

Tang Sect 171

Chapter 171: Lets Not Meet Anymore

Huo Yuhao's feelings for Ju Zi were complicated. He was guarded against her, he pitied her, and he liked her too—particularly when she was taking care of him. He had to admit that in his heart, he saw traces of Ma Xiaotao in Ju Zi. However, Ma Xiaotao was a bad-tempered and straight-talking big sister, while Ju Zi was a warm and quiet older (but younger than Ma Xiaotao) sister.

Through their interactions, he gradually realized that Ju Zi had stopped trying to cover up who she really was in front of him. Huo Yuhao could see that this girl's heart was filled with hatred. Her innate kindness was still there, but it was deeply concealed.

"Yuhao, do you know that when I first ate your grilled meat, I was completely taken by its taste. Your food reminded me of my father again. I once said that if I were to marry and love someone with all my heart, I would love someone who was a talented chef like my father.

"While you are much younger than me, I'm not afraid to admit that I like you. However, I kept this feeling in the depths of my heart, because there is no future between us. Regardless of age, experience, or anything else, there is no way we can be together.

"I can tell that you are akin to a prodigy in Shrek Academy. With only four rings, you are able to face off against a Soul Emperor. Furthermore, soul beasts with tens of thousands of years of cultivation could not resist you. You are the most distinguished soul master I have seen. In the future, you will be a powerful entity on the continent. However, do you know that you have a weakness, too? Looking at you objectively and coldly, I can see it better. Your problem is that you are too outstanding, and even if you try your best to hide it, how can you conceal your vast potential as a genius? Sometimes, you have to wait for the waves to quiet down. A step back may give you the peace you want. This is what I want to tell you. If you can do that, then your path in the future will be even more brilliant.

"I hope this is the last time I will cry. Soon, I will leave the Sun Moon Imperial Soul Engineering Academy. I don't know if we will ever meet again in the future, but I hope not. Because I don't want to face you on the battlefield. I just hope that you can live a good, peaceful, and happy life. Find someone you love and marry her. Have pretty and adorable kids. A normal life. I know that this peace is impossible for you, but I still wish it for you. How I want to be that woman! But alas, I can't!

"I have to go." Ju Zi turned her back to him. "Despite our short time together, I still want to give you a present."

Here, she became quiet. Every single one of her words was imprinted on Huo Yuhao's heart, particularly that line "a good, peaceful, and happy life". It almost made Huo Yuhao cry. He did not dare to open his eyes, because he did not know how he should face her. His breathing became rougher and deeper.

He suddenly felt a fresh and clear gush of air. It was clear, but warm and moist, too. Ju Zi's supple lips landed on his face as she kissed him gently. That kiss brimmed with warmth, as well as an indescribable sadness.

When her lips left his face, tears rolled uncontrollably from Huo Yuhao's eyes. At that moment, Ju Zi had left an imprint of herself on Huo Yuhao's heart. Even if it was not love, it was a permanent mark.

Ju Zi wiped her tears, looked at Huo Yuhao and said softly, "This is my first kiss. I wanted to kiss your lips, but I did not obtain your consent. Hence, I decided to kiss your face. Leave your first kiss for your fated girl. I'm going, don't let me see you again."

He gently wriggled his body while Ju Zi stood up. Her upper teeth bit down on her lower lip as she tried hard not to cry. Turning her back to him, she dashed out of the ward.

The moment she entered, she knew that Huo Yuhao was awake. Huo Yuhao had a special trait. Even though he did not know it, the top of his ears would be stuck tightly to his head when he was awake. When he was meditating or sleeping, there would be a slight gap.

Even Wang Dong had not noticed this change. However, Ju Zi, who had been taking care of him for the past few days, noticed.

He could hear the doors closing. Huo Yuhao slowly opened his teary eyes, and suddenly realized how helpless he was. He wanted very much, from the bottom of his heart, to help her. However, he knew that it was impossible.

Her enemy was his country. Her path was the opposite of the one he wanted to take. He could not ask her to abandon her vision and force her to be with him. If she did, would she still be Ju Zi?

"Sister Ju Zi, don't you know that I want you to have a peaceful and normal life, too?" Huo Yuhao sighed as he calmed himself.

He could still clearly remember that when he was in Shrek Academy, there was a special lesson on psychology in the Ultimate Soldier Plan. Their teacher had taught them that those who wanted to achieve great things must be cold and unfeeling. Great emotional turbulence would affect one's chances of success.

Huo Yuhao tried to control his emotions. While he thought that he did a good job, as did his teachers, it was apparent that he was not there yet.

Who could be truly emotionless? Furthermore, he was not even 15. Most people of this age would undergo mood swings and emotional instability. After all, thoughts of love and romance would start setting in, further upsetting one's emotional stability.

He took a few deep breaths and finally, he was able to calm himself down. Losing control of his emotions could not help him solve anything. His solution for himself was simple. In his heart, he told himself that the only way to change the world would be to further strengthen himself. Only then could he control everything.

With this thought in mind, Huo Yuhao slowly fell asleep. Tonight, he would not cultivate.

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The next day, at noon, Huo Yuhao received news from Ke Ke that Ju Zi had withdrawn from school. No one knew where she went.

Even though Huo Yuhao was mentally prepared, he was still stunned for almost 15 minutes. Slowly, he came back to his senses.

“Stop being shocked! Where do you think she went?” Ke Ke asked in a depressed tone.

Huo Yuhao shook his head and said, “I don’t know, but I think she is working for her vision.”

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Huo Yuhao recovered quickly. Three days later, he left the ward and returned to his dormitory to rest. In reality, his wounds were almost fully recovered.

He did not give much more thought to Ju Zi. Instead, he devoted all his energy to cultivation. With Jing Hongchen’s tricks, he could soon study in the Illustrious Virtue Hall. That was his objective.

To avoid arousing Jing Hongchen’s suspicion, Huo Yuhao cultivated in the dormitory for five days before he went to look for Xuan Ziwen. He told his teacher that his wounds had completely healed, and he could now study in Illustrious Virtue Hall.

Xuan Ziwen looked at the youth before him. While it had only been a few days, for some reason, Huo Yuhao looked more mature all of a sudden. This feeling was strange and indescribable. However, he knew that he was right.

“Yuhao, do you know that, from a national perspective, I don’t want to bring you inside? The Hallmaster has underestimated your intelligence,” Xuan Ziwen frowned as he shook his head.

Huo Yuhao smiled slightly and said, “Teacher Xuan, you are not a politician, but only a researcher. I believe that I can help you further refine your research. After all, I remember our promise at the start. You must remember it too!”

Xuan Ziwen laughed. “Of course I remember it! Okay, don’t forget that the Hall is not like here. Your every word and action will be under surveillance. Listen more, study more, look more, think more, and talk less. Try not to interact so much with the other Shreks. Stay by my side, and you will be fine.”

“Yes, sir,” Huo Yuhao said respectfully.

“Come with me,” Xuan Ziwen told him, standing up and bringing Huo Yuhao out.

In the lab, Zi Mu took a look at the youth accompanying Teacher Xuan and seemed shocked. Ke Ke, however, was excited. She seemed happier than the time she had first entered the Illustrious Virtue Hall.

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Illustrious Virtue Hall was the core of the Sun Moon Imperial Soul Engineering Academy. From the outside, it appeared to be an ordinary building. Once he entered, however, Huo Yuhao realized that the Hall was much bigger than he had first thought.

Illustrious Virtue Hall, like the extravagant auction hall of the Star Luo Empire, were both underground. However, in terms of size, they were simply incomparable.

After he entered the ordinary-looking building that was no greater than five hundred square meters in size, Xuan Ziwen brought him through three checkpoints, each guarded by a soul master and a soul tool.

When he entered the interior of the building, Huo Yuhao could see twenty elevators that formed the shape of an arch. Every single elevator looked metallic, and could fit more than ten people.

Xuan Ziwen brought Huo Yuhao into the first elevator and scanned his ID card on a soul tool. Then, he gripped the metal pole in the center of the elevator and inserted his soul power. Slowly, the elevator descended.

The entire process took two minutes to complete. Huo Yuhao took note of the depth of their descent. To his surprise, it was more than a hundred meters!

As they descended, the interior of the elevator was completely sealed, and he could not see what was outside. A small white strip of light illuminated the interior of the elevator.

Xuan Ziwen did not say or explain anything to him. Just as he had said earlier, he wanted Huo Yuhao to listen more, see more, think more, and not ask more.

The metallic doors of the elevator slowly opened. Xuan Ziwen looked at Huo Yuhao and nodded before he led the way out.

It was a world made completely out of metal. While it was still in the shape of an arch, all one could see was metal. After he exited the elevator and walked through a corridor of average length, the area inside widened.

Huo Yuhao took in a deep breath, and could not help but exclaim under his breath, "Ah..." .

The scene before him was too shocking. He stood in a wide and spacious hall that he was unable to see the end of. Countless laboratory tables were neatly arranged, extending into the distance. When he looked at them horizontally, there had to be more than fifty tables.

Each table was five meters by three meters! Stretching into the distance in front of him, there were more tables than he could count. People were working around each table. This humongous hall, including its dome, was about twenty meters high and it was likewise covered with metal. A strong metallic smell and a low metallic hum invaded Huo Yuhao's senses.

Was this Illustrious Virtue Hall?! This was a factory for soul tools! Furthermore, soul tools manufactured by the Illustrious Virtue Hall could not be of low quality. Those working here were probably the true elites of the Sun Moon Imperial Soul Engineering Academy.

Xuan Ziwen said in a low voice, "The area we are standing at right now is not under surveillance. After we go down, everywhere is under visual and audio surveillance. This is the manufacturing hub of Illustrious Virtue Hall. I don't know how big it is, but it should be at least half the size of the Sun Moon Imperial Soul Engineering Academy above. There are five thousand tables, with some hidden in the shadows. As some research has yet to commence, around one-third of the space here is empty. However, the elites of the Sun Moon Imperial Soul Engineering Academy and Illustrious Virtue Hall are all present. One can say that the most powerful soul engineers of the Sun Moon Empire are here."

"Some of them are interns from the Sun Moon Imperial Soul Engineering Academy. They will only work here for a short time before they continue their studies. In Illustrious Virtue Hall, research is conducted in the form of small groups. Every group has a different number of members. Normally, they will have more than five tables to work at. Other than the public research spaces, there are some secret labs.

Those who can work in the secret labs must be at least Rank 8 and above. Notice the badge on each of their chests. The badges of Illustrious Virtue Hall are different from the outside world. The background is the sun and moon, and stars dot the sky. Each star represents a single rank.”

As he said that, Xuan Ziwen took out an eight-starred badge and placed it on his chest.

“Once one reaches Rank 9, one will have reached the highest and most powerful level in our country. They will be offered maximum protection. In Illustrious Virtue Hall right now, including the Hallmaster, there are four Rank 9 soul engineers. The Hallmaster is the youngest. Everyone doing research here could be said to be a disciple of one of the four most powerful soul engineers, including me and you. My teacher is one of the four.”

Huo Yuhao had been in the Sun Moon Imperial Soul Engineering Academy for quite some time, but he could clearly sense that he was learning more today than the rest of his days here combined. As he listened to Xuan Ziwen, he did not dare to open his mouth. All he did was memorize what he said and nod along.

Xuan Ziwen was pleased with his response. He smiled slightly and said, “Okay, let’s go. We can descend. You will be given your own table, and I will give you a topic to research. If you have questions, ask me directly. I know you can use your spiritual power to send messages. I have faith that you will do well.”

Under Xuan Ziwen’s guidance, the two of them walked for ten minutes before they reached an empty table. Xuan Ziwen took out an ID card and a Rank 5 soul engineer badge. He fixed the badge to Huo Yuhao’s chest, and scanned the ID card against a machine by the side of the table. Then, he used his own ID card as further verification.

“Keep this card. The next time you enter, as well as when you use Table No. 1238, you will need this card.”

After he scanned his card, the many buttons under the table lit up. Looking at them carefully, there were at least fifty of them. Every single button had a small logo, and each of them was colored differently.

Through Xuan Ziwen’s explanations, Huo Yuhao discovered that each of these buttons was linked to a different material. Once he pressed it, the corresponding material would appear. According to the rarity and cost of the material, a different amount of the material would appear. Each table was rationed a certain amount.

For example, each table could only use a hundred grams of mithril.

Huo Yuhao made some mental calculations. No wonder Jing Hongchen was so generous when he said that he could take all of the experimental metals. There were limits, however this satisfied him enough already. He started to study the icons, and asked Xuan Ziwen some questions. He had seen at least ten types of rare metals that he had never heard of before.

Xuan Ziwen tossed a manual at him and said, “This is your first day here. Familiarize yourself with the various functions of the table. There are clear instructions in the manual. For a distinguished soul engineer, a good table will help you a lot in your research. I have to go and do my own research. If you

need me, use your ID card to access Secret Research Zone 1. Find a guard, and ask the guard to look for me. However, I will only give you one opportunity per day to ask me questions.”

“Yes,” Huo Yuhao replied respectfully.

Xuan Ziwen appeared exceptionally cool as he said that. With that, he walked into the darkness, and soon, he was covered by it.

With Huo Yuhao’s sharp eyesight, he noticed that Xuan Ziwen had walked to the end and stopped in a pitch-black corridor. There, two black shadows appeared and spoke to him before he disappeared. Secret Research Zone 1 should be over there.

He had finally entered Illustrious Virtue Hall. While it was unlike what he had imagined, Huo Yuhao was still pleasantly surprised. Here, he could naturally learn more things, and it was no doubt the best place for him to find his own path.

He did not rush to operate a soul tool. Instead, he sat by his table and studied the manual carefully.

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Huo Yuhao did not know that in a room in the depths of Illustrious Virtue Hall, Jing Hongchen was observing his every move quietly.

Lin Jiayi stood next to Jing Hongchen and said, “His recovery was quicker than most normal people, but if we take into consideration the medicine I gave him that day, it should be normal. Hallmaster, are you really going to let him study here? You know Teacher Xuan’s personality. Once he starts his research, he will forget about eating and even sleeping. I’m afraid...”

Jing Hongchen waved his hand and said, “It’s fine, we have to let him learn some things. If not, how can we answer to Shrek Academy? He is but a three-ringed soul master with the powers of a Rank 4 soul engineer. Let him learn. The might of a single person cannot change a war, right? This could have been delayed, if not for the bastards from the Royal Stewards. Send someone to observe his actions. As long as they seem normal, leave him alone. Also, take note of the type of soul tools he makes.”

“Yes,” Lin Jiayi acknowledged.

Jing Hongchen stood up and left. Every single day, he bore the heavy responsibility of research. As the youngest Rank 9 soul engineer, his research affected the progress of the empire.

Yesterday, he had accepted the Crown Prince’s invitation for an evening banquet. Before he went, he had to finish the tasks at hand.

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The tiny manual scared Huo Yuhao. Only now did he realize the significance of the table before him.

The ordinary-looking table was full of different functions. The table before him had all the functions of the big manufacturing tools in Shrek Academy. The table contained abrasives, pressurized equipment, and high-temperature manufacturing tools. One could say that with the right materials, it was not impossible to manufacture Rank 7 and Rank 8 soul tools from this table.

Huo Yuhao spent the entire day reading the manual and trying out the functions of the table. However, no one knew that he had used his spiritual power to scan the table.

Lunch and dinner would be sent to the table by assistants. From his observations, Huo Yuhao realized that some soul engineers did not even bother to eat. They had yet to touch their lunch even at dinnertime. Under these circumstances, the assistants would remind them to eat.

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When the completely exhausted Huo Yuhao left the Illustrious Virtue Hall with Xuan Ziwen, the sky outside was almost completely dark.

“So, how do you feel?” Xuan Ziwen asked with a smile.

Huo Yuhao blurted out, “Time seems to pass quicker inside!”

Xuan Ziwen looked at him in surprise and said, “That’s right! You integrate fast, it’s not easy for one to obtain such a feeling. I thought that you might even find it boring.”

Huo Yuhao smiled. “I’m just afraid I won’t have enough time. Teacher Xuan, I shall head back to rest.”

Xuan Ziwen nodded and said, “Go, you will enter the Illustrious Virtue Hall by yourself tomorrow. Use your ID card. Once you are inside, you will be scanned to ascertain your identity. I’m your guarantor. If anything happens, I will be implicated too.” As he said that, his gaze seemed to deepen.

“Teacher Xuan, please don’t worry. I will not cause trouble for you.” Huo Yuhao said respectfully.

Back in his dorm room, Huo Yuhao carefully used his Spiritual Detection to sense if there were any surveillance soul tools in his room. After he was sure that there were none, he began to draw on a piece of paper.

The table’s make-up was too complicated. He spent almost 4 hours coming up with a rough outline. Tonight, he could only accomplish so much. There were at least 10 formation arrays in the table. Each of them alone did not appear to be very complicated, but they were all tightly interconnected. He had never even heard of some of them.

For example, three Grade 3 formation arrays were used to assist a Grade 4 formation array. Together, they could be used as a Grade 5 formation array with a reduced cost. To him, this was a valuable experience indeed!

He was not just recording the formation arrays in the research table. To Huo Yuhao, this was a learning process.

The next day, Huo Yuhao met He Caitou as they were eating breakfast. Both of them had gotten permission to enter the Illustrious Virtue Hall, but while He Caitou had passed the examination, he was still an intern. He had special teachers guiding his research inside the Illustrious Virtue Hall, unlike Huo Yuhao, who had nothing but a table and his wits.

However, He Caitou admired Huo Yuhao. While he had teachers who offered him guidance, they did not allow him to touch the table. Compared to Huo Yuhao, he was in a more miserable state.

The two of them shared the same thought. Only after they entered the Illustrious Virtue Hall did they realize how big the world of soul engineers was. Only then did they know how terrifying the research of the Sun Moon Empire was.

For a long period afterward, the two of them devoted all their attention to research, and studied tirelessly as they tried to absorb as much knowledge as possible.

Lin Jiayi, the teacher in charge of the exchange students from Shrek Academy, soon lost interest in Huo Yuhao. Huo Yuhao's research appeared directionless. Every day, all he did was make a small, delicate but simple metal object. He rarely used any formation arrays. Most of the time, he would just sit there and do nothing. Occasionally, he would ask Xuan Ziwen some questions, but they were all superficial and completely unlike those posed by high-level soul engineers.

However, He Caitou had caught his attention. He Caitou appeared exceptionally talented in making soul tools. He learned quickly, and his research seemed to have gained steam. Every day, he was making progress.

This was the strategy that He Caitou and Huo Yuhao came up with. While He Caitou was better than Huo Yuhao in terms of soul tools, it was not a significant difference. With him as his cover, Huo Yuhao could use his vast spiritual power to learn even more stuff here.

Do nothing? If Lin Jiayi knew what he was doing, he would probably slap himself.

Huo Yuhao's version of 'doing nothing' was to use his spiritual detection to sense what everyone else around him was researching, particularly those soul engineers who appeared to be making soul tools that could also be weapons.

His plan was simple. By detecting them and then recording them, he could then do careful research and analysis on his own. If he ran into something he didn't know, he would ask Xuan Ziwen. Superficially, he appeared to be doing nothing. In reality, his progress was terrifying. The small items he made were not so simple once he brought them back to his dorm. With his Life Guardian, Huo Yuhao would take more time to finish making these objects, but under total secrecy.

After half a year, the ten exchange students from Shrek Academy, as well as their teacher, all appeared very normal, including Huo Yuhao and He Caitou. Among the ten of them, six had entered the Illustrious Virtue Hall to study. The other four obtained permission to enter the Illustrious Virtue Hall for three days a week. In terms of their overall abilities with soul tools, they all progressed differently. Of course, they could not come into contact with the most important research. Even so, after this batch of exchange students returned, Shrek Academy's Soul Tool Department would improve greatly.

Of course, this was just a superficial appraisal. Half a month earlier, as the Sun Moon Imperial Soul Engineering Academy had lowered their guard, Fan Yu had finally found a chance to send a batch of Huo Yuhao's pictures back. These pictures were extremely valuable. To Shrek Academy's Soul Tool Department, this was worth more than a hundred thousand year soul beast! With these pictures, they could cut a hundred years off their research.

