The Soul Hall once possessed six especially powerful martial souls, and each one of them respectively represented the most powerful entities in the world at that time. One of them was the Starcrown.

The Heaven Dou Empire and the Star Luo Empire had three seats each back then, and the Star Luo Empire’s royal family was still the White Tiger Duke’s bloodline. However, the White Tiger martial soul wasn’t one of the six great martial souls. Instead, the Starcrown martial soul was the strongest of the three seats that belonged to the Star Luo Empire.

The only problem was that the Starcrown bloodline’s inheritance was thin, and thus it was rarely seen on the continent. It was similar to a hidden sect. Over four thousand years ago, the Sun Moon Continent collided and merged with the Douluo Continent, eventually instigating the conflict between the Sun Moon Empire and the empires that resided within the Douluo Continent. The Star Luo Empire took the lead and absorbed most of the external pressure, causing the White Tiger Duke bloodline and the royal family to almost be driven to extinction. During this period, the Starcrown sect stepped out of reclusion to unify and lead the Star Luo Empire’s armies in a valiant effort against their enemies. After intense and fearsome battles did they manage to defend the Star Luo Empire and consolidate the Star Luo Empire’s position as the leading sovereignty amongst the three nations within the original Douluo Continent. The

White Tiger Duke bloodline waned, and was left with a meager lineage. The position of the royal family was passed on, and the Starcrown bloodline took over as the new leaders of Star Luo Empire. Of course, the new royalty did not choose to employ any underhanded tactics against the White Tiger Duke bloodline. They won over their citizens' hearts and minds and succeeded the throne via proper means, which caused the empire to flourish for over a thousand years.

Even if the Dou Ling Empire and the Heavenly Soul Empire formed a coalition, their combined power would still not be enough to compare with the Star Luo Empire.

The Starcrown bloodline managed to turn the tide all those years ago, and this went to show their extraordinary power. In terms of pure auxiliary capabilities, the Starcrown was probably inferior to the Seven Treasures Glazed Pagoda. However, the Starcrown wasn't just about support— it possessed incredible fighting power, and even its auxiliary capabilities leaned entirely towards boosting fighting power. This was vastly different from the Seven Treasures Glazed Pagoda's overall capabilities. It could be said that the Starcrown martial soul existed purely for battle.

Ever since the Starcrown sect took over Star Luo Empire, they became low-profile once more. The passage of a few thousand years caused people to forget that the Star Luo Empire's royal family was one of the more powerful soul master sects in the past, and the Starcrown martial soul was never seen again in the outside world for many years.

Even though Ma Xiaotao was recalling this information regarding the Starcrown martial soul, her movements did not slow down at all. Her opponent's Demontiger's Heavenshock that was amplified by Princess Jiu Jiu's third soul skill, the Starglory Spell, ultimately broke through the Phoenix Baptism's flames and reached Ma Xiaotao.

Ma Xiaotao grunted coldly. Instead of retreating, she chose to advance, and rushed toward the Darkdemon Tiger's light shadow. She roared into the sky as she extended her fiery wings. In this moment, Ma Xiaotao's entire being appeared to transform into a real fire phoenix. The phoenix flames' searing red colors were raised to a white incandescence, and the instant outburst of heat caused even Dai Yueheng and Bei Bei to distance themselves from Ma Xiaotao. The blistering flames scorched the Darkdemon Tiger's light shadow in an instant. Ma Xiaotao's body flashed once more, and she closed in on her opponent while launching another stream of Phoenix Fireline. This time, the phoenix flames had the same white incandescent hue.

Normally, she wouldn't dare to raise her phoenix flames' powers to such a level like she did just now. The reason for that was because unleashing the phoenix flames like this made her highly susceptible to a backlash from the evil fire within her body. If she didn't handle it correctly, she had a high chance of losing her mind again.

Ma Xiaotao wasn't afraid this time, as she had an Ultimate Ice martial soul master beside her. With Huo Yuhao around, she was no longer fearful of suffering the pain from the evil fire's backlash. In fact, she hadn't had any problems at all since the last time she had received help.

The reason why Ma Xiaotao could become a team leader and repress Dai Yueheng was entirely due to her prowess. How could Shrek Academy's teachers not know that she possessed a very impatient and short-tempered nature? However, she was one of the most powerful ones amongst her age. Dai

Yueheng was actually inferior to her by an entire class, and Ma Xiaotao could only be described as terrifying when she was in full eruption mode.

Wang Yan had been riling their fighting spirit over the past few days. Even though she didn't express it, how could she not be affected? All the energy, vigor, and overflowing belligerence that she had been suppressing were on full display today as she faced off against a powerful opponent.

Huang Heyun was shocked as the sweltering flames blazed before him. He discovered, to his intense fear, that he seemed to be completely unable to defend himself. The white-hot phoenix flames surrounded him, and all the air within a few meters of him was completely distorted. The sky-high temperature of the white circle of fire triggered and detonated the Starglory Spell's energy in the sky, perfectly blocking off the Starglory Spell's effects. This meant that the Starglory Spell was no longer able to provide support for him.

Just as Huang Heyun was in an incredibly dangerous situation, he felt the pressure lift from his body as Ma Xiaotao's white-hot flames started to tilt towards the side before they began to drift up into the sky.

A girl appeared not far behind Huang Heyun. Her looks were average, and she looked like a simple and normal girl. She had long dark-purple hair behind her back, and had freckles on her face. Her most defining feature was her eyes— it seemed as if her eyes were blazing with fire. All five of her soul rings were undulating on her body as her right hand reached out toward Ma Xiaotao's phoenix flames in the distance. She was the one that had drawn Ma Xiaotao's Phoenix Fireline away.

Fire control type. An explanation instantly rang out in Ma Xiaotao's head.

Wang Yan had reminded Shrek Academy's students of this purple-haired young girl specifically. Before Princess Jiu Jiu appeared in the Star Luo National Academy's team, the two individuals that Wang Yan was most wary of were two control-type soul masters.

Chapter 109: The Absolute Defense and the Star Protection

Wang Yan referred to them as the Windfire Duo. They both were female soul masters with elemental martial souls: one was fire-type while the other was wind-type.

At this moment, Yi Chen, the rank 51 fire control-type Soul King, pressed her right hand down towards Ma Xiaotao. A blazing circle of light instantly appeared below Ma Xiaotao's feet, generating an intense vacuum underneath her. Ma Xiaotao suddenly felt her phoenix flames draining out from below her with unstoppable momentum; they were being frantically absorbed by the red circle of light.

The weaknesses of Huo Yuhao's Spiritual Detection Sharing started to show at this point. The Starglory Spell unleashed by Princess Jiu Jiu's Star Crown interfered with Huo Yuhao's Spiritual Detection, rendering him to be unable to support his teammates. Otherwise, how could Ma Xiaotao's battle be so passive?

Huo Yuhao was despondent. Princess Jiu Jiu's Star Crown seemed to counter his Spirit Eyes. Of course, he wouldn't have been afraid if they were both at the same level of mastery. However, his level of mastery was greatly inferior at the moment, so the gap in power was simply too great for him to overcome. Furthermore, this was the case even after Huo Yuhao's spiritual sea received a considerable boost— all this served to prove the power of the Star Crown martial soul.

While Ma Xiaotao was being held back by Huang Heyun and Yi Chen, the battle had simultaneously begun on the other side of the arena.

Dai Yueheng was faced with a tall, lanky youth. His martial soul was a lion – the Netherworld Crazy Lion. He was the second-ranked assault-type Soul King from the Star Luo camp, and his name was Dugu Shangshan.

The Netherworld Crazy Lion martial soul gave Dai Yueheng a hard time as it made him unable to fully unleash his strength. Once the Netherworld Crazy Lion was attached to his body, Dugu Shangshan let off an illusory feeling. While Dai Yueheng's White Tiger martial soul was powerful, his forte was physical assault. Faced with an opponent that was hard to hit with physical attacks, much of his strength was being negated. With the support of the Starglory Spell, Dugu Shangshan was able to hold off Dai Yueheng.