Huo Yuhao still had the ability of a Class 6 soul engineer, but he was now one that even Xuan Ziwen recognized.

Huo Yuhao's progress shocked even Xuan Ziwen. In the entire Sun Moon Imperial Soul Engineering Academy, his understanding of Huo Yuhao's soul engineering abilities was the most complete.

After he chose the path of a close-combat soul engineer, Huo Yuhao felt like a tiny canoe in the middle of the ocean looking in the direction of a lighthouse. Not even Xuan Ziwen understood his true progress in soul tools.

"Woo..." Huo Yuhao exhaled as he stretched. Happily, he looked at the tiny silver piece of metal in his hands. The metal was irregularly-shaped, and its complicated shape was formed from many different types of metal. Huo Yuhao had spent more than ten days making it. Today, he was finally successful. This also meant that his soul thruster, which he had designed and made for himself, was complete.

By picking the path of a close-combat soul engineer, Huo Yuhao's first priority was not to increase his attack or his defenses. Instead, he needed to increase his speed.

Compared to a normal soul ancestor, he was much more powerful. He had 3 times more soul skills than a normal soul ancestor. Regardless of whether it was in terms of attack, defense or control, he had powerful soul skills in each. Coupled with his Eye of Destiny, his close-combat abilities had reached a level of strength that, even against a soul king or soul emperor, once he had drawn close enough to them, they might not be able to resist his attacks.

However, his only weakness was in terms of his speed. He had domain-type control soul skills, as well as attack soul skills that could affect an area. However, these were not his specialty, and he could not change them so easily. No one could be strong in all aspects. When Huo Yuhao chose to specialize as a close-combat soul engineer, he gave up his domain attacks and his ability to attack from a distance. Hence, he needed to increase his speed.

Compared to a regular four-ringed soul ancestor, even an agility-type four-ringed soul ancestor, he was at least as fast, if not faster. However, if he faced a soul king who specialized in speed, then his weakness would be exposed. Hence, he would need control type soul skills to limit his opponent, and his disadvantage in speed meant that his originally-explosive power would be affected. Hence, a soul thruster was his priority.

Over the past half a year, Huo Yuhao spend half his time on research that would benefit his soul thruster. He spent the other half of his time on research into combining the Tang Sect's hidden tools and soul tools. In both aspects, he had obtained exceptional results.

After he completed this item in his hand, it meant that his Grade 6 soul tool, which he had made himself, was complete. All he needed to do was assemble it.

The more he researched soul tools, the better he understood Ma Rulong's words. A powerful soul engineer would only use his own soul tools, because he knew what he needed.

He took in a deep breath and smiled contentedly. To him, this was not just the completion of a Grade 6 soul tool. More importantly, the manufacturing of this soul tool allowed him to put what he had learned over the past half year into practice. This allowed him to further solidify his fundamentals. These profound principles and theories from the Sun Moon Imperial Soul Engineering Academy were all good supporting theories for him to make even more soul tools in the future. He believed his improvement would be exponential in the next two years.

However, the only thing that he felt helpless about was the increase in his soul power. In the past half year, his soul power had reached Rank 43. Yet, he felt as if he were progressing at a slower rate. At this speed, he would only be a Rank 50 soul king by the time the next Continental Advanced Soul Master Academy Soul Dueling Tournament rolled around. This meant that he had fallen behind his friends.

However, he still had a positive outlook. After thinking about it carefully, he realized that these two and a half years he would be spending in the Sun Moon Imperial Soul Engineering Academy were important to raising his abilities as a soul engineer. He had his own plans for increasing his soul power.

Just as Huo Yuhao was looking contentedly at the item in his hand, he suddenly felt an odd feeling.

This did not come from him, but instead, from his Eye of Destiny. He could feel that the Eye of Destiny was numbing him, and a sense of danger crept up in his heart.

Without hesitation, Huo Yuhao leapt to the side and tumbled off his seat. He curled up under the table as he released his Ice Empress' Armor, and his Hongchen's Blessing could be triggered at a moment's notice.

"Boom, boom, boom, boom..." Four explosions sounded inside the Illustrious Virtue Hall. The terrifying explosions instantly caused a destructive shockwave.

Chapter 172: Ambush, and the Mysterious Metallic Man

Four separate bursts of light appeared in four different directions; they all appeared in locations that were densely packed with researchers.

The explosion came too suddenly, resulting in the soul engineers near them having almost no chance to react. At least a hundred soul engineers were immediately vaporized by the explosions. Hundreds of tables were ripped apart by the terrifying explosion, and bits of metal flew everywhere like a horrifying wave of shrapnel. Cries of pain mixed with the smell of blood. Under the terrifying explosion, these shot everywhere.

The terrifying explosion even caused the ground to shake. In the huge underground facility, over one-third of all personnel were either injured or killed.

Huo Yuhao was a relatively new entrant, as he had been in there for less than half a year. Hence, his table was located near the periphery, and not at the center of the explosion.

Even so, the powerful shockwave from the explosions pushed him and his table back by over 10 meters.

The survival instincts of the soul engineers manifested themselves at this moment. One-third of all soul engineers were affected, but only a few hundred were killed, mainly from the initial blast. Every soul engineer from the Illustrious Virtue Hall activated their protective soul tools, which helped to mitigate the effects of the explosion. While many were severely injured, the number of deaths was still under control.

After the explosion, black shadows emerged from the ground. These people were clad entirely in black, and were extremely agile. When they appeared, they started a killing spree in all four directions.

Looking from the sky, one would discover that a hole about 10 meters wide had appeared at the location of each of the explosions. These men in black emerged from these holes. Not only were they prepared, but they were also very powerful. Immediately, they turned the place into a slaughterhouse.

While Huo Yuhao hid underneath his table, his spiritual detection was still active. He never expected that a place like the Illustrious Virtue Hall, which possessed such tight security and defenses, would be attacked. The power of these people was beyond his imagination.

Among them, none seemed to be below the level of a Soul Sage. The moment they appeared, they revealed their martial soul true bodies and started a wild massacre.

It would be hard to assemble a team like this, even in Shrek Academy!

Quickly, Huo Yuhao discovered something. Because these men in black were so powerful, they inadvertently revealed their weaknesses.

When Huo Yuhao triangulated his spiritual detection on the right shoulder of one of the men in black, the man's power suddenly increased 10 times. He was then able to pulverize a Grade 5 soul engineer who was just about to fire a soul tool at him. At this moment, Huo Yuhao understood their origins.

Body Sect. They were from the Body Sect. However, why would they suddenly attacking the Sun Moon Imperial Soul Engineering Academy? And the Illustrious Virtue Hall?

Were they mad?

However, regardless of what he thought right now, there was no way he could leave. These people from the Body Sect did not care about anything else. The moment they entered, they started their killing spree without a second thought.

After a short while, hundreds of soul engineers lay in pools of blood on the floor. While the soul engineers had started to counter-attack, the people from the Body Sect were more powerful than they had expected. Among them, there were at least 10 of them with the power of a Titled Douluo. How could their soul tools resist?

Furthermore, all these people wanted to do was destroy. In their hands, the precious tables were ripped apart like scrap. After a short while, the cost of the damage they had done was unthinkable.

However, Huo Yuhao took solace in the knowledge that He Caitou and Teacher Fan Yu were both not there. They had followed a bunch of students from the Sun Moon Imperial Soul Engineering Academy out to test their soul tools. If not, he would not be able to just hide there.

However, he could not do this forever. Who knew when men the from Body Sect would come over to his table? While Huo Yuhao was confident in his own abilities, his opponents were Soul Sages! A Soul Sage from the Body Sect was more powerful than a Soul Sage from other places. He could not beat them.

Damn it! If they came, how could I escape?

As he thought about that, Huo Yuhao's two hands had already turned into the Ice Empress' Pincers. His right hand released his Darkgolden Terrorclaw as he tapped the floor underneath him forcefully.

While the floor was covered with a metal layer about 17 centimeters thick, it was soon torn apart by his sharp Darkgolden Terrorclaw. Using both of his hands, he dug furiously at the ground underneath him. Soon, he made an indent. Huo Yuhao then used his strength to tilt his table. Coordinating with his Darkgolden Terrorclaw, the table soon fell over flat on the ground, covering the indent in the ground that he had dug. Unless someone flipped this table over, they would be unable to discover his presence.

Huo Yuhao lay in the hole in the ground, unmoving. He breathed through a tiny slit between the table and the ground. He used his Spiritual Detection to sense the situation outside.

As the most powerful research facility for soul tools on the continent, the Illustrious Virtue Hall was not so easily defeated. After a short moment of panic, a piercing alarm sounded, and the Hall's counterattack began.

A huge soul tool appeared from the domed ceiling. This soul tool was in the shape of a screw, and about 5 meters long. At its thickest, it was about 2 meters wide, and a purplish-blue light started to swirl around it. Then, from its pointy end, it began to shoot rays of purple light at the Body Sect invaders, as if it had eyes.

When it started, the Body Sect invaders treated it as if it were nothing. They tried to resist it using their powerful soul power. However, they soon realized that something was amiss.

The purple light which came from the roof gave off a terrifying current. While they were able to avoid being injured by the current, they were unable to shake off the paralysis the current caused. A Titled Douluo was struck by at least 10 rays of purple light, causing him to be pinned to the ground.

The soul engineers, who had been on the verge of retreat before this, vigorously counterattacked. Soon, the Body Sect began to take casualties too.

At this moment, a figure dashed through the sky and was soon suspended in mid-air. Pursued by countless rays of purple light, his body shone like an illusory shadow. However, not a single ray of purple light could land on him.

Then, the domed ceiling turned green. Under the terrifying green light, all of the soul tools on the domed ceiling melted.

"Go." The figure stabilized himself in mid-air and waved his hands. Instantly, the green liquid started to fly in the direction of the soul engineers.

"We won't be poisoned, how dare you!" A voice resounded. A film of red light suddenly started to spread as it blocked the green liquid.

From the depths of the Hall, dozens of figures zoomed out. Leading them was Jing Hongchen.

When Jing Hongchen saw the carnage underneath him, his eyes almost popped out of his head in rage. Since the establishment of the Illustrious Virtue Hall, it had never experienced carnage like this before. Everywhere he looked, he could see the corpses of soul engineers.

On a battlefield, he was confident in his ability to destroy the Body Sect invaders with his soul engineers from the Illustrious Virtue Hall. However, their attack came too suddenly. Furthermore, the Illustrious Virtue Hall was a few hundred meters underground. Not only did outsiders not know of its location, but

they shouldn't even know how to penetrate it! Who could have thought that the Body Sect would chose the dumbest, but most effective, way? They dug a tunnel from an unknown location, and then attacked its most vulnerable spot and broke through its defenses.

The black-robed man in mid-air appeared to not have heard Jing Hongchen's words as he said coldly, "Kill!"

The black-robed man who had just destroyed a large amount soul tools was naturally the leader of the Body Sect, Du Busi. However, since he had brought the black-robed men here, he would not reveal his identity, even if everyone knew who he was.

Jing Hongchen also roared in rage. "Spare no one!" As he said that, a powerful red light shot out from his body. Behind him, a metallic light that resembled red lotuses spun rapidly and came together. In a split second, thousands of slender, red rods were aimed at the sky.

A red helmet appeared on Jing Hongchen's head, a metallic mask covered his face, and countless rays of red light flew rapidly towards the leader of the Body Sect.

The other powerful members of the Illustrious Virtue Hall who accompanied Jing Hongchen revealed their soul tools as well. They attacked the Body Sect vigorously as both sides clashed head-on. Instantly, soul power brimmed in the underground space, rocking it with the sounds of explosions.

Huo Yuhao felt his heart thumping rapidly in his chest. This was the first time he had seen something like this.

Why did the Body Sect attack the Illustrious Virtue Hall so brazenly? Could it be for the benefit of the three countries on the Douluo Continent? Impossible! According to what teacher had said, the Body Sect only cared about its own interests. Everything it did was for its own interests. Right now, they had made themselves enemies of the Illustrious Virtue Hall. What benefits could they reap?

Huo Yuhao wracked his brain, but he couldn't think a reason for it. All he cared about right now was his own safety.

Three rays of light from soul tools had already landed on Huo Yuhao's table. Every single one of them was capable of dissolving metal, leaving the table heavily damaged. Once the table was completely destroyed, he would have nowhere to hide. In a fight between so many powerful cultivators, if he was exposed he would be torn to pieces.

What could he do? Huo Yuhao didn't know... Right now, all he could do was dig deeper into the ground beneath him and fully expand his spiritual detection, praying that he would remain safe from the clashes above.

However, the battles between soul powers was too powerful, already causing a strong soul power storm. Under these circumstances, his spiritual power would be torn to shreds when exploring. After he tried unsuccessfully to probe the outside world with his spiritual power, resulting in him bleeding from the mouth and nose, he gave up.

He wouldn't die here; that would be too frustrating. It would be better for him to go out. However, if he did go out, which side should he help?

If not for already being directly in the midst of it, Huo Yuhao would steer clear of this cesspool. It would be good for the Body Sect to kill more members of the Illustrious Virtue Hall, as this would delay the impending war. However, he was directly involved right now! If he died here, it would be a tragic.

At this moment, Huo Yuhao felt his spiritual detection picking something up. As he could not explore outside, he used his spiritual detection to sense the earth underneath instead, and pick the best spot to dig.

As his power increased, his spiritual detection also became more powerful. Even though he was buried in dirt, he could sense everything within a certain radius. Just now, he felt the powerful spiritual power crushing him since he began digging relax temporarily.

This made Huo Yuhao think of something as he probed.

Indeed, just as he'd predicted, there was a tunnel about five meters long underneath him. The tunnel was extremely narrow, and only one person could crawl through it at any one time. Evidently, it was new.

"Excellent, if I can enter this tunnel, then I won't be attacked. Furthermore, the air circulation in this tunnel should be okay. Breathing won't be a problem."

Happily, Huo Yuhao used all his strength to continue digging underneath him.

Boom! His table was struck by a soul cannon shell, sending it flying into the air. Some shattered metal pieces were blocked by Huo Yuhao's Ice Empress' Armor. By now, he'd already dug two meters, and he extended his body. His left hand using an Ice Empress' Pincer, and his right hand had the Darkgolden Terrorclaw. Using every ounce of his strength, he smashed forward, and finally breached into the tunnel.

Huo Yuhao didn't delay, not even for even a second. He wriggled, and dropped into the tunnel.

Indeed, when he dropped into it, he felt the previous sense of danger dropping drastically. Huo Yuhao sighed in relief. However, he couldn't stay here for long. Above him, a battle raged. What if it caused the tunnel to collapse? Once he got his bearings, he discovered that this tunnel stretched far into the depths of the Illustrious Virtue Hall. Naturally, there would be more powerful Illustrious Virtue Hall soul engineers there. It would probably be safer.

Unfortunately this tunnel was not tall enough, and he could only advance by crawling forward. First, he had to leave the danger zone. Anything else was of secondary importance.

When he entered the depths of the tunnel, the sounds of the explosions outside began to soften. Huo Yuhao sighed in relief. He'd managed to dodge this bullet. In the end he still did not know who would be crowned victor.

This place was a few hundred meters deep. Regardless who it was, they wouldn't use their most powerful attacks. If the entire underground facility collapsed, even a Titled Douluo won't be able to carry the weight of a few hundred meters of earth! Huo Yuhao savagely thought, that the best outcome would be for both sides to be severely injured in this battle.

When he advanced forward, he felt the air clearing up. Could it be an exit?

The moment he thought about the word 'exit', he tightened up. Now he realized that this tunnel was evidently not dug by the Illustrious Virtue Hall...

Could it be that the attack of the Body Sect was only a diversion to capture Jing Hongchen's attention? Could their true target actually be through this tunnel, which he had coincidentally ventured into? Were they after some precious soul tool from the Illustrious Virtue Hall? Or... Huo Yuhao trembled. He thought of a possibility, which was also one of his objectives in this expedition. Even though it seemed impossible to him, he had to consider it. If the objectives of Body Sect were identical to his own, then everything would be easier to explain.

Embryo, the hundred thousand year soul beast embryo. They were after that.

When he thought about the three red hundred thousand year soul rings around Du Busi, everything became clear to Huo Yuhao.

He personally witnessed the highlight of the Star Luo Auction held in Star Luo City being awarded to the highest bidder.

He also knew that someone said that they were willing to purchase the item for 100 million golden soul coins. After this was announced, the Sun Moon Imperial Soul Engineering Academy never rested. Even when they came over as exchange students, many people were still coveting that item. But the defenses of the Illustrious Virtue Hall were too powerful, and no one knew where the embryo was hidden.

100 million golden soul coins. An astronomical sum. This was aside from the immeasurable value of the hundred thousand year soul beast embryo.

Huo Yuhao heard Elder Mu say that in the past one hundred years, very few hundred thousand year soul beasts had been killed, particularly within the Great Star Dou Forest. The soul beasts became more powerful, and word went around that the killing of a hundred thousand year soul beast would have terrible consequences on its killers.

However, a hundred thousand year soul beast could bring a Titled Douluo's strength to another level. Not only did its soul ring and soul bone provide soul skills, but the overall strength increase it gave a soul master was much more terrifying. It could be said that as long as a soul master's ninth soul ring was a hundred thousand year one, he would definitely be able to become a Rank 95 Transcendent Douluo.

Even Du Busi, who had three hundred thousand year soul rings, may not be able to reach the level of a Rank 99 Ultimate Douluo. Of course, at his level, there were some negative consequences attached with increasing his power using soul rings. Which was why he did not dare to face off against Elder Mu.

What bravery, Body Sect! They dared to rob the Illustrious Virtue Hall. Only after they made their preparations, of course. After all, they were only a sect, and not a whole country. If the Illustrious Virtue Hall wanted revenge, they still had to find them first. Furthermore, they took steps to conceal their identities, meaning that no one could say for sure they were responsible.

After he had discovered their goal, what should he do? Huo Yuhao was put in a difficult spot, because the hundred thousand year soul beast embryo was part of the reason for his journey too!

Elder Mu had spoken with him about this, and because Huo Yuhao himself had his Spiritual Detection and Imitation, Elder Mu told him that if he was given the chance, he should make a go for it. Of course,

the pre-condition was that he had to ensure his own safety. Even if he were discovered, his opponents would not hurt him. At most, they would send him back...

When Huo Yuhao came to the Sun Moon Imperial Soul Engineering Academy, he abandoned this idea. The defenses of the Illustrious Virtue Hall were tight, and it was equipped with the latest and most powerful soul tools. It was impossible for him to enter undetected. Perhaps he could sneak in easily, but he could not get rid of the defenses.

Who could predict the arrival of the Body Sect? They unleashed a vigorous attack, and then sent someone to sneak in and steal it. This plan was surely formulated over a long time. Evidently, the Body Sect was not confident of destroying the Illustrious Virtue Hall in one blow. Attacking them head-on like this was only a diversion; their true objective was past this tunnel.

So... should he head over, or not?

Huo Yuhao knew that whoever the Body Sect sent to infiltrate the Illustrious Virtue Hall must be someone that Du Busi viewed as extremely important and powerful. Someone he couldn't beat easily. However, would Huo Yuhao just abandon it so easily? This was a rare chance!

Faced with the Body Sect's powerhouse, his only advantage was his familiarity with soul tools.

Time waited for no man. Without giving much thought to it, Huo Yuhao decided, No!

Compared to the hundred thousand year soul beast embryo, his life was far more important. Furthermore, he already had a million year soul ring and a hundred thousand year soul ring. He shouldn't be too greedy, as it would lead to catastrophic consequences. Could he betray the trust of Brother Skydream, the Ice Empress, and Electrolux?

When he thought through it, Huo Yuhao calmed down quickly. But he still couldn't allow the Body Sect to get the hundred thousand year soul beast embryo. If it remained here, he at least had a chance to get it. If the Body Sect took it, he would have no such chance.

He had to find a way to contact the Hallmaster.

Just as he thought about any way to contact Jing Hongchen, a violent vibration could be felt.

The entire building appeared to have started trembling. A boom sounded where Huo Yuhao had been, and a chunk of the tunnel collapsed. Thick mud and dust came straight towards him.

Oh no! The color drained from Huo Yuhao's face. The battle outside was too ferocious, causing the tunnel to collapse. Furthermore, the entire underground facility was trembling violently, and the surrounding earth and mud were on the brink of collapsing.

No matter what danger lay at the end of the tunnel, it was better than being buried alive! Heaven toyed with humans. Huo Yuhao did not even take a second before he ran into the depths of the tunnel.

Just as he ran out, the tunnel behind him collapsed. It was impossible for him to exit the way he had come unless he wanted to be buried alive.

He did not know whether he should laugh or cry, but Huo Yuhao only had one option right now. Taking a deep breath, he thought, Since heaven wills it, I shall try and obtain salvation through peril.

After he moved ahead a bit, the tunnel in front of him suddenly started to twist and turn. This confused Huo Yuhao. While he had never been to the mysterious parts of the Illustrious Virtue Hall, he could tell from the tunnel that the intruder had done his planning. Even underground, he was able to accurately sense the shape of the earth. How could the secrets of what lay underneath the Illustrious Virtue Hall be leaked?

The underground base underneath the Illustrious Virtue Hall...

A fierce explosion and tremors forced both sides to stop. All of them realized that if the place collapsed, no one would make it out alive.

“Du Busi, why?” Jing Hongchen asked through gritted teeth. Suddenly, he sensed something. Immediately, he trembled in rage as he cursed in anger, “Bastard, you dare to...!” As he said that, he ran toward the interior of the Illustrious Virtue Hall. He suddenly recalled where exactly the large explosion came from.

However, how could the Body Sect members, who were so close to their goal, allow him to interfere? A terrifying green storm descended from the sky. Du Busi, who did not fear tapping into his origin soul power, vanished. A countless number of terrifying figures flew towards the powerful members of Illustrious Virtue Hall.

They evidently wanted to kill Jing Hongchen. Hence, they disregarded the attacks of the other soul engineers.

Helpless, Jing Hongchen could only retaliate. With his Grade 9 soul tool, his power matched that of Du Busi, who was likely the only Transcendent Douluo on the continent. With Rank 99 soul power, if he did not fear the collapse of this underground world, more than one-third of the soul engineers would have already perished.

The battle resumed as both sides resumed their intense fight. Yet, the number of casualties did not increase much. After all, they did not fight with all their strength, but instead focused on defending! Du Busi’s aim was to pin down the powerful soul engineers of Illustrious Virtue Hall and create a chance for his people.

“Ahh...” Huo Yuhao left the tunnel and went into another one.

Soul tool lights flashed from both sides of the tunnel, indicating that the structure was unstable.

This should be the interior part of Illustrious Virtue Hall. However, where was the person who came in before him?

As Huo Yuhao ascended, he cloaked himself in a layer of fog. After some deliberation, he also changed his form.

Hidden in the fog, he put on a face mask to make himself look ordinary. Then, using Imitation, he transformed into Du Busi!

One must say that his control over his spiritual power was extremely precise. Not only did his stature and appearance resemble Du Busi, but he even conjured a black robe that looked like the one Du Busi was wearing. In short, he looked like Du Busi without his veil.

His heart pounded quickly. However, since he was there, there was no chance for escape.

As he thought, he slowed his steps and expanded his Spiritual Detection, probing out in front of him.

After he walked forward a bit longer, he felt a tug in his heart. He quickly entered a tunnel to his left, where a metallic black door stood open. Inside it was an extremely spacious lab.

Right now, the lab was completely empty. From the energy he sensed, he could tell that many of the powerful Illustrious Virtue Hall members had rushed out from here.

Since he was here, Huo Yuhao had to explore. He dispelled the fog around him and put on a veil. He then entered the vast lab.

The lab was indeed large, round and at least 100 meters wide and 30 meters high. When Huo Yuhao entered, a huge object immediately caught his attention.

It was a huge man made out of steel. It was at least 15 meters tall, and its huge frame was almost completely made of steel. From its appearance, it looked simple, but the frame of its body was complete. Its chest was propped open and inside there was a chair-like object.

Huo Yuhao did not just look at it with his eyes. He even made a sweep of it with his spiritual detection. After he swept it, he retreated quickly, and almost fell down.

He found thousands of formation arrays on the metallic man's body. He had almost never felt such precise formation arrays before. Even more terrifying, he could sense a horrifying power in the body of the metallic man. This belonged to the metal itself. Yet, how could he fully understand it in such a short time?

What... what exactly is it?

Huo Yuhao paused, and then walked forward quickly, stopping in front of the metallic man. The closer he got, the bigger it appeared to him. Before the metallic man, he felt like an ant.

He tried to use his Darkgolden Terrorclaw to slash at the metallic man. Sparks flew, but all that he did was leave a white scar on the metal. Huo Yuhao did not use his powerful soul power, but normally, not even gold or silver could resist his claws. This metal man was incredibly resilient!

This was the highest level of research in Illustrious Virtue Hall. Could they be developing the metallic man for war?

He raised his head to look at the opening in the metallic man's chest. The control chamber should be there. As he thought about how he controlled the all-terrain exploration soul tool, he realized how insignificant it was compared to the metallic man. This confirmed his suspicion that this metallic man was extremely important to Illustrious Virtue Hall, and that it was at the highest level of research for them in terms of soul tools.

However, how could he take it away? This was too huge, and it was not something Huo Yuhao could store with his storage-type soul tool.

If he couldn't take it away, he had to destroy it. At the very least, he could inflict some damage on Illustrious Virtue Hall. However, it was too strong, and with his power, there was no way he could do that in such a short time.

As Huo Yuhao agonized over it, he directed his Spiritual Detection from the metallic man to the area around him.

"Eh, what's that?"

There was scaffolding at various heights around the metallic man. They were made so that its creators could further refine it. Near Huo Yuhao, there was a low metallic platform. Some of the items on this platform were connected to the metallic man.

His body flashed, and he arrived before the platform, the connected items in front of him.

There was an item that was slightly larger than a palm, which resembled a mirror. A silvery-white ornamental layer surrounded it. Formation arrays were engraved on top of it. At its center, there was a huge sapphire that protruding. The sapphire was originally light-blue, but six rays of starlight now shone on it with an oddly hypnotic light.

"Could... could this be a starlight sapphire?" Huo Yuhao's face changed color. "What a large starlight sapphire!"

Starlight sapphire was a mystical sapphire that contained a massive amount of energy. It contained mysterious spatial energy, and was a good material to make space-type soul tools. Placing one piece the size of a thumbnail into a storage-type soul tool could increase its storage space by almost a cubic meter.

Starlight sapphire was valuable because there were very little of it. There were even fewer large pieces, which were extremely precious.

No one had ever seen or heard of a piece as large as the one before him! How could Huo Yuhao not be surprised? At the same time, he pondered its uses.

Could that be all? Huo Yuhao thumbed the huge starlight sapphire and lifted it, along with the metallic formation it was inlaid into. He used his Mysterious Heaven Technique and slowly inserted a bit of his soul power into it.

A powerful sensation started to spread from the starlight sapphire. Huo Yuhao felt his soul power leaving him rapidly. In a matter of seconds, almost a third of it was gone.

At this moment, he suddenly realized that the top of the metallic man's head had started to glow blue in tandem with the light emitted from the starlight sapphire.

A ray of blue light from the starlight sapphire shone out, and started to spread. The metallic man's head gave off a similar light. When the two lights met each other, a bright blue glow suddenly illuminated the entire lab.

The odd distortion in space shocked Huo Yuhao once more. However, all he could do was stand there, unmoving.

Fortunately, the blue light did not last too long. When the light faded, Huo Yuhao discovered to his surprise that the metallic man had disappeared.

Chapter 173: Its, Its Actually Her...

This was indeed a storage-type soul tool! It had to be the biggest storage-type soul tool there was! As he saw the sapphire, Huo Yuhao was both delighted and shocked.

He didn't expect his luck to be so good, he had actually obtained such a treasure! He could sense that this metallic man had some capabilities, even though it was only half-complete. Furthermore, there were many formation arrays in this metallic man. It wasn't beneficial just for him in his research of soul tools. He believed that he could match up to the top-ranked soul engineers in Illustrious Virtue Hall if he managed to completely understand this metallic man. Of course, he would still need a lot of time. But possessing this metallic man meant that he practically owned a soul tool encyclopedia from the Illustrious Virtue Hall.

He quickly put the storage-type soul tool away in his own storage-type soul tool before leaving.

He had no mood to think about the hundred-thousand year soul embryo at this moment. This metallic man was much more important than the hundred-thousand year soul embryo. He was only thinking of how he should leave this place.

After rushing out of the tunnel, Huo Yuhao took in a deep breath, and his heart started to beat faster and faster.

The booms outside seemed to have become softer. The battle between the two parties appeared to have dropped in intensity.

What should he do? Should he still take that tunnel? He had no choice. Even if he had to dig after entering the tunnel, he still had a slim chance. With the Ice Empress' Pincer and Darkgolden Terrorclaws, he was capable of digging another tunnel. If he managed to dig until he reached the rest of the tunnels in the underground base that the Body Sect members had gone into, he could escape.

Huo Yuhao sped up as he considered his options. He rushed towards the opening of the tunnel that he had entered earlier.

At this point, a black figure flashed past with an alarming speed.

"Who's there?" the other party shouted. An intense purplish light shone, and a frightening, suppressive force caused Huo Yuhao to nearly suffocate.

Two yellow, two purple, and four black soul rings appeared on the person's body. He was a Soul Douluo with a pair of thick arms. At this moment, his arms had already turned into a pair of large pincers.

"Shut up." Huo Yuhao's voice was deep and frail. He also removed the veil from his face.

The other party was stunned upon seeing the old and frail face that Huo Yuhao had created for himself with his Imitation, and knelt down on one knee, "Greetings, sect master."

Huo Yuhao was very nervous now. He knew that he had imitated the right person.

The other party's martial soul and dress revealed his identity as a warrior of the Body Sect. He was a Soul Douluo-ranked expert who possessed a Body Soul - his Arms were his Body Soul! How powerful was he? Did he dig the tunnel with his arms?

"Get your hands on it?" Huo Yuhao asked him.

"Yes, we did." The Soul Douluo appeared very excited. He presented something to Huo Yuhao with both hands.

It was a white tray. There was a wooden ladle on it with hundreds of gemstones of all colors. A ball of white gas was trembling slightly on this wooden ladle.

Huo Yuhao had last seen this item at the Starlight Auctionplace. How could he forget this top-ranked finale item!? Although he didn't know how the other party got their hands on it, he was certain that it was a hundred-thousand year soul beast embryo. The Godsealing Altar was definitely real.

Huo Yuhao took in a deep breath and tried to calm down. He snatched the Godsealing Altar from the other party. He set it in front of him and took a good look at it before nodding and saying, "Not bad, you've contributed greatly this time. You'll be greatly rewarded when we return. Go on, leave quickly."

As he spoke, he put the Godsealing Altar away in his own storage-type soul tool.

However, he immediately realized that he'd failed. His storage-type soul tool couldn't contain the Godsealing Altar. Huo Yuhao almost slapped himself. How could he forget this? If the classes of soul tools were too far apart, the storage-type soul tool wouldn't be able to contain a higher-class soul tool!

At this point, reverberating booms could be heard from the outside again. The man in black in front of Huo Yuhao stood up quickly, looking very shocked. He pointed his finger at Huo Yuhao and asked, "You, you're not the sect master?!"

Huo Yuhao furrowed his brow. "What gibberish are you spouting?"

The man in black turned fierce. "I sensed the sect master's aura on the outside. You're an imitation! Go and die!"

His right arm had already turned into a huge, purple fist as he spoke. He punched straight towards Huo Yuhao's chest. That instantaneous, explosive force caused the entire tunnel to distort slightly.

He used his other hand to reach towards the hundred-thousand year soul beast embryo.

When the other party claimed that he wasn't the sect master, Huo Yuhao knew that things had gone wrong. His abilities were far inferior to this Soul Douluo's. His life was in grave danger now that he had been discovered!

At this critical moment, Huo Yuhao displayed what he had learned from the Ultimate Soldier Plan. He did the only thing that was right.

A layer of scarlet-gold light surfaced on his body. It was the fifteen-second Invincible Barrier from the Hongchen's Blessing. His defensive strength increased threefold with this Invincible Barrier.

He also unleashed the Ice Empress' Armor, though the diamond crystals didn't release any glow under the disguise of his Imitation.

As he unleashed both his defensive capabilities, he used the hundred-thousand year soul embryo to receive the other party's frightening fist. However, the other party didn't seem to take any heed as he continued to reach his hand over.

A hundred-thousand year soul ring and soul bone were a treasure to every soul master. This Soul Douluo never expected that someone would allow this treasure to be damaged after obtaining it.

He reckoned that Huo Yuhao's cultivation must be of a certain standard, or Huo Yuhao wouldn't have dared to trick him. That's why he unleashed his entire strength with this punch. It was almost impossible to retract his fist.

However, the hundred-thousand year soul beast embryo was their main target! Whether it was the hundred million gold coin reward, the soul beast embryo itself, or the Class 9 Godsealing Altar that contained it, they were all valuable treasures. However, he was anxious because Huo Yuhao didn't seem to care.

His left hand reached for his right hand at this moment rather than grabbing towards Huo Yuhao.

The Body Sect had expended a lot of effort for this plan. They had spent almost two years on their advanced preparations. They had also done their own research on the Godsealing Altar.

The Godsealing Altar could seal life within it. However, the target must lose all ability to struggle before it could be sealed. Once the target was sealed, even a Titled Douluo couldn't break out. It was normally used to seal some powerful soul beasts that had lost their fighting strength, but it was used, if rarely, on soul masters.

However, the Godsealing Altar wasn't completely flawless. The seal was sustained by drawing from the trapped person's soul power. That's why it was very powerful internally, but was unable to exert any significant external defensive strength. A certain amount of force could cause this Class 9 soul tool to crack. That was why the Godsealing Altar was also known to be soft on the outside, but tough on the inside.

Huo Yuhao naturally had some understanding of the Godsealing Altar. That was why he made such a choice. After obtaining the huge experimental metallic man, he just wanted to leave this place safely. He wasn't that interested in the hundred-thousand year soul beast embryo, either. He couldn't absorb a hundred-thousand year soul ring with his current abilities. Furthermore, he didn't even know what this soul beast's type was! That was why he'd rather release this soul beast, which also happened to be the only way he could resist the other party's attack. Otherwise, even Hongchen's Blessing couldn't withstand the other party's attack, considering the gap in their cultivations.

Survival was his only goal now.

The Soul Douluo who was chosen to carry out this critical task was indeed very powerful. He still managed to achieve his goal even though he changed his move at the last moment. His left hand managed to grab hold of his right hand. His body stiffened up, and his right fist stopped right in front of the Godsealing Altar.

However, it had taken all of his energy to do this. After all, he had completely unleashed his right fist. He knew that Huo Yuhao would exploit this opportunity to attack him, but he was fairly confident of his own defensive strength. However, something unexpected happened.

Huo Yuhao attacked him, but he used the Godsealing Altar to attack him.

Huo Yuhao could sense where the other party's fist had stopped using his Spiritual Detection. He smashed the Godsealing Altar towards the other party's fist. He used all his strength this time, and the strength of the Ice Empress' Pincer was completely unleashed.

Bang!

Kacha-!

The Godsealing Altar was smashed against the Soul Douluo's clenched fist. A crack appeared on this dazzling Class 9 soul tool as a piercing, cracking sound echoed out.

"Bastard!" the Soul Douluo roared furiously. He wanted to snatch the Godsealing Altar back.

However, the temperature in the entire tunnel suddenly dropped. A streak of white gas drilled its way out of the crack on the Godsealing Altar.

Huo Yuhao let go of the Godsealing Altar and quickly retreated. The Soul Douluo opened his arms and grabbed towards that streak of white gas.

A woman's voice, sounding very aloof and furious, exclaimed, "Despicable humans! Go and die! All of you can go and die!"

In the next instant, both Huo Yuhao and the eight-ringed Soul Douluo saw everything turn white in front of them.

Huo Yuhao couldn't see the Soul Douluo, but he could tell that the Hongchen's Blessing's Invincible Barrier had stalled. His circulating soul power weakened, and a piercing, cracking sound shook the air in the next moment. A frightening chill surged towards him from every direction, and engulfed his body.

Huo Yuhao hadn't felt cold for a long time due to his Ultimate Ice. However, he was feeling chilly at this moment. His body and spirit were about to be frozen, and his body turned rigid.

At this point, a surprised voice sounded in Huo Yuhao's mind, "It's-it's actually her... How is this possible? How is this possible?"

A refreshing gust of air was released from the Ice Jade Empress' Scorpion's skeleton to tackle the chill. Huo Yuhao's frozen blood started to circulate normally once again. The Ultimate Ice continued to protect Huo Yuhao's body during this chill, and kept him from being completely frozen.

However, Huo Yuhao could sense that even the Ultimate Ice seemed inferior to the chill that was sweeping over him.

He had always thought that his Ultimate Ice brought about the most extreme chill, but this sudden change caused his understanding to be revised.

When he reopened his eyes, he was shocked by what he saw.

The entire tunnel had become narrower. There was now a layer of crystalline ice about a foot thick covering the inside of the tunnel. The Soul Douluo had been turned into an ice sculpture. He was motionless as he stood in front of Huo Yuhao. The Godsealing Altar was also frozen after it dropped to the ground.

The tunnel had turned completely dark now. The soul tools that were used to increase visibility had lost their effect. If not for Huo Yuhao's Spirit Eyes, he wouldn't be able to see anything.

"Ice Empress, what's going on? What did you mean just now?" The shocked voice he had heard had come from the Ice Empress.

The Ice Empress sounded very appalled. "That's-that's the aura of the Snow Empress!"

"Snow Empress!" Huo Yuhao's body jerked, and he almost lost his voice. "Are you saying that the hundred-thousand year soul beast embryo sealed within the Godsealing Altar belongs to the leader of the Three Heavenly Kings of the Extreme North, the Snow Empress, who also happens to be ranked third among the Ten Great Savage Beasts?"

"That's right. It's the Snow Empress' aura." The Ice Empress sounded more certain now. "In the continent, only the Snow Empress possesses an aura even chillier than mine. That voice also belonged to the Snow Empress. I'm certain that it's the Snow Empress."

Huo Yuhao couldn't believe it as he asked, "But, is that even possible? Isn't the Snow Empress' cultivation close to seven hundred thousand years? If a soul beast wants to turn into a human, it has to make a choice at the hundred thousand-year mark. Since the Snow Empress has already existed for seven hundred thousand years, how can she be reborn into a human? Could it be someone else from the same species?"

The Ice Empress replied, "It's impossible. The Snow Empress is special. She's an Icesky Snow Lady that was given life after receiving the spiritual energy of heaven and earth. How can a normal Snow Lady be more powerful than me? It's definitely the Snow Empress. Although I don't know how she did it, I'm certain that it's her."

The Skydream Iceworm's voice sounded, "Whether it is or it isn't the Snow Empress, we have to leave this place quickly. This is not the time to consider it."

Huo Yuhao was jolted to his senses. Yes! He wasn't out of danger yet!

He quickly walked towards the Soul Douluo. A cold light flashed in his eyes, and he said in a low voice, "I'm sorry." As he spoke, he stretched out his right index finger, and his Darkgolden Terrorclaw pierced through the ice, puncturing the Soul Douluo's forehead.

There was still a possibility of revival after being frozen under extreme conditions. However, Huo Yuhao wouldn't survive if he remained here and was captured by Illustrious Virtue Hall. It might even reveal his tracks. It wasn't time for him to be merciful right now.

He bent over and picked up the damaged Godsealing Altar, putting it away in his storage-type soul tool. Although it was damaged, it was still a Class 9 soul tool! It was still extremely valuable in terms of research and materials.

The fighting noises outside abruptly became even louder. Huo Yuhao hesitated for a moment before returning to the previous tunnel.