It would have been a lot easier for Dai Yueheng if he was against just the Netherworld Crazy Lion Soul King; he would even probably win if he put in a little more effort. The problem was that there was another control-type battle Soul King behind him – the person that represented Wind in the Windfire Duo.

Just as Dai Yueheng unleashed his White Tiger's Vajra Transformation, he felt his body suddenly freeze in place as a green circle of light rose up from beneath his feet. The green circle of light instantly transformed into a miniature tornado that trapped him within. Even though it didn't knock him off his feet and throw him around, his subsequent assault was countered just like that.

The two Soul Emperors were the most powerful strike force on the Shrek Academy's team, but they were forcibly held back by the combined efforts of four Soul Kings from the Star Luo National Academy with the support of the Starglory Spell.

Bei Bei was also being obstructed. The opponent he was facing was an agility-type Soul King whose speed was something that Bei Bei had never encountered before.

He hadn't been able to see his opponent clearly since the beginning of the battle. If Ma Xiaotao hadn't been so close, his opponent wouldn't have dared to defend against the attack. Furthermore, Huo Yuhao wasn't able to properly utilize his Spiritual Detection Sharing. If Huo Yuhao's Spiritual Detection was directed towards him, he would probably be in deep trouble.

In the eyes of the audience, Bei Bei appeared to be surrounded by a bolt of lightning that flickered incessantly. This bolt of lightning was yellow, which was in stark contrast to bluish-purple lighting on his body. Every time the yellow bolt of lightning charged over, it erupted with a ferocious assault. Bei Bei seemed a little hard-pressed as he tried his best to defend. Bei Bei was only able to barely hold on with the Blue Tyrant Lightning Dragon's immense power.

His opponent was the only agility-type soul master in the Star Lou National Academy's team. His name was Chen Xiaojie who possessed the Lightning Warfalcon martial soul. When Wang Yan was evaluating this Soul King, he had described him with just a few words – tough and annoying to handle.

Not only was the Lightning Warfalcon extremely fast, it also possessed powerful offensive capabilities. A lapse in concentration was simply not allowed when engaging this fellow in battle. Bei Bei already had

more than ten wounds on his body by this time. Even though they weren't serious, the wounds continually weakened his fighting strength.

Princess Jiu Jiu's eyes did not linger at the battle occurring before her. Instead, her eyes were directed at the thick white mist that was swiftly rolling towards them.

The current situation was that the Star Luo National Academy used five people to hold back three assault-type soul masters from Shrek Academy's lineup. In reality, they weren't really at a disadvantage, as one could say that Ma Xiaotao, Dai Yueheng and Bei Bei made up seventy percent of Shrek Academy's fighting strength.

Both parties had yet to give their all as the battle continued to unfold. The most frightening aspect of group battles was the sudden appearance of harmonious teamwork. With such team fights, either party would be able to tip the scale and emerge victorious with a single eruption of explosive power.

Princess Jiu Jiu squinted her eyes a little as she gradually pointed her right hand into the sky. A single golden speck of light sparkled on her fingertip as the brilliance of the Star Crown above her head flickered once more. This time, a streak of golden light shot up into the sky. However, this wasn't the same light pillar as before but a thin golden thread. Her first soul ring sparkled on while she continued to maintain her third soul ring, which powered the Starglory Spell.

The ray of golden light paused as it approached the protective dome around the competition stage. Immediately afterwards, a single brilliant star appeared above Princess Jiu Jiu's head. This star wasn't big, but it exuded a vigorous radiance.

Princess Jiu Jiu closed her eyes momentarily as she pointed towards the rolling Icemist. The patch of starlight transformed into uncountable rays of light in the next moment as they surged towards the patch of Icemist.

Surprisingly, these thin streaks of light weren't impeded by the Icemist at all. They entered it with extreme ease, as they were just pure rays of light, without a trace of offensive power.

The threads of light glimmered as a vast majority of them vanished into thin air. Only four streaks of light remained as they guided Princess Jiu Jiu like a bridge. These four rays of light shimmered within the Icemist while they phased in and out of sight.

This was the Starguiding Technique, her first soul skill. She successfully located her four opponents hidden within the Icemist with the help of the star's guidance.

Within the Icemist, the four people maintained their positions. The only difference was that they were closer to the center of the competition stage than before. The patch of Icemist continued to close in from both ends towards the center of the stage as well.

Ma Xiaotao released a shrill phoenix cry into the sky as her blazing wings forcefully flapped downwards, and a streak of red light surged into the sky. The pillar of red light was took the form of a fiery phoenix as scorching phoenix flames erupted. The control spell that Yi Chen directed towards her was immediately broken as the Darkdemon Tiger Soul King, Huang Heyun, was forcibly pushed away.

The dense Icemist riled up at this point and lunged towards the center like a tsunami. A single ray of black light flickered within, and it was targeted straight at Princess Jiu Jiu. Xu Sanshi who had been

holding back the Mysterious Netherworld Displacement for a long time, finally unleashed it. Even though he knew that it was almost impossible for him to succeed, he still had to use it. The purpose of this move was just to occupy the princess' attention.

Dai Yueheng unleashed his White Tiger's Devilgod Transformation in an instant, and pounced towards his opponent. On the other side, Bei Bei exploded with innumerable streaks of lightning and forced back the Lightning Warfalcon Soul King. Besides Huo Yuhao and Wang Dong, almost every member from Shrek Academy was erupting all around.

However, just at this moment, a faint smile appeared on Princess Jiu Jiu's face. It felt as if she had been waiting for this the whole time, as if she had been looking forward to this moment since the very beginning.

She suddenly tossed out a sphere of golden light from her hands. It wasn't a soul skill. The golden light flashed once before smashing against Ma Xiaotao's frightening phoenix flames that were soaring into the air.

The strangest of scenes happened. A layer of golden light descended from the sky and enveloped Ma Xiaotao's sixth soul skill, the Phoenix Meteor Shower, which had already been unleashed. It crashed downwards with lightning speed as it applied pressure on Ma Xiaotao herself – her most powerful soul skill was negated just like that.

Ma Xiaotao felt a stifling pressing weigh down on her from the sky. She wanted to dodge, but the patch of golden light bore down on her in an instant, and trapped her within.

There was a single sphere with a hundred and eight cross-sectional areas that sparkled with brilliant light above the layer of golden light. This sphere was about the size of a fist, and spiraled with intense speed as it flickered with blinding light. Ma Xiaotao, who was trapped inside, immediately launched a hysterical assault against the layer of light, but was only able to create ripples along its surface. Her efforts proved futile.

This sudden change shocked the entire team from Shrek Academy. They had chose to explode with the tactic that Wang Yan called the Dual Sky Of Ice And Fire. The Icemist unleashed by Huo Yuhao and Ling Luochen provided all-round control and pressure, but the move that would have claimed victory for them was Ma Xiaotao's Phoenix Meteor Shower! Who would have thought that Ma Xiaotao would be so easily locked down by their opponents?

He Caitou stood up abruptly below the competition stage. Intense disbelief filled his eyes as he said, "That... That's an absolute defense soul tool! How can that be? That Absolute Defense Barrier soul tool is at least Class 7! They actually have a Class 7 soul tool! The Absolute Defense Barrier can only be used once, but its value..."

Wang Yan's eyes were wide open as he reacted with an equal amount of surprise. He asked hurriedly, "What is the Absolute Defense Barrier?"

He Caitou answered, "It's similar to the Invincible Barrier. Once it's deployed, anybody under the Absolute Defense Barrier's seal will have to face the protection of a defense-type soul master similar to the power of a stage 8 Soul Douluo for fifteen minutes. However, this is a special soul tool that also works in reverse. The Absolute Defense Barrier has the same effects internally and externally. Even if

one wants to forcibly break out of the pearl, one has to be at least a Class 7 Soul Sage. This soul tool can only be manufactured by the Sun Moon Empire, and its formation arrays are extremely mysterious. It's impossible for us to produce anything similar. To think it would appear in this competition! It's been said that the Absolute Defense Barrier is worth several million gold soul coins. Having this item during a dangerous moments is equivalent to having another life! This is so much more powerful than the Invincible Barrier, which is only effective for three seconds. Fifteen minutes is enough to accomplish many things."

He Caitou continued, "In terms of abilities, we may be at an advantage. However, how can our financial power match up to such dominant powers like the Star Luo Empire? To them, even such an expensive soul tool is expendable."

Ma Xiaotao, the most powerful member, was trapped. This was a disaster for Shrek Academy's team.

Princess Jiu Jiu had obviously planned out her strategy well. With Ma Xiaotao out of the way, her fourth soul ring lit up. A ball of thick, intense starlight was unleashed. This time, the starlight was as bright as the sun. This ball expanded into a barrier of light, it forcefully expelling the Icemist outside. Only the seven members on her side, including Dai Yueheng, Bei Bei and the trapped Ma Xiaotao, were covered within this layer of light.

On the surface of the layer of the light barrier, 18 stars appeared and flashed with a bright glow.

Huang Heyun and Yi Chen, who were both fighting Ma Xiaotao initially, changed their target to Dai Yueheng without any hesitation. The four Soul Kings encircled him. Bei Bei continued to suffer from the relentless attacks of the Lightning Warfalcon, and he could not even ensure his own safety.

Princess Jiu Jiu appeared indifferent as she looked at the Icemist outside the layer of light, and she curled her lips up slightly. There was yet another soul master in front of her who, till this point, had not joined in the battle at all.

"Not good." Inside the Icemist, Ling Luochen's face grew solemn. She quickly forced an wave with the Icemist. However, the light barrier that flashed with starlight continued to resist the Icemist. It was unable to gain any ground. There was a flickering radiance that shone from the 18 stars. It was obvious that unless the light from all 18 stars dimmed, this light barrier would not be broken.

No one would have expected such a situation before the competition. Princess Jiu Jiu had divided the seven members of the Shrek Academy in half. Furthermore, Ling Luochen had discovered this problem far too late. Amongst her own team, those who were offensively inclined were covered by the light barrier, while everyone else left outside of it were not skilled in attacking.

Wang Dong and Huo Yuhao could mount an offense, but their cultivations were simply too weak.

The Ultimate Ice could only enhance Ling Luochen's soul skill, but not change it. Unfortunately, Ling Luochen was a control-type soul master, not an assault-type soul master. She only had the Icemist at her disposal for attacking.

On top of the city wall, the Star Luo Emperor revealed a gentle smile on his face, "To Shrek, it's not an entirely bad thing to lose. The Star Barrier of our Star Luo bloodline hasn't appeared in the continent for a very long time. I'm afraid the world of soul masters has already forgotten our powerful defense-type

soul skill that's known for being able to isolate all other elements. It's rather useful while facing off against Huo Yuhao's Ultimate Ice. My younger sister has been unconvinced by my appraisal of that little fellow because of this. When that little fellow grows up, I would really like to see the result of a fight between the Star Barrier and his Ultimate element."

At this moment, Dai Yueheng was the one who was in the most danger.

The attacking force of Star Luo Academy's Windfire duo had increased after they teamed up. Without the suppression of the phoenix flames, Yi Chen looped her hands in front of her, causing a bright flaming ring to loom over Dai Yueheng.

Dai Yueheng couldn't avoid this flaming halo. This was because the light ring first expanded to cover the entire area of the Star Barrier before it retracted towards the center.

The wind control-type Soul King, Wang Shiyang, also unleashed a similar halo of light. One red and one green light ring overlapped each other and exploded at the same time.

As the saying went, wind aided the strength of fire. The instant that the two light rings ascended, a series of howls and booms resonated in the air. With Dai Yueheng's body as the center, a huge pillar of wind and fire rose into the sky. With the power of wind supplementing it, the burning flames became extremely deadly; they were like a huge meat grinder that was wildly crushing everything within them.

After unleashing the combination of Wind and Fire, Huang Heyun, Dugu Shangshan, Yi Chen and Wang Shiyang did not exploit the opportunity to attack. Rather, they gathered together rapidly and stood in a row.

The abilities of the Shrek Academy's Soul Emperors were displayed right now. Even while Ma Xiaotao was suppressed heavily, Dai Yueheng didn't panic at all. As the pillar of Wind and Fire was unleashed, Huang Heyun and Dugu Shangshan were not able to force him back by even half a step. Instead, they caused him to become even fiercer.

As the pillar of Wind and Fire was unleashed, the immense pressure caused his hairs to curl up. However, Dai Yueheng faced the sky and released a roar. He thumped his fists against his chest, and blazing golden lights were suddenly released from his body. The character '王' on his forehead even flashed with a bright radiance. Behind him, a huge illusory figure of a white tiger flashed. Suddenly, he bent his back and slammed his fist down on the ground beneath his feet.

When this fist struck the solid competition stage, everything seemed to go still in the Star Barrier Domain. Following silence, a booming sound like thunder rang out. Debris flew and blew apart the pillar of Wind and Fire, scattering fragments in various directions.

It should be noted that the two control-type Soul Kings fought with the support of Princess Jiu Jiu's Starglory Spell. According to their original estimates, a Soul Emperor could only defend passively if the two of them teamed up together to control him. But who knew that Dai Yueheng would managed to overcome them using his tough strength and soul power. Not only did he not defend, but he used his immense strength to break apart the wind and fire elements using the earth element.

Princess Jiu Jiu focused her gaze. When the red and green light rings exploded, Dai Yueheng also lifted his head and looked in the direction of Princess Jiu Jiu.

As their gazes met, Princess Jiu Jiu's expression turned cold. Dai Yueheng's eyes flashed with a strange glint. As he bellowed, his body bent forward a little. In the next instant, he had already leapt out like lightning, and his target was Princess Jiu Jiu. It was best to go for the leader to root out the problem.

However, four figures formed a quaternity in front of her and blocked his path. Dai Yueheng couldn't see anything strange from the front, but the back of four members of the Star Luo Academy emitted dim white radiances.

The white radiances formed a dome-like shape, just like the shell on the back of a turtle. These radiances shone through the uniforms they wore.

Yi Chen, who stood the furthest back, pressed on Wang Shiyin's back. Wang Shiyin did the same towards Dugu Shangshan. Similarly, Dugu Shangshan's palms also pressed on Huang Heyun's back. Right now, they seemed like one entity now.

Huang Heyun's size seemed to have ballooned from earlier causing blood vessels squirming under the fur of the Darkdemon Tiger's Possession to be visible. As Dai Yueheng leapt forward, Huang Heyun suddenly struck his palms forward. As they struck, Huang Heyun let loose a deep growl. This growl carried an extremely concentrated aura of darkness and collided with Dai Yueheng.

"Boom——" Dai Yueheng felt as if he had collided with a sheet of iron. He was sent flying and was knocked violently against the light barrier of the Star Barrier. His organs felt as if they were on fire. As he tried to get up, he vomited fresh blood.

Impossible! This was the first thought that he had in his mind after he was sent flying.

The opponent was only a Soul King! How could his soul power be so great? Even if the opponent was a seven-ringed Soul Sage, he would still be unable to unleash such power without using his Martial Soul True Body!

Below the competition stage, Wang Yan was a little anxious. He grabbed He Caitou beside him and asked, "What, what soul tool is this?"