The tunnel hadn't caved in, and Huo Yuhao used his Spiritual Detection to sense the changes in the soil above the tunnel. He quickly advanced, and soon arrived at the collapsed spot. He used his Spiritual Detection to check the situation above, and was greeted with a delightful surprise. From where he was, it was only three meters to the surface. The top was also covered by a steel board, helping to conceal the situation beneath it. Huo Yuhao unleashed his Ice Empress' Pincer decisively, and started to dig upwards. He quickly dug his way up to the board.

The metal board above made jerking noises, and Huo Yuhao leapt up and stuck his body to it.

The air here was extremely polluted, and the smell of stinking soil made it hard to breathe. His Spiritual Detection enabled him to locate a place to conceal himself as he moved along the steel board. His Darkgolden Terrorclaws tore it apart, and he silently made his way underneath a laboratory desk.

He was now quite close to the main hall of Illustrious Virtue Hall. After calming his breathing for a moment, he observed the situation in front of him carefully.

The entire underground base had already been reduced to a huge mess. Less than a fifth of the laboratory desks were in good condition. The losses Illustrious Virtue Hall had suffered couldn't just be measured in terms of money.

Jing Hongchen's expression was very pale. Streaks of red light were continually being released from his body.

Du Busi remained in mid-air. However, their targets were no longer each other. Rather, it was the swaying and flashing white figure in the air.

Streaks and streams of frozen white gas were being released from this figure. However, Du Busi and Jing Hongchen's dominant attacks prevented this white gas from spreading.

Besides Du Busi and Jing Hongchen, the rest of the people from both sides had stopped fighting at this point. They watched this fight between the three powerful parties as they clearly separated into two different sides.

Huo Yuhao managed to catch a clear glimpse of the white figure. It was a young girl that seemed to be only two or three years old. Her chubby body was covered in a snow-white, cotton skirt.

She roared viciously and tried to break out of the encirclement. Many people from the Body Sect and Illustrious Virtue Hall had already turned into ice sculptures, obviously her doing.

"Is that really the Snow Empress?" Huo Yuhao asked the Ice Empress.

The Ice Empress replied, "It should be. After the Snow Empress was reborn as a human, she should have turned into a human embryo. She must be trying to give up her rebirth and return to her original form. However, she doesn't seem to possess even a third of her normal strength. Otherwise, these humans wouldn't be able to stop her no matter how strong they were!"

Huo Yuhao furrowed his brow and said, "It's normal for her powers to fall after being trapped in the Godsealing Altar for so long. Furthermore, she has experienced a rebirth into a human."

“No, I have to help her!” The Ice Empress’ determination shocked Huo Yuhao.

Huo Yuhao hurriedly said, “Ice Empress, don’t be reckless. The situation is very messy now. How can we help her?”

The Ice Empress replied, “The Snow Empress saved me before. Now that she’s in trouble, I have to help her. Don’t worry, I have my own way. I won’t endanger you. Don’t move. I’ll communicate with her.”

The Ice Empress was slowly released, and the golden-red, four-hundred thousand year soul ring appeared on Huo Yuhao’s body. Imitation concealed its light.

A huge image of the Ice Jade Empress Scorpion slowly surfaced on Huo Yuhao’s back. If he stripped, this image would seem to be alive. The image moved slightly on his back, and a weird light shot out from the Ice Empress’ crystal-yellow eyes. A streak of strange aura was also exuded.

Du Busi was very depressed right now. He had never expected things to go this badly. They were fully prepared for this sneak attack, and had even practiced it countless times. It was supposed to be flawless. But who knew that the sealed hundred-thousand year soul beast embryo would escape, and be so powerful?

Neither the Body Sect or Illustrious Virtue Hall dared to use their most destructive weapons to attack. If the place collapsed, no one would survive.

But the soul beast embryo was too difficult to deal with. Its body temperature was too low. It was both Du Busi and Jing Hongchen’s first time seeing something like this. Its Ultimate Ice managed to neutralize all their attacks. Even Du Busi’s notoriously lethal poison couldn’t penetrate the frozen gas.

In addition, Du Busi had to be wary of Jing Hongchen even when he dealt with the soul beast embryo. While the two of them seemed to be teaming up, the suspended battle would erupt again once the soul beast embryo appeared to be on the verge of caving in.

The Snow Empress’ body was covered by a layer of frozen gas. This layer of frozen gas was in a ball shape with a diameter of two meters. However, this ball of frozen gas could even freeze light, and was the Snow Empress’ best protection.

Du Busi reached out with his right hand, and formed a huge hand of dark-green light. This energy palm reached out for the Snow Empress. Jing Hongchen coordinated with him, and a long, frightening red rainbow appeared in the air. This rainbow whipped towards the Snow Empress. A two-pronged attack from front and back was unleashed against the Snow Empress.

The air in the underground base started to distort furiously. Slits started to appear in the air as the two of them unleashed their power to stop the Snow Empress.

They weren’t entirely sure how the Snow Empress had managed to garner such power, but at this moment of crisis, the most crucial thing was to capture her first. The enmity between the two of them could wait until they had dealt with this hundred-thousand year soul beast.

The frozen ball of gas suddenly turned rigid. Initially, it was quite flexible, but it didn't manage to avoid Du Busi's huge hand of soul energy. The dark-green light engulfed and restrained the frozen ball of gas within it.

Jing Hongchen's scarlet rainbow also whipped the ball of gas, causing it to distort drastically. The ball of gas seemed to be critically damaged.

Du Busi was elated. He could sense that the ball of gas was not as cold as before, and it was also on the verge of collapsing. He suddenly shouted, "Retreat!" Since he had achieved his goal, it was imperative for him to leave quickly.

Jing Hongchen laughed coldly and gestured with his right hand. The soul engineers from Illustrious Virtue Hall immediately launched a ferocious attack against the Body Sect.

The rainbow that had struck the ball of gas disappeared. However, something small was now floating in mid-air, looking like a crystal ball. It was very smooth and bright, and had many holes in it. A magical scarlet-red light flashed up inside it at this point.

Ommmmmm! A deafening hum suddenly shook the air. Even Du Busi stiffened up when he heard this hum. Following this, a thin streak of red light shot out from the scarlet-red crystal ball. This red light engulfed the dark-green light that had restrained the ball of gas.

Du Busi's soul power was quickly dissipated by that ray of scarlet light. The Snow Empress was freed before Du Busi could drag her away.

Du Busi was enraged. Just as he was about to pull himself together, an indescribable sense of crisis suddenly swept over him.

At the Ultimate Douluo level, one was almost godly. An Ultimate Douluo was extremely perceptive, and even had the ability to predict the future.

Du Busi didn't hesitate, and quickly let go of the idea of taking the Snow Empress. His figure flashed, and he returned to the ground. A dark-green light supported his body and blocked off the attacks from the Illustrious Virtue Hall soul engineers. It also extended out to protect all the Body Sect members.

A desolate voice echoed throughout the entire place, overshadowing all other sounds.

In the air, the frozen ball of gas was still rigid as it was covered by the red light.

"Despicable humans. All of you will pay the price for hunting soul beasts one day. Even if I die, I won't fulfill your greed! All of you can go and die!"

When she reached the end of her words, the Snow Empress was already screeching. Her terrifying soul power undulations caused the air around her to distort violently.

"This is not good!" Jing Hongchen exclaimed, "Quickly, stop her!" As he shouted, he didn't conserve his powers any further. Multiple blurs of red light continued to appear in mid-air.

They turned into barriers of light that engulfed the frozen gas. The rest of the Illustrious Virtue Hall members imitated him and added even more layers of defensive barriers around the frozen gas.

The regretful Du Busi watched the frozen gas sphere. Under his command, the Body Sect members were quickly retreating into the underground holes that they had come from.

Ommmmm...!

Boom!

Tremors struck the entire place as terrifying explosive booms rang out. The Snow Empress unleashed her full power, turning into a frightening explosive force that swept the entire place.

If the magnitude of this explosion had to be described, Jing Hongchen was certain that it was as powerful as a legendary Class 10 explosive soul tool.

The layers of defensive barriers were completely destroyed by the explosion. The immense force blew the entire underground base apart.

Fortunately, there were many layers of powerful defensive barriers. More than twelve Class 9 soul tools greatly weakened the strength of the explosion. When the shockwave surged through the underground base, the underground base still did not collapse.

Countless cracks appeared within the underground base, however, and many sections of it were caving in. A cold aura filled the air, and everyone shivered from the biting chill.

What a powerful hundred-thousand year soul beast! Even after turning into a human embryo, she still possessed such frightening strength! How unfortunate that it didn't matter anymore. She had self-imploded, and not even a soul bone was left of her.

The Body Sect also suffered from the shockwave of the explosion. However, Du Busi bore the entire impact of the shockwave alone, spitting out dark-green blood as he warded it from his sect members.

The Body Sect consisted of only soul masters. They weren't like Illustrious Virtue Hall. There were many Class 9 soul engineers helping Jing Hongchen, but Du Busi used his own strength to bear the impact of the shockwave, which also alleviated the impact on the underground base.

The rest of the Body Sect managed to retreat, along with the corpses of their comrades, because Du Busi resisted the explosion for them.

Du Busi was a little indignant when he looked at Jing Hongchen. Jing Hongchen also spat out some blood at this point. As their gazes met, Du Busi revealed a mocking look in his eyes. He reached out his right hand and gave the other man a thumbs-down. He only left after swaying his thumb slightly.

"Chase them!" Jing Hongchen shouted, infuriated. He quickly turned into a streak of flowing light and pursued the Body Sect. The rest of the Illustrious Virtue Hall defenders also acted quickly.

Huo Yuhao had remained motionless underneath the laboratory desk the whole time. The impact of the shockwave was almost entirely resisted by the Illustrious Virtue Hall members. He wasn't struck by the shockwave to any real extent.

However, he couldn't move right now even if he wanted to. An extreme chill had entered his body through his back and circulated throughout his entire body. Almost every part of his body was on the brink of being frozen.

No one had seen a clear fluid descending from the sky when the Snow Empress caused the explosion. This liquid flowed onto Huo Yuhao's back and seeped into his body. The frightening explosive force had concealed everything.

The Ice Empress' Ultimate Ice immediately protected him from the cold as it seeped into Huo Yuhao's body. She even used her own strength to restrict that chill as it flowed below his navel region. This also relieved Huo Yuhao from the freezing pain.

The Ice Empress was anxious as she called out, "Snow Lady, Snow Lady, how are you?!"

A weak woman's voice replied, "Ice, why are you here? You're even in a human's body." The Ice Empress' voice was resonating in Huo Yuhao's spiritual world.

Huo Yuhao felt weird at this point. "This must be the fourth one. Brother Skydream, Ice Empress, Elder Yi. Now there's the Snow Empress..."

The Ice Empress was anxious. "Don't ask so many questions right now. You're only left with this little origin power now. How is your condition? Can you recover?"

The Snow Empress said grievously, "If not for your call, I would have infused my origin power into that explosion. In that way, I could drag more down with me. Do you think I can recover? I don't even have my body now. This little bit of origin power will slowly dissipate."

The Ice Empress asked anxiously, "Snow Lady, what happened? Why did you become a hundred-thousand year soul beast embryo? No wonder I had a familiar feeling when I saw that Godsealing Altar at the Starlight Auction house. You're the one that was sealed inside the altar."

The Snow Empress sighed and said, "Aren't we in the same boat? If I'm not wrong, you only ran into a bottleneck in these recent few years. Before I chose rebirth as a human, I tried to find you and hoped to help you. But you'd already disappeared. Even those from your species didn't know where you'd gone."

The Ice Empress laughed bitterly. "Even if you had helped me, I wouldn't have been able to pass that stage. I know myself well. When potential reaches its limit, external help won't be useful. That's why I chose this path."

"Snow Empress, how are you? Do you still remember me?" Skydream Iceworm was a little awkward.

"Oh?" The Snow Empress was evidently stunned. "There's still a soul beast's aura here? Why are the two of you in a human's world? This aura is very familiar. It's a spiritual power that's tremendous, but not dangerous. What is it?" She evidently couldn't recall the Skydream Iceworm.

The Ice Empress snapped, "It's that fortunate Skydream Iceworm. It managed to advance in its sleep, and overcame bottleneck after bottleneck. Its cultivation even superseded mine."

The Snow Empress perked up. "Oh, I remember. I remember that you chased after it before. Didn't you say that it went missing? Why're the two of you together now?"

Skydream chortled and said, "Snow Empress, you're right that we're together!"

"Scram and shut up!" the Ice Empress raged.

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Huo Yuhao was like a bystander now. He sensed the three of them talking in his Spiritual Sea and found it very weird.

The Illustrious Virtue Hall's underground base was a mess. Besides the Illustrious Virtue Hall members who chased after the Body Sect, those with lesser cultivations remained to help those who had been injured.

Huo Yuhao was among those who needed help. He was brought to a safer place after he was verified to be alive. He also acted like he was unconscious, and was thus temporarily safe.

"Snow Lady, let me help you to gather your origin power first. Maybe you'll have a chance at recovery." The Ice Empress wanted to use Huo Yuhao's soul power to help the Snow Empress shrink the transparent fluid that was the manifestation of the Snow Empress' origin power.

However, the Ice Empress soon realized that something was amiss. That was because she couldn't control Huo Yuhao's internal strength like she could before.

"Yuhao, do something. Come and help." The Ice Empress snapped.

Huo Yuhao laughed bitterly. "Ice Empress, I'm not doing nothing! I'm just scared that the Snow Empress will misunderstand if I just suddenly appear."

The Snow Empress did misunderstand. She sensed Huo Yuhao's aura and asked in shock, "Ice, you're residing in a human's body? How did your dignity fall to this stage? What happened? It's you. You're the one who smashed the Godsealing Altar and released me?"

Huo Yuhao was annoyed. "But you took advantage of my kindness and froze me too. Without the Ice Empress' strength, I would've become a real ice sculpture."

The Snow Empress was furious, "You humans are all evil. I don't need your help."

The Ice Empress sighed. She knew that no one could change the Snow Empress' mind when she got angry. The only way was to clarify things first.

She tried her best to explain how she had met Huo Yuhao and the Skydream Iceworm, as well as how the Skydream Iceworm had convinced her to become Huo Yuhao's second martial soul.

The Snow Lady's emotions were evidently surging. Huo Yuhao also took this opportunity to gather the Snow Empress' remaining origin power into a small, transparent pearl using his Ultimate Ice soul power under the Ice Empress' guidance. He stabilized this pearl below his navel.

It seemed like the Ice Empress was similar to Electrolux then. She was only left with this origin sense. She had fared better than Electrolux in the sense that her origin sense was complete and wasn't in pieces. However, the Snow Empress couldn't compare to Electrolux in terms of her divine sense. Without the protection of Huo Yuhao's Ultimate Ice, her origin power would've dissipated.

“Ice, I didn’t expect that you’d choose such a path.” The Snow Empress sighed after hearing the Ice Empress out. She had also calmed down significantly.

The Ice Empress laughed bitterly. “I had no choice! If not because I was desperate, I wouldn’t have entrusted my fate to someone else. Right now, I can only do my best to help Yuhao. I hope that he can reach that stage one day.”

The Snow Empress said, “Skydream.”

“Yes, I’m here. I’m here.” The Skydream Iceworm appeared eagerly once again.

The Snow Empress said, “I never thought you’d be so loyal. You found a path to success, but you never forgot Ice. Solely based on this, Ice is fortunate to follow you. You must take good care of her in the future.”

“Alright, alright.” The Skydream Iceworm didn’t rush to answer.

“Snow Lady, what do you mean?” The Ice Empress asked, “Snow Lady, are you unwilling to walk the same path as me?”

The Snow Empress laughed bitterly, “It’s not that I don’t want to. I can’t. Your situation is different from mine. I’ve already decided to be reborn as a human. My own strength is suppressed within my origin power. If my rebirth is successful, this strength will slowly be released from my human body and turn into my human strength. Now that a part of this strength is still present, do you think this human can accept this shrunken origin power of mine?”

“Furthermore, Skydream was the one who reserved a spot for you and allowed you to undergo fusion. But do I have a place here? If I stay, I’ll only be a time bomb. Once I detonate, the two of you will also die, along with this human.”

“Without my original body, my origin power is in an unstable state. It can blow apart at any time.”

After the Snow Empress listened to the Ice Empress, she was actually tempted. She had to admit that Skydream’s path was a good opportunity for soul beasts like them who had no choice. Once Huo Yuhao became a god, they might be released. However, she was in a different situation from the Ice Empress. There was no place for her here. If she underwent fusion, everyone would die.

The Ice Empress was speechless. Yes! She had guided the Snow Empress here, but how could she help her? She could also sense that the Snow Empress’ origin power was very unstable. The Snow Empress had lost the ability to control her own origin power. If something went wrong, disaster might ensue!

“Skydream, what do we do? Think of a way.” The Ice Empress couldn’t help but ask the Skydream Iceworm.

“Me...?” The Skydream Iceworm laughed bitterly. “What idea could I possibly have? Although my cultivation seems to be better than yours, my capabilities are extremely inferior to the two of you. The two of you can also clearly sense the condition of Yuhao’s body. His potential is slowly being developed, but it’s impossible for him to bear the Snow Empress’ origin power.”

“Is there not even a single solution?” The Ice Empress asked anxiously.

Skydream said, "If the Snow Empress could control her own power and follow us in sealing the parts that Yuhao can't absorb, she could become your martial soul's second soul ring, and there's a possibility of retaining her intelligence. However, the Snow Empress is above your level. If she fuses into a martial soul that you form, there'll be a conflict. That'll be a very serious matter. Furthermore, the Snow Empress can't control her own origin power now."

"If I retract my power and let the Snow Lady replace me, is it possible?" The Ice Empress asked flatly.

Skydream became annoyed. "Do you think this is a game? Do you think giving up your position is so easy? Your strength has already fused with my ice martial soul. Without Yuhao's agreement, you can't retract your power. Even if you could, it would only cause the ice martial soul to be crushed. Everyone will perish together."

The Snow Empress' voice became much gentler, "Ice, don't be like that. We've lived in this world for hundred thousands of years. I've lived even longer than you. When I was first born, there weren't even humans around yet. Is death really that scary? I don't think so. Maybe it's just a new beginning. If there's a next life, I hope we can be of different genders. I'll marry you then. It's time to say goodbye, Ice."

As she spoke, the Snow Lady's origin power struggled slightly beneath Huo Yuhao's navel. It started to swim like a fish. Huo Yuhao's soul power couldn't restrict it as it tried to escape his body.

The Skydream Iceworm was stunned. "What's going on? Ice Empress, you and the Snow Empress..."

"Shut up!" The Ice Empress screamed, and her voice already sounded like she was sobbing. "Snow Empress, don't go. We'll think of another way."

The Snow Empress sighed. "I have to go. I don't know how long I can suppress this origin power anymore. After I leave, all of you should leave this place quickly. Once my origin power blows apart, it'll be even more terrifying than what happened earlier. Ice, Skydream is a nice chap. Be nicer to him."

"You don't have to go." Elder Yi's voice sounded at this moment. He finally spoke.

"Elder Yi." The Ice Empress seemed to have found her savior, "Elder Yi, help the Snow Lady. If you can help her survive, I'll do anything."

Electrolux smiled as he said, "Even if it means giving up your spirit?"

The Ice Empress was in a momentary daze. After that, she said determinedly, "Yes."

Electrolux was silent for a moment before he replied, "I seem to have seen something. Reveal yourselves in the Spiritual Sea. Yuhao still needs to make a decision. After all, we're in his body."

Amidst an intense undulation of spiritual power, Huo Yuhao peered into his own mind. A boundless, golden ocean drifted into his vision – he had arrived beside his Spiritual Sea.

The Ice Empress turned into an Ice Jade Empress Scorpion, while the Skydream Iceworm was still the huge worm that had ten, flashing golden soul rings on it.

Huo Yuhao was shocked by the Snow Empress' appearance.

She looked like a seventeen or eighteen-year-old teenage girl. Her long, white hair flowed freely to her legs, and her sky-blue eyes were very clear. It was as if she could see through everything in the world. Her slender figure was flawless, and her long white dress wasn't adorned with any accessories. However, she still looked very elegant and ravishing.

Even though she was only left with a shred of her origin power, the Snow Empress paid very meticulous attention to her appearance. She stood out above the common crowd and had a proud demeanor.

Huo Yuhao had revealed his original appearance in his Spiritual Sea, but his body had a layer of dim gold that wasn't found on the Ice Empress or the others.

Electrolux's figure slowly surfaced. He wore a long, golden robe that had rose patterns on it. His white hair and beard revealed the vicissitudes of life that he had been through, and he carried a sense of simplicity and profundity.

When the Snow Empress saw him for the first time, her body jerked. Huo Yuhao could sense an agitation in her origin power.

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Electrolux also looked at the Snow Empress and said with a calm gaze, "You have one of the most powerful spiritual senses I've seen since coming to this world. Although that worm has a greater cultivation than you, he can't compare to you in terms of his spiritual sense. Your spiritual sense is also very pure, which is a very rare thing. No wonder you're the Icesky Snow Lady."

The Snow Empress was aloof as she looked back at Electrolux, "Human, you don't have to say such useless things to me. You're very powerful."

Electrolux smiled, and the wrinkles on his face became very obvious. "You can sense my power because you're on a different level. Although I was only left with a shred of my divine sense when I came to this world, it still exists. Although your level isn't low, it has remained stagnant at that level. After all, one's spiritual and divine sense don't belong in the same category."

The Snow Empress' spirit jerked a little. "Are you the split consciousness of a god?"

Electrolux shook his head and said, "No, I'm just a human who didn't want to be a god. In my previous world, becoming a god signified eternal death. It seems to be different in this world. It's a pity that I no longer possess the foundation to become a god.

"Let's talk about your matter. Your situation is actually very simple. After you lost your body, your immense spiritual sense no longer has a body to house it. Your spiritual power can no longer contain your origin power, and it'll eventually blow apart. There doesn't seem to be a place in Yuhao's body that can contain you, because he is still not strong enough right now. While it isn't possible to contain you now, that doesn't mean that it will be impossible in the future. That's why I'm willing to help you. I'm also helping myself, the worm, and the scorpion.

"With your strength, it'll be much easier for Yuhao to advance in the future."

The Snow Empress replied, "If I'm going to live, I'd rather return to nature than live so pathetically."

Electrolux smiled. “No one’s asking you to live pathetically. I’ve already thought about your future. But the time isn’t ripe. You need to preserve your powers and prevent them from dissipating. Your intelligence will exist with your spiritual sense.”

“My future?” The Snow Empress was a little confused, and looked at Electrolux with a new sense of curiosity.

Electrolux nodded, and his lips moved as if he were saying something, but Skydream, the Ice Empress, and Huo Yuhao couldn’t hear him.

The Snow Empress listened very carefully. After a long while, her confusion turned into shock. “Is that really possible?” she asked, and everyone could hear her.

Electrolux answered in a deep voice. “I never exaggerate things. I’m seventy percent confident that it can be realized. Furthermore, it’s only your origin power that will need to be sealed. Your spiritual sense and intelligence can remain in Huo Yuhao’s Spiritual Sea just like the worm and the scorpion, which will allow you to consolidate your spiritual sense and help you familiarize yourself with this place. When Yuhao’s cultivation reaches seven rings, it’ll be a great opportunity to evolve.”

“Snow Lady, I beg you. Please stay here.” The Ice Empress pestered the Snow Empress, and used her long scorpion tail to caress the Snow Empress’ slender thigh.

“That’s right. Stay here.” The Skydream Iceworm followed her to the Snow Empress’ side. However, he was smacked by the Ice Empress’ pincer before he could get close to the Snow Lady.

The Snow Empress turned to Huo Yuhao, and her icy-blue eyes bore a complicated look.

At this point, Huo Yuhao knew what he should do. He stared at the Snow Empress with a sincere look on his face and said, “Greetings, Snow Empress! Although I don’t know what Elder Yi said to you, I really hope that you can stay. I can’t guarantee that I’ll fulfill your wish in the future, but I’ll do my best to. You’re the darling of nature, you can’t just die. I’ll treat you like a friend, partner, and even kin, just like how I treat Skydream and the Ice Empress.”

If the Snow Empress stayed, it would be very beneficial to him. Although Huo Yuhao didn’t know what Elder Yi said to the Snow Empress, he had clearly heard the word ‘evolve’. Furthermore, his control over his body would become stronger as his abilities increased. Even the powerful spirits that existed in his body couldn’t forcefully control his body anymore.

Before the Snow Empress had turned into a human embryo, she had nearly seven hundred thousand years of cultivation! Even though she had blown her own body apart, her main strength was sealed within her origin. It would certainly be very useful for him in the future. In addition, the Snow Empress and Ice Empress appeared to very close, the Ice Empress would be delighted if the Snow Empress stayed.

Her desire to survive eventually trumped her pride. The Snow Empress glanced at the Ice Empress’ hopeful eyes and nodded, albeit with a little hesitation.

The Ice Empress quickly changed the topic. “Snow Lady, how did you manage to do it? With your seven-hundred thousand years of cultivation, you can’t possibly be reborn as a human! Above a hundred-

thousand years of cultivation, our strength can't be restricted just by sealing it. Even if we're willing to give up our strength, we won't be able to do it! How did you succeed?"

The Snow Empress said, "I encountered a hundred-thousand year Snow Lotus. The Snow Lotus can't unlock one's spiritual intelligence, but it contains the purest essence of heaven and earth. I used it to seal my origin, which allowed me to be reborn as a human. But who knew that I would be so unfortunate as to meet a human that had snuck into the Extreme North? He exploited the opportunity to seal me in that vicious Godsealing Altar."

The Ice Empress was enlightened. "I see. No wonder you chose this path. It's a pity..."

Electrolux spoke in a deep voice. "Snow Lady, your spiritual sense is too unstable because your sealed origin power is too immense. We must begin quickly."

Although the Snow Empress was very proud, she wouldn't delay after she made her choice. She nodded and answered, "I'll have to trouble you, then."

Electrolux drifted to the Snow Empress and reached his right hand forward. The Spiritual Sea beside them started to surge as Huo Yuhao entered a trance. Countless golden spots formed a light that was as bright as the stars, gathering towards Electrolux.

A long, golden staff slowly took form. Huo Yuhao felt a sudden and intense weakness as it condensed in Electrolux's hand.

Electrolux was in a different situation than the Skydream Iceworm and Ice Empress. When he fused into Huo Yuhao's body, he was only left with a shred of his divine sense. He needed to rely on Huo Yuhao's strength every time he wanted to exhibit any form of ability. Under such circumstances, the power that he wanted to use must be within Huo Yuhao's ability to handle.

The formation of this staff had undoubtedly drained Huo Yuhao's spiritual power.

Electrolux's aura changed when the golden staff entered his hands. An indescribable sense of purity and elegance made him seem like a god that had descended.

A deep chant sounded out, Electrolux was reciting mystical words. At the start, his voice was very deep. However, it gradually started to echo in Huo Yuhao's Spiritual Sea.

His mighty voice made him appear even more majestic. Skydream and the Ice Empress didn't move from where they were. The Snow Empress had already shut her eyes, and appeared to be sensing something.

Huo Yuhao was the only one in pain. He felt weaker and weaker. To his horror, he discovered that his boundless Spiritual Sea was shrinking at an alarming rate. His spiritual power was also decreasing significantly.

He initially felt that he already overestimated Elder Yi. But now he realized that Elder Yi was far stronger than he had thought. Huo Yuhao made such this judgment after witnessing the Ice Empress, Snow Empress, and Skydream Iceworm's reactions.

The Snow Empress' pride quickly disappeared as Elder Yi recited his incantations. What replaced it was a sense of solemnity and esteem.

How powerful would Elder Yi be if he wasn't just a shred of divine sense? Perhaps even a Transcendent Douluo would be inferior to him!

Huo Yuhao's belief grew despite the weakness he felt. He had realized how small he was during the fight between Illustrious Virtue Hall and the Body Sect. He wasn't at a level where he could get involved in such an intense fight. He couldn't even use his Spiritual Detection in such circumstances.

He might be one of the best among others of his same age, but he was still very far from the true elites.

Elder Yi's voice was very deep right from the start. However, Huo Yuhao's Spiritual Sea started to shake as Elder Yi continued to chat. In his Spiritual Sea, both bright and dim rays of light intersected. Huo Yuhao fell to a half-conscious state from the drain on his spiritual strength.

At this point, a huge golden vertical eye slowly opened in his Spiritual Sea. A golden beam of light turned into a strong ray shining directly on Huo Yuhao's body. He was jolted awake by the strong light.

Elder Yi's voice was blocked out by the light. The golden beam also started to emit brilliant spots that lit up his Spiritual Sea.

This was the feeling that came from the Eye of Destiny's second mental sea. The power of destiny was keeping Huo Yuhao conscious.

He still felt weak, but he managed to stay conscious. Huo Yuhao realized that Elder Yi wasn't just chanting anymore.

Electrolux wielded the golden staff in his hand, a ball of transparent golden light glowing blindingly above it. Strange runes slowly formed on the sphere. Every time a mysterious rune was formed, it would detach from the globe, drift towards the Snow Empress, and imprint onto her forehead. While the rune slowly fused into the Snow Empress' forehead, a second rune would slowly take form before drifting towards her again. This process carried on very smoothly.

Chapter 174.3: Snow Empress

Huo Yuhao gradually felt the weakness disappear. Electrolux seemed to have finally gathered enough strength, and the golden runes began to appear faster and faster. The Snow Lady was gradually engulfed in a layer of golden light, while her divine sense was magically stabilized.

Huo Yuhao could sense that the transparent pearl below his navel was now encased in a layer of gold energy, the entirety of the pearl's strength restrained by it.

It was a very strange feeling. It was as if a force on the brink of collapse had been frozen in that state. The Snow Empress' expression had also become calmer. Her aloof demeanor was much gentler now.

Something weird seemed to have been etched into Huo Yuhao's heart, and he slowly shut his eyes. He didn't know what had enabled him to become enlightened, but he slowly became immersed in his Spiritual Sea and entered a deep meditative state.

.....

Within the Illustrious Virtue Hall.

Jing Hongchen grit his teeth as he stood in the underground base. Everything in front of him was simply too startling.

The entire underground base was a complete mess. Less than a third of the costly laboratory desks were still in working order; the rest had been completely destroyed, leaving all sorts of rare metals strewn about. The underground base was in tatters.

Jing Hongchen was most depressed by the fact that the underground base was beginning to show signs of instability as a result of the intense battle that had ensued earlier. Luckily, it wasn't beyond salvaging. He immediately instructed his people to solidify and stabilize the base's foundations before they did anything else.

The Illustrious Virtue Hall had never been hit so badly before. The material damages it had sustained would be astronomically costly, and then there was the lives they'd lost. The Illustrious Virtue Hall didn't even belong to him; it was the soul tool research base for the entire Sun Moon Empire! It also had to bear the responsibility of developing advanced soul tools. Even with his current status in the Sun Moon Empire, he'd still be held responsible for such a grave matter. He was bound to receive pressure from the imperial family for this.

"Body Sect...Body Sect!" Jing Hongchen was enraged. His attempt to pursue them hadn't achieved anything. Halfway through one of the tunnels, Du Busi had collapsed the tunnel behind him while they were chasing them, which had allowed the Body Sect the chance to flee the area.

Jing Hongchen immediately commanded the military to lock down the entire city. However, he knew that this wouldn't work. With the Body Sect's abilities, how would the military be able to stop them?

"Hallmaster." Lin Jiayi's voice trembled as he walked up to Jing Hongchen. Jing Hongchen lowered his head to look at him.

"What's the situation?" Jing Hongchen attempted to calm down.

Lin Jiayi lowered his head and answered, "The warehouse is still fine—we didn't really lose anything. All of the advanced soul tools in storage are intact."

Jing Hongchen heaved a sigh of relief after hearing Lin Jiayi's words; at least there was still some good news. It seemed that the Body Sect's target had been the hundred thousand year soul beast embryo, and that they'd employed their entire sect to launch a surprise attack on them. Jing Hongchen was determined to take revenge.

"However..." Lin Jiayi's next word caused Jing Hongchen to tense up.

He glared at Lin Jiayi, "'However' what? Don't stutter, speak clearly."

Lin Jiayi grit his teeth. His voice trembled as he said, "However, Test Subject 1 is missing..."

"What?" Jing Hongchen felt as if his vision had suddenly gone dark. His body shook, and he almost toppled to the ground. Lin Jiayi quickly moved to support him.

Jing Hongchen felt as if the sky had just collapsed. He was panicking, and was extremely upset now.

"Repeat what you just said." Even Jing Hongchen's voice was trembling this time.

Lin Jiayi's voice continued to tremble as he said, "Test Subject 1 is missing."

Jing Hongchen cursed, spat out a mouthful of fresh blood, and then collapsed into Lin Jiayi's arms.

What was Test Subject 1? It was the pinnacle of the Illustrious Virtue Hall's research on soul tools! Even though it was only half-complete, it was the essence of the Sun Moon Empire's research on soul tools over the past few thousand years!

Jing Hongchen's face had become pale and his eyes were now full of fear as he looked at Lin Jiayi. He could get away with the fact that the Illustrious Virtue Hall had suffered a great amount of damage in this incident, but he couldn't bear the consequences brought about by the theft of Test Subject 1. This was something that threatened the entire empire's safety!

He took in a deep breath and tried to calm himself down. After a moment, he asked, "Who else knows about this?"

Lin Jiayi shook his head hurriedly and said, "I personally went to Laboratory 1 to check. I sealed the door to the lab and changed the door's passcode the moment I discovered that it was missing. I immediately came to report it to you."

Jing Hongchen finally managed to calm himself down and said, "Good job. No one else can know about this."

"Alright." Lin Jiayi hurriedly answered. Jing Hongchen's face was currently half-red and half-white. His hatred towards the Body Sect had reached a peak. His only hope right now was that Test Subject 1 was too difficult for anyone to use—that its technology was too advanced. If it were to be stripped apart, the explosive device within it would immediately detonate. This was a theft prevention plan they'd implemented, and right now, it seemed that doing so had been the right choice.

Even so, the metals they'd lost were still extremely valuable. Fortunately, the Illustrious Virtue Hall was greatly autonomous. So long as this matter wasn't exposed, there was still a chance that they could resolve it quietly.

Jing Hongchen forced his body to straighten up, somehow managing to maintain his cool despite the critical situation.

"Lin Jiayi, instruct everyone who was present today to keep their mouths sealed. Anyone that dares to leak news of the incident will be executed, no exceptions.

"Send people to every single auction houses, including those in the empire. Have them monitor any and all higher-level auctions. If Test Subject 1 is discovered, retrieve it at all costs.

"Finally, use the Illustrious Virtue Hall's name to send a mission out to all mercenaries and assassins: Kill anyone from the Body Sect and you'll be heavily rewarded."

Jing Hongchen paused for a moment, then said, "Besides the injured Illustrious Virtue Hall disciples, all remaining Illustrious Virtue Hall members are to aid in restoring our underground base. Help me inform the elders that we'll need them to beef up the Illustrious Virtue Hall's defenses as well. No further flaws will be accepted. Do you understand?"

"Yes," Lin Jiayi answered hurriedly. He was relieved that Jing Hongchen had regained his reason.

Jing Hongchen seemed to have thought of something, and asked anxiously, “How’re the exchange students from Shrek Academy? Especially Huo Yuhao. Were any of them hurt?”

Lin Jiayi knew that Jing Hongchen would ask him this question, thus had done his homework beforehand.

“Fan Yu and He Caitou are currently out for an experiment, thus they weren’t in the underground base. Most of the rest were also outside of the experimentation zone; the initial explosion didn’t affect them. They were all very sly, and managed to swiftly retreat to a safe place where they didn’t have to participate in the battle. Some of them are injured, but their injuries aren’t serious. Huo Yuhao is one of them. Our healing-type soul engineers have already checked on him. Even though he’s unconscious, he isn’t critically injured. He must’ve suffered a concussion; he just needs some time to recover.”

Jing Hongchen heaved a sigh of relief and said, “That’s good. If anything had happened to the Shrek students, it would’ve caused even more trouble. They have to be well taken care of—nothing can happen to them.”

Lin Jiayi hesitated for a moment before saying, “Hallmaster, do you think it’s possible that this attack was some sort of collusion between Shrek Academy and the Body Sect? How else could the Body Sect accurately know the position of our underground base—especially where Test Subject 1 and the hundred thousand year soul beast embryo were? They even managed to release the hundred thousand year soul beast embryo. I’m afraid that there’s a mole!”

Jing Hongchen glared at him and said, “Idiot. Don’t I know that? However, Shrek wasn’t involved. Is your brain empty? Does anyone from Shrek Academy know where our hundred thousand year soul beast embryo is? None of them can even enter the core region of the Illustrious Virtue Hall. Furthermore, we have Huo Yuhao with us. Shrek Academy wouldn’t be so stupid. They might mock us for this incident, but it wasn’t their doing. And do you really think that they’re that close to the Body Sect?”

“Alright, quickly pass down my instructions. We need to minimize the effects of this incident. I’ll head to the palace immediately; It seems that I need to pay the Crown Prince a visit after all. It’s really heaven’s will!” Once he’d finished speaking, Jing Hongchen quickly walked away.

Even though the Illustrious Virtue Hall was doing its best to suppress the news, how could such a huge matter be concealed?

The matter had been made known to the entire continent after just a few days. Although the Sun Moon Empire’s officials didn’t reveal who the perpetrators had been, the Illustrious Virtue Hall’s murderous mission towards the Body Sect clearly indicated who the mastermind behind the attack had been.

The entire continent shook from the news, and the other empires were jubilant at the news. Even though they didn’t know how much damage the Illustrious Virtue Hall had suffered, it was a good thing for them no matter what!

The Sun Moon Empire’s Emperor was enraged when he learned about the matter, and his physical condition worsened as a result. Jing Hongchen was severely punished as a result: his Dukedom was revoked. If not for Xu Tianran, his punishment would’ve been even more severe.

The prices of advanced soul tools on the continent dropped significantly following this, while the prices of rare metals soared. The exchange of rare metals suddenly became much more prevalent.

Chapter 175: Crisis During the Interrogation

The Body Sect didn't remain quiet for long. They strongly condemned the indiscriminately murderous mission issued by the Illustrious Virtue Hall, and also firmly stated that they had nothing to do with the incident. They then stated that whoever dared to exact revenge on them would have to bear the consequences of their actions.

However, regardless of what the Body Sect said, their standing on the continent had increased greatly. They now seemed even more powerful than Shrek Academy or the Illustrious Virtuous Hall, and appeared to be the top power on the continent.

Huo Yuhao only learned of these things when he woke up. He slept for four days straight before finally waking up in the infirmary. It hadn't been an act; he'd truly been asleep the entire time.

However, when he woke up, Huo Yuhao felt an odd sensation. It was as if a door in his spiritual world had been opened, as his mind was unusually clear compared to before. His understanding of previously-blurry profound concepts of Necromancy had also improved greatly.

Electrolux was asleep when he woke up, as was the Snow Empress. The Ice Empress and Skydream told Huo Yuhao that the Snow Empress' seal had been completed, but that her power could only be unsealed once Huo Yuhao had achieved the level of a Soul Sage. In her sleep, the Snow Empress was trying to regain her spiritual awareness.

Everything else appeared to be normal. Huo Yuhao hadn't become stronger because of the Snow Empress' successful sealing, but he looked forward to the moment that he would 'evolve' like Electrolux had said. How would the Snow Empress fuse with him? What would the evolution reject? If not for the fact that Electrolux was asleep, he would've demanded an answer.

The internal chaos within the Illustrious Virtue Hall had nothing to do with Huo Yuhao. However, he was still extremely worried when he woke up. After all, the huge starlight sapphire storage-type soul tool and the giant metal figure were both still inside his storage-type soul tool! He didn't even have to think to know their significance to the Illustrious Virtue Hall. They'd definitely spare no effort to find them.