He Caitou laughed bitterly. "This is a rare soul tool called the Nine Transformations Soulrite. The core formation that's used to produce it requires a special metal called Chaos Silver. The greatest strength of this Nine Transformations Soulrite is that it can change soul power types. No matter what type of soul power is injected into it, the type of soul power that comes out is the most balanced chaos-type that can be absorbed by anyone of any type. Through this Nine Transformations Soulrite, soul masters can inject their soul power into one another for a short period of time. But a portion of the soul power injected into them has to be released quickly. After all, soul power beyond what a soul master can handle will lead to damage in his passageways. Furthermore, chaos-type soul power can only be used temporarily, and can't be fused with one's own soul power. I didn't expect them to use this. The Nine Transformations Soulrite is a Class 5 soul tool, and can be used by soul masters with less than seven rings. If the person it's used by is a seven-ringed Soul Sage or stronger, the core formation of the Chaos Silver can't handle the surge of soul power unless it's an extremely large Nine Transformations Soulrite."

As he struck his palms towards Dai Yueheng, Huang Heyun's face surged with a tinge of red. He shouldered the greatest pressure, as he helmed the tip of the Nine Transformations Soulrite. After this competition, he would have to rest for up to a month to heal his passageways. However, he would not

hold back here. Amplified by Princess Jiu Jiu's Starglory Spell, the combined power of 5 soul kings had hurt Dai Yueheng. However, Ma Xiaotao couldn't be restrained forever. To win, they had to end everything before Ma Xiaotao escaped, and gather the powers of all seven of them to deal with the strongest Soul Emperor.

Hence, Huang Heyun followed up with another attack immediately. A huge figure of a black tiger leapt out from his body. It was the Demontiger's Heavenshock that he had used against Ma Xiaotao before.

The difference this time was that, under the support of the frightening soul power, this illusory figure of the Darkdemon Tiger seemed like a real entity. In just a moment, it was already in front of Dai Yueheng. They were planning to incapacitate Dai Yueheng in this next strike.

The situation in the Star Barrier was very dangerous. However, what about the situation outside the Star Barrier?

When Huo Yuhao and the rest saw that Dai Yueheng was being attacked by the Windfire duo, they realized that things were going to be bad. However, they had no chance if they did not overcome the barrier of light in front of them. But, how could they have the power to do so?

Xu Sanshi really wanted to enter the state of the Xuanwu turtle. However, he couldn't just summon it at any time he wished. If Jiang Nannan was the one who was trapped, it might have been a different story. But without her, he couldn't unleash it.

Ling Luochen's Icemist constantly engulfed the entire Star Barrier, and the 18 stars above the Star Barrier were slowly dimming. But if things were dragged on at this pace, they might not get in before the seal trapping Ma Xiaotao was released.

"What do we do?" Wang Dong asked Huo Yuhao anxiously.

Huo Yuhao did not have a clue either. As the effect of his Spiritual Detection Sharing was crippled, he had fallen into a bewildered state. Hearing Wang Dong's anxious voice only increased his depression. A competition of this level was out of his control! He wanted to sweep aside this sense of helplessness, but the gap in cultivation rendered him unable to do so.

"Do you know why you are so helpless?" An old voice rang in his head clearly.

"Elder Yi." Huo Yuhao responded in his consciousness.

Electrolux answered his own question. "That's because you don't fully understand yourself. You haven't used your control to the fullest. While increasing one's cultivation is important, you will be unable to reach the top no matter how hard you cultivate if you don't understand your own capabilities. After this competition, I want you to enter closed-door cultivation. Understand that power cannot decide everything all the time. The ability to control everything that you possess, and exhibit your capabilities appropriately in different situations, that is true power. For now, act according to what I tell you."

"Yuhao, what do we do?" In Wang Dong's eyes, Huo Yuhao was entirely in a daze. This was a critical situation. Wang Dong was aware that his own abilities could not faze the light barrier. In this battle, the only chance he had was if he combined with Huo Yuhao.

Huo Yuhao's eyes brightened, and he shouted, "Senior Ling, maintain the strength of the Icemist and help to block our figures. Wang Dong, let's strike." As he said that, he turned around suddenly and opened his arms wide. He hugged Wang Dong tightly and strongly. Their spirits and soul powers combined and merged into one entity.

.....

"The strength of the opponent is derived from Star Power. What's the origin of the Star Power? It's light. No matter how they are structured internally, they are all made of light. They can be considered a high level performance of light," advised Electrolux.

.....

Within the Icemist,

Huo Yuhao's pupils emitted a dim golden glow on one side.

On the other side, Wang Dong unleashed his Radiant Butterfly Goddess, spreading his elegant wings behind his back.

Alternating shades of blue, purple and gold shone within the mist.

When the illusory figure of the huge Radiant Butterfly Goddess spread opened her wings and hugged the illusory figure of the Spirit Eyes, a dazzling purplish-golden light burst out. A glow that descended from the sky engulfed the illusory figures. A huge bluish-golden pupil directed its gaze towards the front. Blue, purple and golden light that intertwined with each other shot out from the depths of the pupil that seemed to contain a boundless world.

A radiance laced with a magical color shot straight forward, locking onto the light of the Star Barrier.

Blocked by the dense Icemist, neither the audience below the stage nor the competitors inside the Star Barrier could see what was happening. Even Princess Jiu Jiu did not have a clue as her Starguiding Technique could only sense their positions with her.

The Icemist subtly diminished. It was as if its aura of ultimacy had been lost. However, Princess Jiu Jiu's attention was entirely on Dai Yueheng at this moment as Huang Heyun's second wave of Demontiger's Heavenshock was about to strike Dai Yueheng. To her, this was the key to determine victory. She ignored the four outside the barrier. She reckoned that even though Huo Yuhao was very talented, he was unable to pose much of a threat to her.

However, Princess Jiu Jiu's expression changed the next instant.

The dim golden glow on the Star Barrier suddenly turned a bright golden color. The entire barrier actually began to emit the same radiance as the 18 stars above the barrier. Princess Jiu Jiu could only faintly see what was in front of her, only catching a short glimpse of a huge pupil briefly appearing before vanishing again. In the next moment, she discovered to her horror that her Star Barrier seemed to have been melted. Drops of golden fluid flowed down the surface of the barrier. Furthermore, the soul power that she was continuously injecting was forcefully stopped.

This was impossible. She was now feeling like Dai Yueheng had felt earlier. She had no idea how the four members outside were able to damage her Star Barrier.

However, there was nothing impossible in this world. At the moment when the Star Barrier was broken through, Dai Yueheng reacted to his opponents' assault.

Blinding white light was suddenly unleashed from his body and a huge figure of a white tiger surfaced above his head, instantly fused with his body. Dai Yueheng let out a furious roar. His first, third, fifth and sixth soul ring flashed at the same time.

His three strengthening skills, the White Tiger's Shield, the White Tiger's Vajra Transformation and the White Tiger's Devilgod Transformation were powered to their peaks with his Soul Emperor cultivation.

From his pair of almost foot-long golden tiger claws, a cold radiance was emitted. In the next instant, his body suddenly disappeared from the bright radiance that had flashed from white to gold.

A huge 'kill' character 杀 suddenly appeared out of nowhere and collided with the black tiger formed by the Demontiger's Heavenshock. Sharps streaks of piercing and splitting were heard inside of the Star Barrier. It was combined with the roars of two raging tigers that were wreaking havoc to their surroundings.

Huang Heyun and the rest were indeed very powerful, as they had combined their soul power using the Nine Transformations Soulrite. Their overall power had already reached the intermediate stage of the Soul Sage rank. In terms of soul power, Dai Yueheng, who was only a Soul Emperor, was completely suppressed.

Princess Jiu Jiu had meticulously chosen Huang Heyun to be placed at the very front. She was very familiar with Dai Yueheng's White Tiger martial soul, so she had created this strategy to specifically counter Dai Yueheng. Huang Heyun's Darkdemon Tiger was only slightly inferior to the White Tiger. However, the difference was minimal. Along with the enhancement of the Starglory Spell, this suppression of martial souls was completely removed. Under such a circumstance, the might of Dai Yueheng's White Tiger no longer had to be feared.

However, things did not always go according to plan. Princess Jiu Jiu could never predict that Huang Heyun's state of mind would experience changes during the battle, resulting in the failure of his second strike, which was supposed to be the defining blow.