Huo Yuhao was extremely worried that they'd search everyone's storage-type soul tools. If that happened, there was nowhere he could hide them.

"I'm fine now. Can I return to my dormitory?" Huo Yuhao asked the doctor on duty.

The doctor checked his body, nodded his head, and said, "It seems you really are fine. Strange, your brain doesn't appear to have suffered any trauma, so why were you out for so long?"

Huo Yuhao grimaced and replied, "I don't know either. Teacher, can I ask what happened that day? How could anyone have the guts to attack the Illustrious Virtue Hall?"

"Shh." The doctor quickly shushed him and placed a finger to his lips. He then said in a low voice, "We can't discuss it. The Hallmaster has issued a gag-order. The entire school is feeling jittery, and none of the students or teachers are permitted to leave the school right now."

“Everyone has to undergo interrogation. If not for the fact that you were unconscious, you would’ve been interrogated too. I’ll inform my superiors now that you’ve recovered from your wounds. You can only return to your dormitory once you’ve been questioned. Wait here, I’ll go inform someone.”

The thing he feared the most had come true. Huo Yuhao became noticeably more tense.

What can I do? As Huo Yuhao tensed up, his brain began to spin rapidly.

“The interrogation could be either light or severe,” Huo Yuhao told himself, “I have to consider the worst-case scenario.” At that moment, he took note of his surroundings and then acted immediately.

The doctor soon returned with a strict-looking teacher in tow. Huo Yuhao thought he recognized from the Illustrious Virtue Hall.

“Your name is Huo Yuhao?” The teacher asked coldly as he took out a register.

“Yes.”

“You’re from Shrek Academy?” The teacher continued.

“Yes.”

“On the day that the Illustrious Virtue Hall was attacked, what did you see? What were you doing?” When the teacher asked this question, he waved his hand at the doctor, signalling for him to leave them.

After some thought, Huo Yuhao replied, “That day, I was in the middle of making a soul tool. Just as I finished up one of the component, there was a huge explosion. I’m a spirit-type soul master, thus I have a very astute sense of danger. The moment I sensed that something was amiss, I immediately hid underneath the table. I heard an explosion from outside, while the following terrifying soul power shockwave prevented me from venturing outside. After the battle outside had quieted down, I snuck a peak, and then ran to the side of the Illustrious Virtue Hall. Then, I felt a strong force strike me, then I blacked out.”

Huo Yuhao was able to avoid lying as he answered. What he’d said was the truth of the matter. While he didn’t know if they’d survived the battle, he did know that there were surveillance type soul tools in the underground facility of the Illustrious Virtue hall. There was no point in arousing the other’s suspicions for a few meaningless details.

After he heard what Huo Yuhao had said, the teacher nodded his head and said, “Anything else? For example, did you discover anything special?”

Huo Yuhao shook his head with a blank look on his face.

In the Ultimate Soldier Plan, they had undergone intensive interrogation training. When he answered these questions, Huo Yuhao’s heart rate and tone were all perfectly normal. Even his eyes didn’t give him away.

The teacher stared at him carefully for a while before slowly shaking his head. He took out a metal stick from the storage-type soul tool on his wrist, and then said, “I have to do a complete sweep of you.”

Please put all of your soul tools into a storage-type soul tool. When you're done, pass them to me. You can't leave anything out."

Huo Yuhao's expression turned dark and he replied, "Sorry, teacher, but I have a right to my privacy. I can't let you search them. I'm an exchange student from Shrek Academy. Even if I'm just an ordinary student here, you have no right to search me."

The teacher chuckled coldly and replied, "No right? Don't forget our school's name: 'The Sun Moon Imperial Soul Engineering Academy.' We fall under direct imperial jurisdiction. As such, all of our students have sworn loyalty to the imperial family, and our management is semi-military. This is a personal order from His Majesty. Anyone who refuses to be interrogated and searched shall be dealt with as a traitor. I don't care where you're from, but since you were in our school at the time of the incident, you must be searched thoroughly. The fact that we didn't search you while you were recovering is already a gesture to preserve your dignity."

Huo Yuhao's face turned red, and he said angrily, "Fine, go ahead and search. Please tell Hallmaster Jing Hongchen that I will report this incident to Shrek Academy. You can only pray that your students will not undergo such treatment at my school!"

As he said that, he placed all his soul tools, including Hongchen's Blessing, into his belt storage-type soul, which was an imitation of the Twenty-Four Moonlit Bridges, and the storage-type tool on his wrist. Then, he passed them to the teacher.

When he heard Huo Yuhao's threat, the teacher's face softened as he sighed. He said, "Please don't be too angry. We have no choice here. Even if a prince is in the academy, he'll be interrogated and searched, too."

As he said that, he carefully searched Huo Yuhao using the metal stick. Then, he did a sweep of the bed Huo Yuhao slept on just now to ascertain that he had no soul tools concealed there. Only then did he take the few soul tools from Huo Yuhao to search them.

It was easy to search a storage-type soul tool. All he needed to do was direct his spiritual power inside. Of course, more advanced storage-type soul tools could be sealed by their owner's spiritual power. But Huo Yuhao could not make one at his current level.

"Eh? Why do you have a Rank 9 soul tool on you?" Hongchen's Blessing quickly caught the teacher's attention.

Huo Yuhao snorted coldly. "Go and ask Hallmaster Jing Hongchen."

The teacher took Hongchen's Blessing from Huo Yuhao's storage-type soul tool and said, "Come with me." As he said that, he took out a soul tool that had left an indelible mark on Huo Yuhao's memory.

A pair of golden handcuffs... Huo Yuhao held his hands out in front of him and said, "You can cuff me and seal my soul power."

The teacher looked at him suspiciously, but still cuffed Huo Yuhao immediately.

Huo Yuhao said coldly, "Now I'm unable to resist. Good. Now, please ask Hallmaster Jing Hongchen to escort me out. I won't go with you. I'll report all unfair treatment to Shrek Academy. Also, please return to me the items that you have checked."

The teacher never expected Huo Yuhao to be so difficult. If he were not an exchange student, he would have slapped him and dragged him away. However, Huo Yuhao had a unique identity. Before he came, Lin Jiayi had specifically told him to be careful of his attitude regarding Huo Yuhao and avoid causing unnecessary trouble.

After he pondered it for a while, he said, "Wait here." With that, he turned and left.

Huo Yuhao held his storage-type soul tools, and a faint smile crossed his face. He walked slowly to the edge of the wall and made a gesture, as if he were picking something out of thin air. Then, he put it away in his Twenty-Four Moonlit Bridges belt.

That's right. He had brazenly placed the map he drew of Illustrious Virtue Hall, as well as the starlight sapphire storage-type tool, on the floor.

His Imitation soul skill had been activated the whole time. However, he did not conjure anything, but instead used it to conceal the starlight sapphire and the map, which he had placed on the floor.

Who knew that he would hide the item on the floor in plain view? The teacher would definitely not search the corners of the room like a madman.

Huo Yuhao liked these handcuffs. Their ability to seal his soul power was powerful, indeed. He could not use any of his soul power. However, as a spirit-type soul master, especially one who possessed a second spiritual sea, he could use his spiritual power as a replacement for his soul power when he wanted to use a soul skill.

This referred to his Spirit Eyes, and would not work with his second martial soul, the Ice Jade Empress Scorpion.

Hence, he continued to use Imitation. At the same time, he used his spiritual power to open his storage-type soul tool to put the items away. With the handcuffs, his opponents would not worry about him.

His Hongchen's Blessing was a decoy for his opponent. It was possible that Jing Hongchen would take this Rank 9 soul tool back. However, compared to the metal man and the map, it was hardly worth anything. Furthermore, Jing Hongchen might not even take it away.

The reason he did not leave with his opponent was that once he left the range of his power, the items would be exposed! With him as the center, Imitation would only work in a five-meter range.

Imitation, which appeared to have no offensive abilities, could be described as a divine skill. Even if his opponents knew that he had this ability, its many uses would leave them careless.

Soon, the teacher was back, along with Lin Jiayi.

"Eh, Yuhao, who cuffed you?" When Lin Jiayi saw the golden handcuffs on Huo Yuhao, he asked that question despite knowing the answer perfectly well.

Huo Yuhao replied, "Please ask this teacher here."

Lin Jiayi looked at the teacher, vexed, and said, "What an outrage! Uncuff him immediately!"

The teacher nodded and went over to uncuff Huo Yuhao. However, Huo Yuhao shimmered to the side and withdrew his hands, saying, "Don't! Director Lin, your arrival is timely indeed. I am an exchange student from Shrek Academy, not a convict. Earlier, I was already arrested once. After I discussed the incident with Hallmaster Jing Hongchen, I decided to bear the humiliation. And what a humiliation it was! Why did I do it? For the friendship between our two schools, of course. However, I can't take this humiliation. What right do you have to search me? Why do you treat me like a convict? If you can't give me an answer, I shall keep the handcuffs on and save the Sun Moon Imperial Soul Engineering Academy the worry that I am out to harm you guys."

Lin Jiayi had an ugly expression on his face. He did not expect Huo Yuhao to be so difficult. He coughed and said, "Yuhao, please understand our dilemma. Days ago, you were attacked with us as a bunch of men in black attacked our Illustrious Virtue Hall. We suffered heavy losses, and even the principal was punished by His Majesty. We have no choice but to do a thorough investigation. Furthermore, we found a Rank 9 soul tool that is evidently from Illustrious Virtue Hall. As long as you can answer for it clearly and properly, we will not trouble you any further."

Chapter 176: Extortion and Sparring

Huo Yuhao looked at him out of the corner of his eyes, which were brimming with rage, and said angrily, "Does this mean you don't trust me?"

Lin Jiayi spread his hands open and made a helpless gesture. He said, "It's not that I don't trust you. However, reality states otherwise, and that is what we must deal with. Don't worry, I will inform Teacher Fan Yu. However, you must explain yourself clearly right now."

Huo Yuhao nodded coldly and said, "Right, since you don't want 'face', there's no need for me to cover up for you. Let's go. Bring me to the Hallmaster, and I shall explain it in front of him."

Lin Jiayi was helpless before Huo Yuhao. Jing Hongchen had told him of his importance many times. Furthermore, Xiao Hongchen and Meng Hongchen were still at Shrek Academy. While he already had Hongchen's Blessing as evidence, he could not truly lose his temper at Huo Yuhao or do anything drastic to him! All he suspected was a possible connection between Huo Yuhao and the surprise attack by the Body Sect.

"Alright, I shall bring you to the Hallmaster." In the end, Lin Jiayi decided to let Jing Hongchen take care of Huo Yuhao.

First, this was because his status was too sensitive. Second, Jing Hongchen had been in a foul mood recently. He had been heavily punished by the imperial family, and that was before news of the loss of Test Subject 1 leaked out.

Right now, in Lab No. 1, some of Jing Hongchen's confidantes were trying to rebuild Test Subject 1. With their experience, their progress was rather quick. However, the once-vast resources of Illustrious Virtue Hall had been greatly reduced.

In cuffs, Huo Yuhao walked out of the infirmary with his back straight and head held high. A cold smile was plastered on his face. His self-righteous appearance made Lin Jiayi's heart pound. However, the

Rank 9 soul tool, Hongchen's Blessing, was not something that Shrek Academy could have produced. Furthermore, there were still traces of Jing Hongchen's aura on it. Those traces could not be faked. Lin Jiayi would never believe that Jing Hongchen would gift a Rank 9 soul tool to an outsider!

He also could not imagine that the revolutionary Test Subject 1 of the Illustrious Virtue Hall was currently located in the Twenty-Four Moonlit Bridges around Huo Yuhao's waist. Right now, the teenager's face was both relaxed and infuriated.

Jing Hongchen's office was no longer in Virtuous Illustrious Hall out of safety considerations, since the underground facility had not yet been fully reinforced. While the new location was not suited for work, Jing Hongchen had no mood to carry out research on soul tools at the moment.

When Huo Yuhao followed Lin Jiayi into Jing Hongchen's office, he was resting with his eyes closed. In just the span of a few days, the Hallmaster, who previously looked impeccable, appeared to have aged ten years. His face appeared much colder, too.

"What happened?" When he saw Lin Jiayi bringing Huo Yuhao into his office in handcuffs, a suspicious look crossed Jing Hongchen's face.

Lin Jiayi said respectfully, "Hallmaster, this was what happened. Today, Huo Yuhao woke up in the infirmary and per regulations, we interrogated him and searched him. While nothing appeared to be amiss, we found a Rank 9 soul tool on him that belonged to you. Hence, our suspicions were aroused, and we decided to let you decide his fate."

"A Rank 9 soul tool that belonged to me?" Jing Hongchen paused momentarily. Then, his eyes fell on the Hongchen's Blessing that Lin Jiayi passed him.

When he saw the round soul tool, along with Huo Yuhao smiling coldly, Jing Hongchen felt as if he had been slapped before a crowd by one of his own people.

"Did he not tell you how this Rank 9 soul tool came about?" Jing Hongchen asked in a voice that was a few octaves higher than his normal one, glaring at Lin Jiayi.

When Lin Jiayi saw his face, he knew that something was amiss. He said apologetically, "Yuhao did not want to say, but instead demanded that we bring him to you for interrogation."

Jing Hongchen slammed his table and cursed, "Bastard, what did I tell you? Not only is he an exchange student from Shrek Academy, but he is also a closed door disciple of the Master of the Sea God's Pavilion, the Dragon God Douluo, Elder Mu! Elder Mu is a senior whom I respect. This Hongchen's Blessing was something I personally passed to him when I was still with him. How can you interrogate Huo Yuhao like any other person?! Is your brain damaged?!"

Lin Jiayi was stunned by the scolding. The Hallmaster had given it away, a Rank 9 soul tool!

However, as a confidante of Jing Hongchen, he understood what was going on from his tone when he mentioned Elder Mu, the Dragon God Douluo. The last time he met Elder Mu, it was in the Sea God's Pavilion in Shrek Academy. Could it be...

“Heh... so that’s the case. It’s all my fault. Hallmaster, I am wrong. I was too brash, but there are really too many things going around recently. Furthermore, I did not dare to act rashly since it was so important! Yuhao, it’s all my fault, please forgive me, please forgive me!”

As he said that, Lin Jiayi walked in front of Huo Yuhao to apologize.

Huo Yuhao stared at him coldly and said, “Director Lin, what mistake did you make? You were doing it for the good of the Sun Moon Imperial Soul Engineering Academy.

“After all, this is not the first time I’ve had to wear these handcuffs. What a pity Shrek Academy does not have them!”

An ugly look crossed Jing Hongchen’s face. The last time, he was forced by Huo Yuhao to grant him permission to study in Illustrious Virtue Hall. Over the past few months, he’d heard that Huo Yuhao had used up all of the rare metals that were allocated to him. This time, as Huo Yuhao had been treated unfairly, he would have to make it up to him again.

However, there was really not much he could do. After all, his precious granddaughter and grandson were exchange students at Shrek Academy. A smile crossed his face as he walked in front of Huo Yuhao and said, “This is a mistake they committed in the line of duty, and it is a mistake on my part, too. I will personally un-cuff you. How about this? I shall double your allotment of precious metals every month from now on. What do you think?”

Huo Yuhao did not dare to continue maintaining this facade. Who knew what high-level soul tools capable of detecting the contents of storage-type soul tools the Hallmaster possessed? If his secret was discovered, he had too much to lose.

Immediately, his face softened as he said, “Please, Hallmaster.” As he said that, he extended his arms.

Jing Hongchen took the key from Lin Jiayi and personally un-cuffed him while saying, “Jiayi, please remember that you must give Yuhao special treatment. If a problem like this emerges again, you can forget about being a teaching director.”

“Yes, yes.” Lin Jiayi could only chuckle bitterly in his heart. Why was it so difficult to deal with this rascal? He really had to be more careful next time.

Huo Yuhao said, “If there’s no other matter, Hallmaster, I shall head back. Today is the last day of the month, so there’s no need for you to double my allotment for this month.” In the outside world, the monthly allotment of the Illustrious Virtue Hall was no small sum. Some of the materials could not even be sold on the market.

Jing Hongchen’s facial muscles twitched as he said, “It has to be counted.”

With that, Huo Yuhao nodded in satisfaction and said, “Then I shall leave.” As he said that, he turned to walk out, his tension finally starting to relax. Just because he could control his heartbeat did not mean that he was relaxed! Instead, he was worried sick. If he could not pass this round, he would be in deep trouble.

He made it to the door of the office and was just about to leave when he heard Jing Hongchen say suddenly, “Wait a moment.”

Oh, no. Huo Yuhao felt his pores constricting. He was struck by fear! He almost dropped everything and ran.

Fortunately, he was very mature for his age, probably more mature than some adults. Could he actually run away? Not only was Jing Hongchen a Rank 9 soul engineer, but he was also a Titled Douluo. How could he escape?

All he could do was turn around and ask, "Do you have a request, Hallmaster?"

Jing Hongchen fell silent for a while, and then said, "Yuhao, if I remember correctly, you were part of the main team in the last Continental Advanced Soul Master Academy Soul Dueling Tournament, right?"

Huo Yuhao shook his head and said, "Not the main team. I was only a stand-in."

The corners of Jing Hongchen's eyes twitched. A stand-in? A stand-in beat my grandson and granddaughter? Was this not a slap on his face? However, he could not react. He coughed and said, "It's like this. The incidents a few days ago have affected me greatly. The reason our facility was invaded and we suffered such heavy losses was that our soul engineers did not have a lot of battle experience against soul masters. Normally, they are surrounded by other soul engineers, and hence they will only battle other soul engineers. So I've had an idea."

When he heard that, Huo Yuhao calmed down, thinking, Whatever you say, it's fine. Just don't search me.

He walked back into Jing Hongchen's office and asked obligingly, "What idea did you have, Hallmaster?"

Jing Hongchen said, "Shrek Academy is the premier academy on the continent, particularly for soul masters. Our Sun Moon Imperial Soul Engineering Academy is the best school on the continent in terms of soul engineering. You were able to represent Shrek Academy previously, which demonstrates your ability in battling other soul masters. Hence, with you as the lead, I want to let the soul masters and soul engineers in our school spar. This will let our students understand how soul masters fight. Don't worry, I will only pick opponents whose ages are similar to yours. At best, they would be Rank 5 soul engineers. What do you think?"

Huo Yuhao shook his head and said, "No, I am not interested."

"Why not?" Jing Hongchen asked, curious. "This is a good chance to increase your combat experience!"

Huo Yuhao smiled slightly and said, "I have enough combat experience, and I don't need anymore. Hallmaster, please ask someone else. I'm here to study, not to fight."

Jing Hongchen's face instantly turned foul as he said, "Fine, state your conditions."

Huo Yuhao chuckled and said, "You understand me so well."

Jing Hongchen looked at Huo Yuhao's change in attitude, and didn't know if he should cry or laugh. However, he could not deny that this young man was exceptional indeed. Compared to his grandson and granddaughter, he did not think that Huo Yuhao was better than them in terms of battling abilities. However, his people skills surpassed theirs completely.

“Just state your conditions, but you can’t ask for more allotments. Our school’s budget is rather tight,” Jing Hongchen forewarned Huo Yuhao.

Huo Yuhao said, “Hallmaster, is this acceptable to you? You aren’t a stingy person, and I can assure you that in these spars, I will neither severely injure nor kill anyone. If I win, all I want is a prize. I am willing to take on challengers who are Class 6 and below. If I win, you must give me a kilogram of precious metal. I choose the type. What do you think?”

A kilogram of precious metal for a single victory? This condition was indeed not harsh. After all, many precious metals had high densities, and a small chunk would easily weight one kilogram.

After some thought, Jing Hongchen said, “Okay, we shall proceed as you wish. If you lose, I don’t want anything from you. Just don’t ask me for anything.”

Huo Yuhao puffed up his chest and said, “Of course, of course. As long as you keep your promise, I am willing to battle as many rounds as you want. I am very poor, and can only become rich through this. Oh right, I almost forgot. Shouldn’t you return the Hongchen’s Blessing to me?” As he said that, he extended a hand to Jing Hongchen.

Jing Hongchen really did not want to give it to him. However, when he looked at the greedy and uncompromising young boy before him, he found it hard to reject him. After all, he did not bring up that embarrassing incident. Furthermore, as a Titled Douluo and the Hallmaster of the Illustrious Virtue Hall, how could he take back something he had already given out? Elder Mu was generous indeed. He had given Huo Yuhao Shrek Academy’s only Class 9 soul tool.

Jing Hongchen returned the Hongchen’s Blessing to Huo Yuhao. He had a new level of understanding of Huo Yuhao’s position in Shrek Academy. If they could afford to give him a Class 9 soul tool, his importance could not be understated!

“Thank you, Hallmaster. Let me know after you setup the location for the spar. If you decide to sell tickets to outsiders, you don’t need to worry about me asking for a cut.”

Jing Hongchen almost kicked him out of his office as he chided, “Get out!”

Huo Yuhao laughed as he walked out.

“Wait.” Just when he reached the exit, he was called back by Jing Hongchen again.

Huo Yuhao stopped, turned his head and asked, “Hallmaster, didn’t you ask me to get out? Is there something else?” In his heart, he thought, “Are you trying to scare me to death? There’s no end to this!”

Jing Hongchen said seriously, “Yuhao, if you are willing to come over, the Sun Moon Imperial Soul Engineering Academy will double whatever Shrek Academy offers you. Think about it.”

Huo Yuhao was stunned. He could see the sincerity in Jing Hongchen’s eyes. However, they had different aims, and there was no chance this could work! He shook his head gently and said, “Thank you for this recognition. However, I can’t.” Right after he said that, he finally managed to leave Jing Hongchen’s office. This time, a look of disappointment crossed Jing Hongchen’s face, but he did not hold him back.

“Hallmaster, I think it’s a good idea to sell tickets. In our school, no one actually lacks money. Recently, not only has Huo Yuhao been extorting us, but our expenditures have gone up too. Do you...?” Lin Jiayi asked probingly.

Jing Hongchen’s eyes shone as he nodded and said, “You make the arrangements.”

“Yes.” Lin Jiayi was full of admiration for Jing Hongchen. This time, despite the incident and the fact that Jing Hongchen was forced by circumstances, he still had the future development of the school in his mind. By allowing Huo Yuhao to compete with their students, it superficially seemed to be giving in to Huo Yuhao’s demands. However, in reality, if the spar was properly organized, they could divert the students’ attention and increase their understanding of soul masters. Not only could it increase their experience against soul masters, but they could further understand Huo Yuhao’s abilities and prepare for the next Continental Advanced Soul Master Academy Soul Dueling Tournament, which would be held in the Sun Moon Empire. There were many benefits to this arrangement, and making money was just one of them.

After Huo Yuhao returned to his dormitory, he plonked down on his bed immediately. The psychological pressure was too much to bear. Even then, his heart continued to thump loudly against his chest, as if it wanted to break out from his chest.

Right after he woke up from his sleep, he was faced with an immense challenge. In the end, he was able to turn the situation around. He could more or less guess the reason why Jing Hongchen wanted him to spar with soul engineers from the Sun Moon Imperial Soul Engineering Academy, but he still agreed to it. He needed to obtain more precious metals, and he needed a chance to release his pent-up emotions.

Ever since he had entered the Sun Moon Imperial Soul Engineering Academy, he had been in a state of constant alertness. Regardless of whether it was in his studies or his secret drawing of the map, he was under immense pressure, further exacerbated by this incident.

The Ultimate Soldier Plan had special psychology lessons. His teacher taught him that once his mental pressure reached a certain level, he would need to find a suitable location to vent. If not, it would create psychological problems, especially for someone of his age.

“Knock, knock, knock.” Someone was knocking on his door.

Huo Yuhao stretched out on his bed. In doing so, he allowed himself to calm down. Only then did he walk to his door to open it. Just as he expected, Fan Yu and He Caitou were outside.

When they noticed that he was fine, they evidently became calmer. Quickly, they entered his room. He Caitou closed the door behind him.

“Little Junior, you almost scared teacher and me to death! I heard from other members of our academy that the situation that day was extremely dangerous. You were out for a few days. While the Sun Moon Imperial Soul Engineering Academy allowed us to pay you a visit, we could not tell what was wrong. Luckily, you are fine.” While the Shrek’s Seven Monsters were all ranked, He Caitou was still willing to call Huo Yuhao ‘Little Junior’. After all, only the two of them were soul engineers.

Huo Yuhao shook his head and said, “I don’t know how I was knocked unconscious. It was really dangerous that day. The Body Sect was too powerful, and they appeared to be very familiar with the

interior of the Illustrious Virtue Hall. As the attack came too suddenly, the Illustrious Virtue Hall suffered heavy casualties.”

Then, he recounted the incident of that day simply. However, he did not talk about him entering the interiors of the Illustrious Virtue Hall through the tunnel.

Huo Yuhao had his considerations too. The metal man was extremely important, and it was best for as few people as possible to know about it. It might not be a good idea to tell Teacher Fan Yu and Second Senior. Furthermore, he was also afraid that it would expose his connection to the Snow Lady. All he said was that the Snow Lady blew up and nothing else. As for the metal man, he decided to tell no one before he returned to Shrek Academy. He would say everything back at Shrek Academy.

After he heard Huo Yuhao’s recounting of the events, Fan Yu frowned and said, “Something is wrong here. The price of a hundred thousand year soul beast embryo rivals that of entire cities, but one could only benefit two soul masters at most, and that’s under the condition that the soul ring and the soul bone are separated. This attack by the Body Sect was almost lethal to the Illustrious Virtue Hall, and their losses cannot be calculated. At the same time, they now have a vendetta against the Illustrious Virtue Hall. Is it really worth sacrificing so much for this treasure? After all, the Body Sect does not need money. I don’t think they are doing it for the 100 million golden soul coins.”

He Caitou said, “Teacher, regardless of what their reasons were, it doesn’t hurt us. The more the Illustrious Virtue Hall loses, the more the Sun Moon Empire loses. Perhaps it’ll delay the onset of war.” When He Caitou talked about the future war, an odd light shone in his eyes. When he mentioned the Sun Moon Empire, it was as if it did not concern him.

Huo Yuhao sighed in his heart. Did Second Senior really manage to emerge from the shadow of hate? Or was the hate buried in an even deeper place? He did not want anything back, all he wanted was to destroy! Ever since he met Ju Zi, Huo Yuhao’s understanding of the hatred in humans’ hearts had increased.

From Ke Ke, he occasionally heard some news about Ju Zi. She seemed to have joined the military, but he did not know what her role was. All he knew was that she went with the military to West Sea of the Sun Moon Empire, where she battled against oceanic soul beasts. Since then, she had not returned.

Fan Yu nodded and said, “That’s right, but as students of Shrek we are in a precarious position. It’s best for us to understand the ties between the two sides. Yuhao, with your analysis, what do you think is going on?”

Huo Yuhao knew that his teacher was testing him by asking this question. He replied after a moment of silence, “The Body Sect attacked suddenly, but they came entirely in black and their faces were masked. They did not reveal their identities. By doing so, while the Illustrious Virtue Hall could guess who did it, the Body Sect could deny their allegations, as they had no solid proof. After keeping silent for so many years, the Body Sect’s sudden action could only have a few objectives.”

“First, many might have forgotten the Body Sect because they’ve remained low-profile for too long. They’re trying to enhance their reputation. The Sun Moon Empire and Illustrious Virtue Hall will try to keep their true losses a secret after this incident, but things will always leak out. Once the truth is

known, it will be very beneficial for the Body Sect's reputation. At the very least, they have shown how powerful they can be.

"Secondly, Elder Mu once mentioned that the Body Sect's priority is always profit, they aren't really concerned about good or evil. They were extremely invested and meticulous in this ambush, so there must have been huge profits involved. On the surface, it seems like it might be because of the hundred-thousand year soul beast embryo and the hundred-million gold soul coin reward. But those who are sharp know that the huge reward has something to do with the Star Luo Empire. Everyone, including the Sun Moon Empire, might focus on the Star Luo Empire. But in truth, the Body Sect might have other areas of interest, just like you mentioned. It might not be the Star Luo Empire behind it all. After all, the Star Luo Empire has sacrificed too much in this matter, and it would be too obvious. I don't think that the Star Luo Empire is ready to engage the Sun Moon Empire in a war."

Elder Mu and Fan Yu were both his teachers. He spoke of Elder Mu this way to prevent confusion.

"The Star Luo Empire is under the greatest immediate threat from the Sun Moon Empire among the three empires on the continent. But they aren't the only ones in conflict with the Sun Moon Empire. The Heaven Dou Empire also faces threats from the Sun Moon Empire."

Fan Yu listened to Huo Yuhao's analysis carefully. He revealed a slight smile on his face as he heard all this, and nodded agreement. But he didn't appraise Huo Yuhao's analysis. He instead nodded and said, "What do you think about Jing Hongchen's proposition for you to spar with the academy's soul engineers?"

Huo Yuhao answered honestly, "I admire him for maintaining his cool in such a messy situation. He's able to kill many birds with one stone by asking me to spar with his students. First, he can turn the academy's attention to something beside their losses, and allow himself more time to rebuild Illustrious Virtue Hall's underground base. In addition, he must have realized that the academy's students lack any real experience against soul masters. Many of them don't even know the fighting styles of soul masters with a powerful martial soul.

"Illustrious Virtue Hall isn't inferior to the Body Sect in terms of overall ability. They might even be better. But aside from the fact that their truly powerful soul tools couldn't be used in an underground base, the soul engineers from the Illustrious Virtue Hall are indeed disappointing in terms of their adaptability, coordination, fighting spirit, and performance in many areas. This might have to do with the fact that they place most of their focus on soul tool research. The Hallmaster might be using me to wake them up. At the same time, he wants to let them witness a soul master with a powerful martial soul, and his fighting style."

Fan Yu chortled and told him, "You're not humble at all."

Huo Yuhao chuckled and replied, "Teacher, didn't you say that being overly modest is very hypocritical?"

Fan Yu agreed. "You're right. After some observation, their academy's soul engineers are much more advanced in terms of soul tools compared to us, but their focus on live experience is greatly inferior to our academy. The Hallmaster evidently recognizes this point. Illustrious Virtue Hall can have a huge impact in a war, but when it comes to a battle between elites within a restricted area, Illustrious Virtue

Hall doesn't have the confidence to defeat Shrek Academy or the Body Sect. What're you planning to do for this sparring competition?"

Hearing this question, He Caitou was also interested. He watched Huo Yuhao alertly, waiting for his reply.

A light flashed in Huo Yuhao's eyes. "Teacher, I'm representing Shrek and the Tang Sect! I can't lose on purpose. I shall let them witness Shrek's abilities if they want to. I'll leave a deep impression on all of them this time! They'll never forget who I am!"

He Caitou laughed loudly and commented happily, "Little junior, you're awesome!"

Huo Yuhao smiled in reply and said, "Since the Hallmaster promised me a kilogram of rare metal for every round I win, I can't disappoint him, can I?"

The Sun Moon Imperial Soul Engineering Academy's Teaching Director Lin Jiayi was very efficient. This was especially so after a major incident just happened in Illustrious Virtue Hall, and the entire academy was engulfed in a tense atmosphere.

Jing Hongchen's instructions were quickly carried out. News of Huo Yuhao's sparring competition with the academy's soul engineers quickly reached the entire academy.

The doors of every teaching block and dormitory room were pasted with posters of this latest announcement.

The sparring competition was to be conducted in the academy's Soul Tool Experimentation Area. The academy demanded that all its students watch the competition unless they had something special going on. Those with four rings of cultivation and above could sign up to compete. The limit was a Class 6 soul engineer or a six-ringed Soul Emperor. Every competing student had to purchase a ticket to watch the competition. If the competing students could defeat Huo Yuhao, they were qualified to enter Illustrious Virtue Hall, and would also be rewarded with a hundred-thousand gold soul coins. In addition, Jing Hongchen would personally make a soul tool for them. But if they lost, they wouldn't be given materials to create soul tools for a month.

It was pertinent to note that those materials were actually paid for by the students. The forfeit was literally a fine of their own money!

The rules for the sparring competition were very simple. Beating Huo Yuhao was the only goal. After each round, Huo Yuhao would be given sufficient time to rest based on his physical condition. The entire sparring competition would be held over three days.

Once the announcement was made, there were more students who signed up to compete than expected. Everyone was young, and no one lacked passion. The Sun Moon Imperial Soul Engineering Academy lost to Shrek Academy in practically every meeting of the Elite Continental Advanced Soul Master Academy Soul Dueling Tournament. For most of the students, this was a fantastic opportunity to regain glory for their academy!

But not everyone was qualified to represent the academy in tournaments. They also wanted to know how capable Huo Yuhao was, since he had represented Shrek Academy before. Furthermore, the omnipresent conflict between soul masters and soul engineers, as well as the rewards for victory, were also contributing factors to the large turnout.

More than three hundred students had signed up in less than a day. Lin Jiayi and his teachers were kept busy. After reporting the situation to Jing Hongchen, they made a decision to increase the requirement to Soul Kings and above. This way, the number of students signing up to compete dropped drastically.

This matter also garnered a huge reaction from the Shrek exchange students. They only found out about it as the announcement was made. The youngest and seemingly weakest exchange student, Huo Yuhao, had represented the academy in the previous Elite Continental Advanced Soul Master Academy Soul Dueling Tournament.

As Shrek Academy had always been the winners of the tournament, the academy didn't publicize their victory too much. They only made one announcement after they became champions, but they didn't reveal the students who had participated. This was to keep unneeded fame from influencing their studies and cultivation. Very few people from Shrek actually knew who had participated in the tournament.

After learning that Huo Yuhao was going to spar with the Sun Moon Imperial Soul Engineering Academy's soul engineers without using soul tools, the rest of the exchange students offered to help him. They even told him that they were willing to join in the sparring.

Huo Yuhao accepted their help, but they couldn't spar, because they were all soul engineers.

Two days later, at dawn...

Ye Xiaosheng came to fetch Huo Yuhao at his door. "Yuhao, how're your preparations going? Brother Sheng supports you. This is a huge matter. You must do your best for Shrek's glory!"

Huo Yuhao chortled and replied, "Thanks, Brother Sheng. I'll do my best."

Ye Xiaosheng laughed and said, "I've prepared the stuff. They'll be shocked today. You don't know how arrogant they are. They claim that they won't even let you win one round. They even say they'll step on Shrek.

"They say that you're here to deliver presents to them, and asked the academy to prepare more rewards. It's a pity that I can't compete. Otherwise, I'd teach them a good lesson."

Huo Yuhao smiled as he said, "Brother Sheng, don't worry. I'll help you teach them a lesson. Oh right, how's the situation regarding that matter?" As he spoke, he lifted his right hand and rubbed a few of his fingers together.

Ye Xiaosheng immediately understood what he meant. He replied with a grin, "Many started wagering after we opened the plate. I have to admit that these students are very confident in their own people. More than half of them bet that you won't last ten rounds... I wonder if their brains are empty.

“Only a quarter of them bet that you can’t last more than twenty rounds. The rest bet that you can’t win fifty rounds in three days, they just did it for the odds. Based on what we’ve discussed, rare metals can be used as stakes. We’ve received more than two thousand kilos of rare metals, and five hundred-thousand gold soul coins. These students sure are wealthy!”

Huo Yuhao furrowed his brow and said, “That is indeed quite a lot of rare metals, but not that many gold soul coins. But it’s okay. I believe more and more people will bet after today.”

As the two of them were talking, Fan Yu, He Caitou, and the rest of Shrek’s students also arrived.

Fan Yu looked at Huo Yuhao and asked directly, “Are you ready?”

Chapter 177.1: The Tang Sect Completely Dominates Throughout All Eternity

Huo Yuhao nodded and said, “Teacher, don’t worry. I won’t lose Shrek’s face. I believe that I’ll leave a black mark in the Sun Moon Imperial Soul Engineering Academy’s history in the next three days.”

Fan Yu laughed as he admonished him, “Don’t be too complacent either. With the current stakes, we won’t be able to pay our debts if you lose within ten rounds. We’ll need to request a large amount directly from the academy.”

Huo Yuhao laughed. “Teacher, you’ve given so much effort to nurture me. Aren’t you confident in me?”

Fan Yu smiled and replied, “It’s not that. I’m just warning you not to be careless. A lion only beats the rabbit by using all his strength.”

“Yes.” Huo Yuhao looked at Fan Yu seriously and acknowledged his words.

The Soul Tool Experimentation Area was the largest building in the Sun Moon Imperial Soul Engineering Academy, and could hold more than ten thousand people. It had a similar architectural to the Shrek Academy’s Beast Dueling Arena. There was a huge arena in the building, and was surrounded by seats that extended nearly all the way to back of the building. It was normally used by the Sun Moon Imperial Soul Engineering Academy’s students for their tests, competitions, and experimenting on large soul tools. Between the spectators’ seats and the central arena, there was a linked defense system that was made up of many defensive soul tools. This linked defense system demonstrated how advanced the Sun Moon Imperial Soul Engineering Academy was in terms of their soul tools. They just needed a sufficiently strong soul master to control the entire defense system. The only prerequisite for the soul master was that his soul power had to be at a certain standard.

Although it was only morning, the entire Soul Tool Experimentation Area was full. There were close to twelve thousand teachers and students present, including some from the Illustrious Virtue Hall.

It wasn’t just the students who wanted to see the differences between how soul masters and soul engineers fought; even the teachers were curious. The academy had suspended lessons for three days for the sake of this sparring competition.

Jing Hongchen hadn’t attended, as there were too many things that he needed to see to. Lin Jiayi, on the other hand, was responsible for hosting the competition. To Jing Hongchen, it didn’t matter how long Huo Yuhao managed to last in the competition. No matter what, the Sun Moon Imperial Soul Engineering Academy was bound to benefit from it. The camaraderie between their students would

increase, and they would also learn more about the differences between soul masters and soul engineers. It would be an exciting lesson for the students.

Due to a lack of seats, the students who arrived late had to sit among the aisles, or stand in-between the rows. Fortunately, the arena was large enough to accommodate everyone.

As the referee, Lin Jiayi also made a lot of deliberations. He finally chose to invite Xuan Ziwen, firstly because of Xuan Ziwen's teacher-student relationship with Huo Yuhao, and secondly because of Xuan Ziwen's abilities. Initially, Lin Jiayi thought that Xuan Ziwen would decline his offer. However, Xuan Ziwen agreed readily after listening to his proposition. His reasoning was also very simple: He wanted to see how strong his student was in terms of fighting strength as a soul master.

When Huo Yuhao first came, he'd personally taught a lesson to a few Class 5 soul engineers!

Xuan Ziwen also knew that the students were making their own private bets. The odds were three to one that he couldn't survive ten rounds, two to one that he couldn't survive twenty rounds, and thirty to a hundred that he couldn't survive fifty rounds.

Those who offered such odds were clearly confident that Huo Yuhao could win fifty consecutive rounds! Why were Shrek Academy's students so confident? It's important to know that Huo Yuhao only had four rings. Even if he rested between rounds, he still needed to fight for a long period of time.

The Sun Moon Imperial Soul Engineering Academy wasn't a small academy either. Even if the Illustrious Virtue Hall's students didn't participate, Huo Yuhao was bound to collapse from three days of intense fighting. And once he lost one round, he might not have the ability to carry on further.

"Alright, please quiet down." Lin Jiayi's imposing voice resonated throughout the entire arena through a sound-amplifying soul tool. The excited students who were engaged in discussions immediately started to quiet down and turn their attention to him.

Lin Jiayi continued, "For the purpose of strengthening our exchange and interaction, the academy has decided to organize this sparring competition. Shrek is sending out Huo Yuhao, an exchange student who once competed in the Elite Continental Advanced Soul Master Academy Soul Dueling Tournament. I hope that all of you will do your best to observe this competition, even if you aren't involved in it. Try your best to sense the differences between soul masters and soul engineers, as well as deepen your own understanding of them. The referee for this friendly exchange will be Teacher Xuan Ziwen, and I'll be the host. Let's welcome Shrek Academy's Huo Yuhao onto the stage."