The change in his state of mind was not because of Dai Yueheng, but Ma Xiaotao, who had fought him earlier.

Ma Xiaotao was just too powerful. Even after being infused with the Starglory Spell, Huang Heyun had still felt completely helpless. He was clearly aware that Ma Xiaotao was stronger than Dai Yueheng. After they defeating Dai Yueheng, their next target would be Ma Xiaotao!

Hence, Huang Heyun did not unleash his fifth soul skill to defeat Dai Yueheng according to the original plan. Instead he used his third soul skill. A thousand year soul ring skill was significant weaker than a ten thousand year soul kill. However, Dai Yueheng coughing up blood and seemed to be on the verge of falling. With his comrades supporting him, he had felt that a thousand year soul skill backed with the power of a Soul Sage was enough to finish him off. By this, he could conserve his soul power to deal with Ma Xiaotao. Using soul skills with the combined power of four people caused the toll on his body to be

rather big. The reason why they combined only four of them and not five was because no one could handle the accumulation of five individual soul powers.

Against any other person, Huang Heyun's decision would have been correct. However, Dai Yueheng was from Shrek Academy. He was a monster, and a very experienced one at that. Knowing that he had no room to escape, his potential was stimulated. In a short span of time, he managed to pin point Huang Heyun's flaw.

The result of the infusing four people's soul power into one person boosted his soul power to tremendous heights. However, there was also a drawback. This drawback was very simple: their attacks became very rigid.

While the Demontiger's Heavenshock was full of power and speed, it lacked flexibility. Dai Yueheng managed to unleash his strongest soul skill under the support of his three strengthening skills.

White Tiger's Extermination!

Using this close-combat skill allowed him to dodge the charge of the Demontiger's Heavenshock. Turning around, he managed to forcefully disperse this attack while taking six consecutive strikes from the side.

Although Dai Yueheng vomiting more blood, he took advantage of the situation and dashed towards Bei Bei in the distance.

After losing their opportunity, another drawback was revealed. The four of them lacked dexterity. With Dai Yueheng's cultivation, it was not easy for his opponent to force him to take another blow without determining his exact location.

"Idiot." Princess Jiu Jiu could not help but curse. As the saying went, "A weak teammate does more harm than a strong opponent." What added to her misery was that her Star Barrier had collapsed with a loud, booming sound.

.....

"The effect of your martial soul fusion skill, the Golden Road, is to melt and degrade. It is a combination of the light element and spiritual power. This skill of yours only fires in a straight line but will have no problems hitting on a stationary barrier. Even if the opponent's defense-type soul skill isolates other elements, all you have to do is to control the power of degradation within the Golden Road and convert it into the power to melt," said Electrolux.

.....

When the Golden Road struck the Star Barrier, Huo Yuhao could clearly feel the collision between the Golden Road and the Star Barrier.

In the past, the Golden Road had passed through everything in a straight line whenever it was shot. This was the first time it was blocked. However, the instant the bright, tri-colored radiance was blocked, it spread over the Star Barrier.

Huo Yuhao suddenly felt something in his mind being stirred. A wave of weird power passed from his forehead and guided his mind to his Golden Road. With the help of the strange power, he was able to clearly differentiate the concepts of melting and degradation.

Huo Yuhao controlled his spiritual power and converted the power of degradation into that of melting. To him, everything happened very slowly, but in reality, it all was completed in the blink of an eye.

Chapter 110.1 The Second Fusion Skill!

“What’re you waiting for? When that hard barrier softens, you have to break it.”

.....

The Golden Road ended, revealing Huo Yuhao and Wang Dong’s bodies. Huo Yuhao loosened his arms and stretched out his hands, while Wang Dong raised his right hand.

They looked at each other, and saw a reflection of their own bodies in each other’s eyes. At this moment, their souls were connected.

Huo Yuhao cupped Wang Dong’s right hand within his two palms as if he was protecting the most valuable treasure in the world. The instant his palms closed, Huo Yuhao’s hands turned ice-white. On the other hand, Wang Dong’s right hand turned a strange dark-gold. The three palms interlocked, causing a terrifying stream of air to suddenly surge from their bodies.

The originally thick icy mist quickly rose into the air like a mushroom cloud, causing an indescribable sense of awe to appear with it. At this moment, the only people who could truly feel and see what was going on were Ling Luochen and Xu Sanshi.

They were completely unable to describe how shocked they were feeling right now. The scene unfolding in front of them was just that shocking!

The instant the intense white light interweaved with the dark-gold light, Huo Yuhao and Wang Dong’s figures vanished. Right after that, a slender figure quietly appeared behind that light.

This figure looked around two or so meters tall, and it had a slender, tall figure and a head of black hair draped over its shoulders. Its gorgeous changshan seemed to have been inlaid with diamonds, causing it to emanate a resplendent light. His eyes were jade-green; it wasn’t an abstruse jade-green, but one that flickered with the light of a gem, and was filled with boundless might. In terms of appearances alone, he looked 80% similar to Huo Yuhao. Perhaps, this was simply how he would look after growing up.

The instant he appeared, the Icemist in the air started to surge towards him at an astonishing rate, making it seem as though the rivers were flowing back into the sea. Even Ling Luochen’s own soul power started to be swallowed at a rapid pace.

Ling Luochen was relatively clever, and thus she didn’t try to resist or obstruct it. On the contrary, she did all she could to release her Icemist. Although the Icemist started to rapidly vanish, Ling Luochen was able to maintain the portion of it that covered them.

This was a figure that was clearly incorporeal, yet felt very real. He extended his right hand, plunging it into the ball of light in front of him. The light suddenly solidified, and the figure suddenly vanished into

thin air right after that. The instant he disappeared, Xu Sanshi and Ling Luo Chen felt the exact same feeling in their hearts--ferocity!

In the next instant, the space in front of the Star Barrier instantaneously shattered. Then, an enormous hammer appeared.

The head of this hammer was as black as ink, but its two ends each had a sharp protrusion that was jade-green. On the other hand, its handle was fully inlaid with diamonds.

The instant it appeared, a peculiar, never-before-seen whimpering sound rang out in the air. It was as though the air itself was weeping due to its existence. The two protrusions on the head of the hammer shone with a jade-green light, and the head itself shone with a dark-gold light. The handle of the hammer also shone with an icy-white light, and the three different colors simultaneously exploded out. Right after that, the super hammer that was more than ten meters long, and whose head was more than three metres wide, turned blood-red in color.

All other traces of light seemed to have been swallowed by that blood-red light, and even the Star Barrier in front of it started to tremble.

It was as though an invisible hand was controlling this enormous hammer. In the next instant, it fell.

The only thing Princess Jiu Jiu could see was the instant that the hammer descended. She only felt like a streak of blood had flashed past the outer parts of the Star Barrier, and right after that, she suddenly felt an enormous blow strike her chest. Then, a clang that resembled the sound of shattering came from the Starcrown on her forehead.

The rhombus-shaped gem set in the center of the Starcrown actually started to show cracks. Right after that, the Star Barrier instantly collapsed.

The bloody light disappeared without a trace, and the Ice Mist on the tournament stage vanished along with it.

Huo Yuhao and Wang Dong reappeared on the tournament stage. Only, the current Wang Dong was leaning on Huo Yuhao's back, clearly having lost consciousness.

Huo Yuhao was still clear-headed as he looked forward with a burning gaze in his eyes. He pressed on his forehead with his right hand, then pointed his second, third, and fourth fingers into the air.

Immediately, a mysterious green light flashed through the sky before vanishing. The light, however, was directed towards the absolute defense barrier that trapped Ma Xiaotao.

Right after he pointed his fingers into the sky, the gaze in Huo Yuhao's eyes darkened. He seemingly indifferently looked towards the distant Princess Jiu Jiu, then fell to the ground with Wang Dong with a trace of arrogance, but even more satisfaction in his eyes.

"Ding--"

The metal ball located above the Absolute Defense Barrier suddenly let out a crisp cry, then shook violently. The originally-dazzling golden light it emitted started to darken at an astonishing rate, before vanishing within two breaths of time. The metal ball turned grey, and the barrier it generated became extremely thin.

Without the Icemist concealing the stage, the audience and the Star Luo Emperor were all able to clearly see what was going on.

Just like his younger sister, the Star Luo Emperor suddenly blurted out, 'impossible'.

From the outside, the Star Barrier looked like Princess Jiu Jiu's fourth soul skill. In reality, however, it couldn't be used easily. The Starcrown's might far exceeded that of ordinary martial souls, and even a few top-ranked ones wouldn't be able to go against it. However, its wielder needed to cultivate arduously in order to use it.

A soul master who possessed the Starcrown could only cultivate at night, as they would need to absorb star power to further increase their cultivation. Furthermore, their soul skills could only be used by consuming some of their accumulated star power. Of which, the skill that needed the most star power was the Star Barrier.

The eighteen gold stars that created the Star Barrier needed a full eighteen days to be fully absorbed. However, the strength of the Star Barrier would continuously increase following its owner's increase in cultivation; it was an extremely rare and powerful skill that wasn't affected by the quality of the soul ring that bestowed it. However, its drawbacks were extremely obvious. After using it once, its owner would need to wait eighteen days in order to use it again.

It was because of this exact reason that the Star Barrier's defensive powers were extraordinarily tyrannical. It wasn't just a defense skill, but one that allowed the current Princess Jiu Jiu to possess the power of a defense-type Soul Emperor. This was the reason why she and the Emperor were so confident in this match.

However, this tyrannical defense had been blown apart at this moment. Looking at Shrek Academy's current abilities, there was no way that any of them should've been able to achieve this feat. However, the destruction of the Star Barrier signified one thing--that was subjugation. One of Shrek Academy's four students who were previously hidden within the Icemist was able to subdue the Star Barrier.

Right after that, an even more astonishing scene occurred. A problem had suddenly come up with the powerful Class 7 soul tool that was known as the Absolute Defense Barrier.

.....

"The Soul-Devouring Carving Knife didn't disappear after I purified it. The enormous life energy contained within the Life Gold isn't something that you're able to fathom. Because of that, you now possess a completely new carving knife, one that can fully display the true might of the Life Gold. After thinking about it for a while, I've decided to name it the Life Guardian. This Life Guardian can not only bestow life energy, but also take it away. This special ability of stripping one's life energy away shall be called Judgement, and the life energy taken away will be absorbed back into the Life Guardian.

Every single person in this world possesses life energy, but Judgement only targets existences which do not guard their own life energy. If you encounter any resistance, it'll lose all of its effects. However, it can be a very powerful weapon against the soul tools from your world."

-Electrolux

.....

Ma Xiaotao wouldn't be Ma Xiaotao if she wasn't able to grasp an opportunity like this. While she was trapped by the Absolute Defense Barrier, she had continuously tried to break free of her bindings.

Just what kind of temper did Ma Xiaotao have? She was basically a can of gunpowder that would explode with just a light spark. However, she absolutely wasn't the type of person who would let anger go to her head; on the contrary, she had hidden her intelligence under her outward explosiveness.

After launching a few attacks as a test, she understood that she wouldn't be able to destroy this barrier with her level of cultivation. At the very least, she wouldn't be able to do it within a short period of time. After that, she made the smartest choice available--that was to directly sit in a cross-legged position within the Absolute Defense Barrier and sense the strength of the barrier while recovering the soul power she had drained earlier. At the same time, she continued to observe what was going on outside the barrier.

Ma Xiaotao knew that she could hasten the destruction of the Absolute Defense Barrier if she were to stake everything on one attack. However, since their opponents had used a soul tool like this to counter her, she understood that she wouldn't be able to break free like Dai Yueheng had, no matter how she attacked. Since that was the case, she chose to wait patiently.

No matter what tactics their opponents were using, the match wouldn't be over as long as she wasn't defeated. Although Shrek Academy's overall strength would suffer dramatically if they were to lose her, the team Dai Yueheng led wouldn't be defeated so easily. At the very least, their opponents would have to pay an extremely heavy price to defeat them. However, a soul tool like this would be going against the heavens if it was able to be used for a long period of time! Because of that, Ma Xiaotao would be able to take her opponents on in her peak condition after the barrier finally expired.

She had been paying close attention to everything going on on the battlefield, observing each and every one of her opponents and how much they had endured in the battle. What she was waiting for was a chance to counterattack. She had never lacked any confidence, because confidence came from strength. Ma Xiaotao knew that her team would absolutely never fall easily as long as she hadn't fallen.

Chapter 110.2: The Second Fusion Skill!

However, Ma Xiaotao didn't think that her chance would come so quickly. The instant the Star Barrier was destroyed, she was greatly astonished. She absolutely didn't think that the four of them could've destroyed the barrier that even Dai Yueheng couldn't from the outside.

At that moment, Huo Yuhao had an extremely pale face as he supported the unconscious Wang Dong. However, his eyes were just that resolute. Although there was an age difference of seven years between the two, Ma Xiaotao had no choice but to admit that she had been moved by Huo Yuhao's eyes at that moment.

This resolute, stubborn unyieldingness from a youth who wasn't even thirteen gave her an indescribable sense of shock. He was like a towering, stable mountain that made people trust him.

After that, Ma Xiaotao witnessed everything occur. The only person who could hear the crisp shattering of the Absolute Defense Barrier was her, who was trapped within it. She didn't know how Huo Yuhao had done it, but she didn't need to ponder this question at this moment.

Her silent flames once again rose into the sky, and when her phoenix once again cried out in her voice, its flames had reached an incomparably terrifying degree of heat.

It carried a few traces of demonism within it, causing Ma Xiaotao's eyes to turn dark red. Right after that, her phoenix wings once again blossomed from her back. However, the flames that appeared alongside her wings were now dark red as well!

The sonorous cry of a phoenix carried boundless tyrannical might and anger as it mightily rang out, its demonic, dark red flames covering its wings surging forth as it did so. The Absolute Defense Barrier completely shattered in its wake, making it seem as though Ma Xiaotao was just crushing the last weed in her path. At the same time, her body shot out like a cannon shell made of fire.

She didn't fly towards Princess Jiu Jiu, but the four soul masters who were grouped together.

The students from Shrek Academy had never lacked in coordination. The instant Ma Xiaotao started moving, Dai Yueheng exploded out. Although he'd been previously injured, his injuries weren't severe. His powerful physique that had been strengthened threefold had turned him into the person with the sturdiest body on the battlefield. His body was practically intertwined with Ma Xiaotao's as he rushed out, but the person he chose to run towards was Jiu Jiu.

The soul master in front of Princess Jiu Jiu who hadn't made a move since the start of the battle finally stood up. A pair of enormous wings suddenly unfurled, blocking Dai Yueheng's path like a set of wooden doors.

This was Sheng Yi, a defense-type Soul King whose martial soul was the Gigant Eagle.

Although Jiu Jiu's Starcrown was powerful, its drawbacks were very obvious. The Starcrown wouldn't give too much of a boost to its user's physique, and because of that, Princess Jiu Jiu's physique was still one of her weaknesses, even if she had an auxiliary-type soul skill strengthening her defense, or even her attacks. Because of that, she always had this defense-type Soul King protecting her, so as to avoid any accidents from occurring.

Dai Yueheng's eyes went wide as he roared, "Screw off!"

He charged tyrannically forward, then used both his palms to aggressively catch the wings which were swatting at him.

As a defense-type Soul King, Sheng Yi wasn't so easily taken care of. His second and fourth soul rings lit up simultaneously, and his enormous wings turned a metallic grey, then burst forth with a metallic light.

An ear-piercing sound caused by friction rang out, accompanied by countless sparks flying about. It seemed as though both parties were metallic weapons which were clashing with each other.

Considering how much rage Ma Xiaotao had pent up inside her, how could Dai Yueheng's mood be any better? As the eldest son of the White Tiger Duke, the arrogance he possessed in his heart was no less than hers. If it weren't for the disparity between their cultivation levels, he would've fought for the position of leader already. Although he looked much more mature than his younger brother from the outside, there wasn't too big of a difference between them on the inside.

There was no need to even mention how depressed Dai Yueheng had been feeling, seeing that he had been ganged up on and even injured by his opponents. At this moment, he was only facing a single opponent! More importantly, Princess Jiu Jiu had been heavily injured by the destruction of the Star Barrier, and her Starglory Spell had been interrupted as well. In other words, her companions couldn't provide her any assistance at all.

In a situation like this, the outcome of a battle between a Soul King and a Soul Emperor could be imagined.

If an ordinary assault-type Soul Emperor fought against a defense-type Soul King, the latter might be able to hold their ground for a few breaths. Unfortunately, Sheng Yi was facing a Soul Emperor who possessed the White Tiger, one who was not only extremely good at close-combat, but one who had an extremely tyrannical physique!

Although Sheng Yi's wings--which were as tough as metal--blocked Dai Yueheng's path, the latter shoved his sharp claws into the former's wings amidst an ear-piercing sound caused by friction.

Dai Yueheng let out another explosive roar, and a fierce, white light surged through his eyes as he unleashed the White Tiger's Extermination for the second time.

However, his attack struck only air this time. A powerful absorption force suddenly descended from the sky, causing Sheng Yi to vanish into thin air; only, his wings now had ten additional gashes on them.

This time, the Heavenfiend Douluo had made a move. There was no doubt that Sheng Yi would die if he were to take on Dai Yueheng's attack, so he had no choice but to intervene in a situation like this. While he was able to guarantee Sheng Yi's safety, this was equivalent to announcing his departure from the match.

While everything over at Dai Yueheng's side went smoothly, Ma Xiaotao revealed the strength befitting of the Continental Advanced Academy Soul Duelling Tournament's reigning champion.

A dark red fire propelled her body forward, making it seem as though she was a real phoenix--an Evil Fire Phoenix.

There was no doubt about it--she was now using the completely unrestrained evil fire. In the past, she would always suppress the evil aura hidden within her phoenix flames during battles or cultivation sessions; that was the only way she could prevent it from affecting her state of mind. However, suppressing it would undoubtedly affect her cultivation to a certain extent. This was because she would have to use some of her energy to suppress it. Not only that, but the evil aura within her was a part of her strength in the first place!

At this exact moment, the dark red flames she revealed were her true, unsuppressed power--the full power of the Evil Fire Phoenix.

From another standpoint, the strength of the current Ma Xiaotao's martial soul had already exceeded that of her ancestor from the first generation's Shrek's Seven Monsters, Ma Hongjun. This was because Ma Hongjun had relied on a heavenly treasure to resolve the issue of his evil aura, turning his martial soul into the pure Fire Phoenix in the process. Although the purified Fire Phoenix was even more overwhelmingly powerful, it lacked the blazing strength that came from the evil aura.

Without the support of the Starglory Spell, Huang Heyun's team of four were bogged down for a brief moment. They were originally pursuing Dai Yueheng, but seeing Ma Xiaotao suddenly charge towards them had left them in a daze. Furthermore, they had been facing Ma Xiaotao horizontally. In other words, Ma Xiaotao was now suddenly flanking them on the side.

The lack of coordination that stemmed from a team of four once again appeared, as the four of them could only quickly turn around. Huang Heyun was left in an even more flustered state. He had been previously suppressed by Ma Xiaotao, and her sudden appearance after breaking through the Absolute Defense Barrier had crushed him in terms of impressiveness.

Panicked, Huang Heyun didn't dare to waste any time. He forcefully pounded his own chest, and his eyes instantly turned blood-red. Then, he let out a tiger's roar, causing a black hurricane to instantly sweep towards Ma Xiaotao.

This was Huang Heyun's fifth soul skill, his strongest attack--Darkness Hurricane. Strengthened by his three teammates, this attack of his even seemed to have some substance to it. The instant it appeared, the air on the tournament stage seemed to melt. At the same time, this hurricane had a strong absorption force, which was now targeting Ma Xiaotao.

After using this attack, Huang Heyun's veins turned purple. He was nearing the limit of his physical endurance, and there was a high chance that he would self-destruct if he were to use another soul skill.

Dugu Shangshan, who was standing behind him, had no choice but to remove his hands from Huang Heyun's body. He now took Huang Heyun's place, but the former quartet now turned into a trio.

This attack had been launched by the combined powers of four people, and it was even Huang Heyun's strongest soul skill. From their point of view, even if it wasn't able to directly take down Ma Xiaotao, it would at least be able to severely injure her.

However, they didn't expect the valiant Ma Xiaotao to choose to not take it on directly.

With a sudden flap of her enormous wings of fire, Ma Xiaotao accelerated as she was sucked towards the powerful hurricane.

At this moment, her advantage in terms of cultivation was revealed. They were both Soul Emperors, but Dai Yueheng was five ranks lower than her. She was already Rank 67, and she wasn't too far from the Soul Sage rank. After releasing her full power and bringing the level of her flames to that of evil fire, even a Soul Sage who had fused their element with their soul power might possibly lose to the current her.

Although she couldn't break free of that absorption force, a strange scene occurred as she flapped her wings. It wasn't her who was drawn into the Darkness Hurricane, but the hurricane that was drawn towards her.

As her feet spouted jets of blazing flame, Ma Xiaotao's body shot out. The Darkness Hurricane that was nearing her immediately slowed down greatly as it was blasted by the two lava-like jets of dark-reddish fire. Furthermore, it even seemed to be damaged slightly, causing it to be reduced slightly in size. However, Ma Xiaotao was able to borrow the force from her two leg soul bones to explosively increase

in speed. Flying in an arc, she brushed past the pursuit of the Darkness Hurricane and flew straight towards Dugu Shangshan's trio.

Her fifth soul ring lit up in midair, and the phoenix flames by her side suddenly formed halos of fiery light. These fiery halos swept behind Ma Xiaotao, and she let out a fierce shout as she once again sped up. Her figure vanished within the dark-red flames, and she transformed into a true Fire Phoenix as she instantly appeared in front of Dugu Shangshan.

Chapter 110.3: The Second Fusion Skill!

An even stranger scene appeared, as the fiery rings of light that were swept backwards seemed to damage the Darkness Hurricane. Although they weren't strong enough to completely destroy it, they were still able to obstruct and weaken it time over time. By the time that Ma Xiaotao had reached Dugu Shangshan, over half of the Darkness Hurricane had dissipated.

Dugu Shangshan was simply unable to do anything. Evading her was completely impossible; how could the the three of them defeat Ma Xiaotao in speed?

His fifth soul ring flashed as he released the Darkdemon Tiger's most powerful attack. However, the three Soul Kings behind him were no longer able to obstruct the raging Ma Xiaotao's advance.

"Boom—" The entire tournament stage was engulfed in an explosion of dark red fire. The instant that Ma Xiaotao's blazing flames blossomed out, the audience was only able to see three figures soar into the air, rescued by the Heavenfiend Douluo. However, the three of them had suffered heavy injuries during the violent collision between the two parties; the Nine Transformations Soulrите behind them had been shattered completely.

Oh, wait, four figures had shot into the air. Huang Heyun had also been rescued by the Heavenfiend Douluo after collapsing due to overexertion.

It wasn't just Dai Yueheng and Ma Xiaotao who'd simultaneously ended their battles: Bei Bei also defeated his extremely troublesome opponent on the other side of the arena at that moment. Of course, he hadn't just relied on his own power.

The Lightning Falcon was simply too quick, and even possessed the ability to use lightning to some extent. As such, it was able to resist Bei Bei's paralysis. Fortunately for Bei Bei, his Blue Lightning Tyrant Dragon was sufficiently strong, thus he'd been able to persist through the entire battle. Granted, he'd been left in an injured and weary state after the Star Barrier broke down.

The instant that the Star Barrier broke down, Chen Xiaojie felt that something was off. He immediately wanted to use his most powerful attack to deal with Bei Bei, but a black streak had appeared behind the latter at that exact moment. The instant he exploded out with all of his power, a thick and solid shield that was filled with the aura of ice faced him.

The Mysterious Underworld Displacement had finally been revealed in this match. Only, the person that had been displaced was on Shrek's team.

Even though Bei Bei's injuries were rather heavy, a large majority of them were only flesh wounds. He didn't hesitate to immediately jump back into the fight when Xu Sanshi took his place. Furthermore, he

made his move at just the right time, as Chen Xiaojie's entire body was in a sluggish state from his previous attack at that moment.

Xu Sanshi naturally wasn't able to slow Chen Xiaojie down with his strength; his control-type soul skills weren't of much use towards the incomparably quick Chen Xiaojie, who even had a cultivation level that exceeded his. However, Shrek's team still had another control-type soul master who'd been trapped for quite a long time!

The instant that Xu Sanshi switched places with Bei Bei, an icy blue halo of light appeared beneath Chen Xiaojie.

This was Ling Luochen's fifth soul skill, Icebrilliant Halo.

However, the Icebrilliant Halo wasn't used to trap her opponents, but rather spread toward outwards from the epicenter. Under Ling Luochen's control, the halo of light instantly spread outwards.

No matter how fast the Lightning Falcon was, it wasn't faster than the release of a soul skill, not to mention an omnidirectional one. He was naturally struck by it.

Ling Luochen didn't have Huo Yuhao's assistance, thus her Icebrilliant Halo didn't contain his Ultimate Ice. However, it was still completely possible for her to temporarily freeze an agility-type soul master who was both weaker than her, and who didn't specialise in defense. After all, the fact that control suppressed agility had been known by everyone since the olden days.

And what did a rascal like Xu Sanshi specialise at doing? There was no doubt that he was amazing at pelting a stone at someone who was already on the ground! He immediately used his third soul skill, Mysterious Underworld Force, followed by his first, Mysterious Underworld Quake, then smashed his shield into Chen Xiaojie repeatedly.

Even though his attack power had never been worth mentioning, being hit by a shield still wouldn't feel good. Only people who'd taken the Shield of the Xuanwu Turtle head-on would understand how heavy it felt. Strengthened by the Mysterious Underworld Force, the Mysterious Underworld Quake's stunning effect landed on Chen Xiaojie's body and shot him towards the extremely angry Bei Bei.

Bei Bei laughed, his smile as warm and scholarly as ever...

Afterwards, a series of thunderclaps rang out on the tournament stage. Although the Heavenfiend Douluo was a Titled Douluo, even he felt somewhat nervous rescuing every participant at the last moment. This was especially so considering the fact that three battles had ended simultaneously.

As such, he naturally chose to deal with the person left in the most dangerous condition. Even though Chen Xiaojie was getting wildly beaten up by Bei Bei, he was still a Soul King, while the latter was only a Soul Ancestor. As such, the Heavenfiend Douluo naturally didn't think that Chen Xiaojie would suffer any heavy injuries. Regardless of what one said, Bei Bei still looked like a rather warm-hearted person.

Unfortunately, the Heavenfiend Douluo didn't know how two-faced this 'warm-looking man' was,

Bei Bei had previously been beaten up by Chen Xiaojie god-knows how many times, thus he was now all bruised up! He'd been oppressed for too long! Bei Bei wasn't a person who would bite the hand that fed him, but he was definitely a person who would exact vengeance on those that wronged him.

He slapped Chen Xiaojie's shoulder with his Thunderous Dragon Claw, sending him straight to the ground. Afterwards, Bei Bei leapt into the air, pointed his elbow downwards, and slammed into Chen Xiaojie's body.

In an even more violent move, Xu Sanshi leapt into the air the same instant that Bei Bei did, and proceeded to slam into Chen Xiaojie alongside him.

Chen Xiaojie let out a muffled groan from the pain. Before he could regain his ability to move, Bei Bei used Vigorous Thunderbolt, which sent countless tendrils of lightning into his body.

Naturally, Xu Sanshi was left shaking from the lightning that struck him. He immediately sent Bei Bei—who was lying underneath him—flying with a kick.

Once he got up, Bei Bei immediately used eighteen consecutive Thunderous Dragon Claw strikes on Chen Xiaojie. A wave of lightning swept towards him...

Chen Xiaojie resembled a piece of charcoal that had been barbecued by the time that the Heavenfiend Douluo rescued him from Bei Bei's clutches.

In reality, only seven or eight breaths of time had passed since the battlefield had changed. What Team Shrek had displayed wasn't just coordination, but explosiveness.

Six of the seven students from Star Luo Academy had been eliminated. As Dai Yueheng stood in front of the staggering Princess Jiu Jiu, he didn't attack her. Instead, he gazed at her with a calm gaze.

Princess Jiu Jiu had already retreated to the very edge of the tournament stage at this point in time. The instant she'd been attacked, her mental state had been affected. The match had practically already ended while she was trying to recover her mental state.

Princess Jiu Jiu mind was somewhat blank. She truly wanted to say, *I haven't even used my strongest attack yet*. However, she clearly understood that there was no longer any meaning in doing so. Even if her Starcrown was stronger, she couldn't take on the entirety of Shrek's team by herself.

"Jiu Jiu, just surrender." Dai Yueheng said indifferently. The Starlight Auction clearly wasn't the first time that they'd met. The gaze he looked at her with was somewhat mysterious, and even carried a few faint traces of warmth.

"I'm not surrendering to you." Jiu Jiu said coldly. She then turned around and jumped off the tournament stage, signalling the end of the team fight.

The match had been quite short, so much so that a large majority of the audience hadn't managed to witness the most brilliant and intense scenes that had occurred.

However, this intense battle was definitely the most marvelous and fierce battle in the tournament to date.

From Star Luo Academy completely controlling the tempo of the entire battle, to Shrek Academy's sudden reversal and explosiveness. The entire battle had not only been intense, but had also been extremely exciting. This was especially true for Shrek's team, who had been feeling palpitations in their heart throughout the entire fight.

Ma Xiaotao watched her opponent leap down from the stage, then immediately turned around and flew to Ling Luochen. With a hoarse voice, she said, "Help me suppress it, quick."

At that moment, her eyes were completely dark red, and flickered with a savage light that seemed like it could swallow one whole.

Ling Luochen didn't dare to waste any time. She quickly placed her icy staff on Ma Xiaotao's forehead, causing an Icebrilliant Halo to appear and forcibly suppress her evil fire that was about to blow up.

A chilly sensation stimulated Ma Xiaotao's body, and after a bout of shivering, her expression became slightly better. However, the dark red light in her eyes didn't completely recede.

After watching Princess Jiu Jiu leap off the stage, Dai Yueheng was left feeling somewhat blank. He quickly turned around, and a slightly strange—and even somewhat chilly—light flashed through his eyes as he looked at the fallen Huo Yuhao and Wang Dong.

Right! It wasn't him who'd defeated Princess Jiu Jiu. At that time, he'd already received a few injuries. Furthermore, he hadn't possessed enough strength to even defeat the quartet that had faced him. Perhaps they wouldn't have been able to immediately chase after him, but they definitely could've taken care of Bei Bei, who'd been trapped by Chen Xiaojie. At that time, how long could he survive in the fight if he were to have to take on the entire team by himself? It would've been hard to tell the results of the following battle. At the very least, the scales of victory would've been tipped in his opponent's favor.

However, the people who'd truly pulled against the strong tide were the two youths who had collapsed. However, just how had they done it? Even though they were now unconscious, they were the true highlights of Shrek's team in this match. It could be said that they'd dominated the match despite only Ling Luochen and Xu Sanshi clearly witnessing what they'd done.