A tunnel at the side of the arena opened slowly, and students wearing the dark-green uniform of Shrek emerged alongside Teacher Fan Yu.

There was a huge commotion, because Shrek Academy's ten exchange students had all appeared at this point. Most of the Sun Moon Imperial Soul Engineering Academy students had never seen Huo Yuhao before, thus they had to guess who among them was the one who dared to challenge the Sun Moon Imperial Soul Engineering Academy students all by himself.

Rumors often spread the fastest. For example, news of Huo Yuhao's conflict with the academy's Class 5 soul engineers and his four-ringed cultivation had already spread like wildfire. Based on these rumours, he sounded capable of representing Shrek Academy in the sparring competition.

Lin Jiayi was also stunned. There weren't too many rules, since this was just a friendly exchange, and was why he hadn't communicated too much with Fan Yu beforehand. After all, it was only Huo Yuhao who was competing. Why had the Shrek Academy exchange students changed into Shrek Academy's uniform? It was clear that they were drawing a line between the Sun Moon Imperial Soul Engineering Academy! Were they deliberately causing trouble?

Lin Jiayi had never thought of this before the competition began. After all, this was the Sun Moon Imperial Soul Engineering Academy's territory. There were only eleven Shrek Academy personnel here; what trouble could they possibly cause? Would they really dare to cause trouble? However, it was a little late for him to realize that something was amiss.

Shrek Academy hadn't been provided a sound-amplifying soul tool. All the emceeing was to be done by Lin Jiayi, which was also an arrangement that he'd made. If he sensed that something was amiss, he was prepared to ask the irrelevant personnel to leave the arena and immediately begin the competition.

However, what he was worried about happened before he even had the chance to open his mouth.

Fan Yu walked straight over to the resting area, but the other nine students didn't follow suit. The nine of them divided into three groups and then quickly got into team formations.

There were four to Huo Yuhao's left and four to his right, while He Caitou stood behind him.

Afterwards, three scrolls drifted into view for all of the Sun Moon Imperial Soul Engineering students to see.

The scroll displayed by the students on Huo Yuhao's left held a string of words that said, "Shrek. Number One! In! The! World! Invincible!"

The scroll displayed by the students on his right said, "Tang Sect! Complete! Dominance! Throughout! All! Eternity!"

He Caitou stood behind Huo Yuhao and lifted a horizontal scroll that said, "Come fight us if you're unconvinced!"

A huge uproar ensued after the three scrolls were presented. The nine students in the formation quickly revolved around Huo Yuhao and allowed the Sun Moon Imperial Soul Engineering Academy to clearly see who Huo Yuhao was.

A huge uproar erupted, with some students even wanting to fire their soul tools towards the arena. Expletives rang out across the entire place.

"Silence, silence!" Lin Jiayi roared furiously, "Teachers, please restrain your students. The competition is about to begin. Irrelevant personnel, please remove yourselves from the arena."

He felt extremely depressed! He hadn't expect the Shrek Academy students to pull such a stunt. Weren't they simply creating a ruckus on purpose? There were only eleven of them, and only Huo Yuhao was competing. Why were they trying to cause such a ruckus? Weren't they creating trouble out of nothing?

However, things had already happened; the entire atmosphere of the competition was already starting to change. The entire Sun Moon Imperial Soul Engineering Academy was bursting with emotion now, and the students who'd been seated had all stood up. Things seemed to be going out of control.

However, Huo Yuhao appeared unbothered. He even lifted his right hand and slowly turned his thumb to point towards the ground.

Even though he didn't mutter a word, his provocation was clear: He was signaling for the other students to challenge him if they were unconvinced!

Arrogant; he was too arrogant!

Fortunately, the teachers managed to control their students well. The students were quickly restrained by the teachers. Furthermore, the entrance of the first Sun Moon Imperial Soul Engineering Academy's student helped stabilize the situation.

"Kill him! Send this Shrek country bumpkin back home!"

"Long live the Sun Moon Imperial Soul Engineering Academy, long live the Sun Moon Empire! Humiliation like this can only be washed away with blood!"

"I'll be the girlfriend of whoever beats him!"

All the spectators were causing a racket. But there were also those who remained silent, like Ke Ke and Zi Mu.

Xuan Ziwen had originally had five students. Ke Ke and Zi Mu had entered the Illustrious Virtue Hall when Huo Yuhao did, while Ju Zi had stopped her studies to join the military, and Wang Shaojie had been expelled.

Thus, there were only three students left out of the original five.

Since Huo Yuhao was the main character in this competition, Ke Ke and Zi Mu also had to come.

Chapter 177.2: The Tang Sect Completely Dominates Throughout All Eternity

Ke Ke was worried, and she said, "Huo Yuhao is too arrogant. Just what does he aim to accomplish? He's really made things serious, won't he have a tough time in the academy when this is all over?"

Zi Mu said softly, "Keep your voice down. We'll get into trouble if the others hear this. I think Yuhao is doing this on purpose. He just wants to study in the Illustrious Virtue Hall normally. The ordinary students won't get chances to see him. Not to mention, he's also an exchange student. If anything happens to him when he's in the academy, the academy can't account for it either. He's doing this to humiliate the academy, and I don't know why Hallmaster agreed to allow this."

Ke Ke glanced at him and asked, "Did you register too?"

Zi Mu shook his head and answered, "I won't humiliate myself."

Ke Ke twisted her lips and commented, "I didn't know that you were so self-aware! Didn't you work very hard over the past half year? Why aren't you confident in yourself?"

Zi Mu laughed and replied, "Confidence rises with one's abilities. While I don't want to expose too much of mine right now... I'll beat him one day. But I can admit that I'm not his match at present. Although my improvement over the past half year has been significant, didn't he increase his number of rings from

three to four? While I don't understand why a twin martial soul, soul master, is so strong, I know that I'm not his match. I simply need to work harder from now on. Is there news from Ju Zi?"

Ke Ke shook her head and said, "No! Don't think about her anymore. Didn't she reject you before leaving?"

Zi Mu chortled. "It's not that easy to forget someone you love. Moreover, you'll always have a chance if you work hard enough."

Ke Ke's attention was drawn to the arena, and she said, "The competition is about to begin."

The commotion in the spectators' stand didn't seem to affect Huo Yuhao's concentration. He didn't even take a look at Xuan Ziwen's displeased expression before moving to one side of the arena. He closed his eyes and waited.

As a soul master, he greatly desired to fight. When he was immersed in soul tool creation every day and was under a lot of pressure in the Sun Moon Imperial Soul Engineering Academy, he had a strong urge to vent this built-up pressure. Today was the best opportunity for him to let loose.

He wanted to win this competition and reap the great rewards to prepare for his future research in soul tools. The future of Shrek Academy and the Tang Sect was his greatest motivation.

He was only fifteen years old, but he was shouldering a lot of responsibilities. He needed to vent his emotions. He also had another intention—help the Tang Sect gain momentum. Bei Bei had discussed this with Huo Yuhao a couple of times. They reckoned that the Tang Sect's future development couldn't be separated from soul tools. But, relying on Huo Yuhao and He Caitou wasn't going to be enough.

Where could one find plenty of talented soul engineers? The Sun Moon Imperial Soul Engineering academy. Huo Yuhao wanted to leave a deep impression through this competition. At the very least, he wanted all the students to know about him, whether they liked him or not. Rather than being ignorant to his existence, their knowledge of him would be for the best. Furthermore, his arrogance actually contained a deeper meaning behind it.

"The first round is about to begin. Everyone, please remain silent and give both parties a peaceful competition's atmosphere. Whoever makes noises will be punished according to the school's rules and regulations." Lin Jiayi's stern voice reverberated all throughout the surroundings. This would help to contain the slightly messy situation.

Huo Yuhao's opponent was a youth, one who looked to be eighteen or nineteen years old. The badge on his chest revealed that he was a Class 5 soul engineer. However, he definitely seemed a little nervous now.

While Huo Yuhao's previous actions had provoked the students from the Sun Moon Imperial Soul Engineering Academy, they also put a lot of pressure on the competing students. If they won, they would be treated as the heroes of the academy. But if they lost, they would become sinners! This was even more evident so for the first student to spar with Huo Yuhao.

"Sun Moon Imperial Soul Engineering Academy's Class 5 soul engineer, Xia Xuanchen." The nervous youth reported his name as he looked at Huo Yuhao. The entire arena was now silent. Everyone's attention was focused on them.

“Shrek. Tang Sect. Huo Yuhao.” Huo Yuhao said indifferently.

Xuan Ziwen was unhappy when he looked at Huo Yuhao. He said in a deep voice, “This is just for sparring, a friendly competition. Both parties must try to avoid severely hurting each other during the process.”

Huo Yuhao could sense Teacher Xuan staring at him and understood his intention. He nodded and replied, “Noted.”

Xia Xuanchen also nodded. By now, he’d calmed down slightly, and slowly became excited. If he could defeat Huo Yuhao, would his class belle treat him nicer? Maybe he could even enter the Illustrious Virtue Hall directly. This was a great opportunity for him!

Xuan Ziwen heaved a sigh of relief after receiving Huo Yuhao’s acknowledgement. He was afraid that Huo Yuhao would harm the academy’s students in this competition. A huge problem would arise if that happened. But, for now, it seemed like he had no such intentions.

“Both competitors, please approach the waiting areas.” Xuan Ziwen said loudly. The Soul Tool Experimentation Area had already been marked out yesterday. The waiting areas on both sides were separated by about a hundred and fifty meters. It was also a way for soul engineers to fully unleash their long-range capabilities. But, from what they’d agreed on earlier, Huo Yuhao wouldn’t use any soul tools apart from the Milk Bottle.

Xia Xuanchen turned around and walked away. He only felt his surging blood rushing through his veins. He couldn’t wait.

Huo Yuhao was different from him. He walked backwards and revealed a smirk of contempt. His first opponent really didn’t seem too impressive! Although they were just sparring, he was careless enough to show his opponent his back. He didn’t have any wariness towards his opponent. It seemed like Jing Hongchen was right, and organizing a sparring competition was necessary for these ordinary students from the academy.

Xuan Ziwen also noticed this problem. That was why when both parties reached their waiting areas, he immediately shouted, “Begin!”

Xia Xuanchen turned around frantically when he heard Xuan Ziwen’s sudden shout.

This was anyone’s natural reaction. However, he wasted two seconds before he could fully turn around and ready his attack. Huo Yuhao burst forth like a panther in these two seconds. He leapt up, and seemed to be flying. When Xia Xuanchen finally reacted, the distance between the two of them had been reduced to a hundred meters already.

Xia Xuanchen displayed his abilities as an elite student of the Sun Moon Imperial Soul Engineering Academy even though he was shocked. He lifted his arms and two metal barrels appeared, with metal clanging sounds ringing out. His metal barrels were different from ordinary soul tool cannons and soul rays. They completely covered his arms, giving off the feeling that he had lost his arms and grown soul cannons in their place.

Two different balls of light suddenly shot out. The left soul tool cannon fired a ball of yellow light, while the right fired a ball of red light. The speeds of the lights were also different, with the yellow light being markedly faster than the red. Before the lights were fired, a beep was heard from Xia Xuanchen's body.

Huo Yuhao's spiritual detection had already been activated back when they were preparing for the match. His greatest advantage in this sparring competition was that he was also a soul engineer, even though he was competing as a soul master. Thus, he was very familiar with them. However, the Sun Moon Imperial Soul Engineering Academy's soul engineers knew nothing about his fighting strategies.

Hence Huo Yuhao could immediately recognize the different effects of the balls of light. The yellow light came from a Class 5 shock cannon; a domain-type offensive soul tool. When their shots exploded at a high velocity, they would cause intense shockwaves. Opponents who weren't skilled enough could easily be torn apart by the shockwaves. Even if the opponent could resist them, his movements would be greatly stalled. It was a rather effective Class 5 soul tool, although it was very difficult to create.

The red light, on the other hand, came from the high-powered soul cannon on his other arm. It only had one effect—destroying the opponent. It would lock onto an opponent through the opponent's soul power, allowing the cannon to track one's opponent.

The combination of the shock cannon and high-powered soul cannon was effective and powerful. Evidently, Xia Xuanchen had prepared well.

While this combination was effective, Huo Yuhao had expected it. When the soul cannons were fired, Huo Yuhao suddenly changed directions. He moved in a diagonal direction now. It was impressive, and when the shock cannon fired out the ball of yellow light, Huo Yuhao was no longer within the area covered by it.

The ball of red light that came shortly after that. However, it also changed directions quickly, and was in hot pursuit of Huo Yuhao.

But Huo Yuhao didn't even look at it. He changed directions again and burst towards Xia Xuanchen. They were only fifty meters apart now.

Wasn't he scared of the high-powered soul cannon? At this point, everyone was puzzled with Huo Yuhao's intentions.

Chapter 177.3: The Tang Sect Completely Dominates Throughout All Eternity

Even Soul Emperors would find it uncomfortable to deal with high-powered soul cannons. Even a Class 5 protective soul barrier couldn't resist the elevated temperatures from a high-powered soul cannon.

However, Huo Yuhao acted like it was air. He continued to dash forward and didn't bother with the assault coming from the high-powered soul cannon. He quickly closed the gap between him and Xia Xuanchen.

The homing red light finally arrived, but Huo Yuhao stopped in the air just as it was about to hit him. Huo Yuhao's figure turned blurry in that instant, and in the next, the high-powered soul cannon's attack brushed past Huo Yuhao's body.

How was that possible? Xia Xuanchen had clearly locked onto him! He was perplexed. A moment later, a loud boom was heard as an orange-red light engulfed the area behind Huo Yuhao. The tremendous explosive force catalyzed the formation of a mushroom cloud in the Soul Tool Experimentation Area.

Huo Yuhao's body was covered in a layer of diamond crystals. The Ice Empress' Armor. Intense shockwaves generated by the explosion propelled his body forward at a faster speed. His speed instantly soared, and he quickly arrived in front of Xia Xuanchen.

Everything came too abruptly for Xia Xuanchen. He could only unleash his Class 5 protective soul barrier and frantically retreat.

However, a Class 5 protective soul barrier was completely useless against the Darkgolden Terrorclaws. It was instantly torn apart, and Huo Yuhao destroyed his two soul cannons. Even so, Xia Xuanchen was not physically hurt in the process. The blades of the terrorclaws touched Xia Xuanchen's shoulders slightly, and their cold aura caused goosebumps to rise.

"You've lost." Huo Yuhao's Ice Empress' Armor disappeared. Even so, his calm and emotionless voice caused Xia Xuanchen to feel an extreme chill through his entire body.

Xia Xuanchen was indignant as he exclaimed, "I haven't unleashed all my soul tools...!"

Piak— Huo Yuhao retracted his terrorclaws and slapped Xia Xuanchen, who spun twice and fell to the floor.

Huo Yuhao said coldly, "If this were a battlefield, you'd already be a corpse. Will your enemies care whether you've used all your soul tools?"

Xia Xuanchen was dumbfounded as he sat on the floor. One of his hands was on his cheeks that were just slapped. He seemed to lose his awareness.

Huo Yuhao lifted his right hand and pointed his index finger at the spectators. Following that, he made one revolution before placing his finger on his lips. He was asking everyone to remain quiet. After that, he shouted, "Next!"

It was only at this point that the academy's teachers and students reacted. A commotion ensued once more.

The first round ended not long after it starting. Approximately ten seconds had passed... It seemed like Huo Yuhao didn't even do anything. He only burst forward and slapped before he emerged victorious. He didn't use any dazzling soul skills, and the spectators didn't even see his soul rings. But, he had won! He won cleanly.

Did he really win that easily? It might appear very simple or easy, but was that really the case?

Only Xuan Ziwen witnessed everything clearly as the referee. Firstly, Huo Yuhao hadn't wasted any time. When Xuan Ziwen signaled the start of the competition, he was dissatisfied with Xia Xuanchen, and thus didn't wait for him to turn around or prepare. However, Huo Yuhao burst forward like a fired cannon shell. Undoubtedly, Huo Yuhao was ready.

Xuan Ziwen wasn't too surprised when Huo Yuhao used the Darkgolden Terrorclaws to tear apart the protective soul barrier and overcome Xia Xuanchen. It was Huo Yuhao's reaction when the shock cannon

was fired that shocked him. His direction changed immediately when the yellow light appeared, allowing him to dodge it effectively. How did he predict it like that? Furthermore, he had even managed to prevent the high-powered soul cannon from locking him onto him properly, and exploited the shockwave to increase his speed. If all of that was within his calculations, he was indeed to be feared.

“Do you need to rest?” Xuan Ziwen asked Huo Yuhao.

Huo Yuhao shook his head and replied, “No, let’s continue.”

Their gazes met, and Huo Yuhao could tell that Xuan Ziwen was deep in thought. Xuan Ziwen could see Huo Yuhao’s stubbornness in his Spirit Eyes, and sensed the strong competitive will in his body.

“Silence!” A voice that sounded like rumbling thunder resonated through the Soul Tool Experimentation Arena. This voice greatly eclipsed the commotion that had ensued from Xia Xuanchen’s defeat. Even Huo Yuhao couldn’t help but look into the air.

Jing Hongchen floated in mid-air without using any flying-type soul tools. He was also looking at Huo Yuhao.

Lin Jiayi had sent someone to report to Jing Hongchen when he realized that the situation was getting out of control. After all, the teachers in the audience were all very strong, and he couldn’t really control those from the Illustrious Virtue Hall either.

Jing Hongchen placed his hands behind his back, and his awe-inspiring gaze swept the place. He said coldly, “Are all of you only this good? Besides cursing, what else can you do? It’s better to prove yourself using your abilities, not your mouth. If you’re capable, beat him. If you’re not, then shut up. The purpose of this sparring contest is to show the gap between him and all of you. Don’t think you’re invincible just because you’ve learned how to use some advanced soul tools. This brat from Shrek Academy is only fifteen years old. Failure isn’t scary. The scary thing is inability to accept one’s defeat and remaining ignorant of your failure. If all of you can only whine, when will the Sun Moon Imperial Soul Engineering Academy ever beat Shrek Academy in the Elite Continental Advanced Soul Master Academy Soul Dueling Tournament?”

Jing Hongchen’s reputation was extremely prominent in the Sun Moon Imperial Soul Engineering Academy. His appearance silenced crowd instantly.

Huo Yuhao furrowed his brow. Jing Hongchen was indeed a hero of his generation. He used him to motivate these students, which was something that he didn’t want. However, he couldn’t stop him. Jing Hongchen had come much earlier than expected!

Jing Hongchen looked at Huo Yuhao and said, “The competition shall continue.” As he spoke, his figure flashed, and he flew towards the main spectators’ stand.

Huo Yuhao sighed in his heart. Forget it, he couldn’t realize his wish. The real reason why he’d been so arrogant and provoked the crowd, was because he wanted to leave the Sun Moon Imperial Soul Engineering Academy.

He had learned enough theoretical knowledge over the past half year. Although Xuan Ziwen never brought him out for any practical experiments, he was now extremely well-versed theoretically. Huo

Yuhao combined his own practice and the path that he'd discovered to make significant progress in his study of soul tools.

Don't misunderstand, Huo Yuhao didn't intend to leave the academy quickly because he thought that there was nothing left for him to learn. It was because of the Iron Man, which was like a time bomb! He was certain that it was the core essence of the Illustrious Virtue Hall's research. With his current theoretical knowledge, he could easily become a top-ranked soul engineer if he could comprehend the Iron Man completely. It wouldn't be a problem even if he had to learn on his own. It wasn't meaningless to remain in the academy—it was dangerous.

That was why Huo Yuhao pretended to be very arrogant. On the surface, it seemed as if he was trying to obtain more rare metals as he invited more opponents to challenge him. But in truth, he wanted to incur everyone's wrath and end this exchange as soon as possible.

However, Jing Hongchen's appearance forced him to change his plans. After all, he couldn't make it too obvious. Otherwise, it would attract the suspicions of others.

The second student sparring with Huo Yuhao entered the arena after being signaled by Xuan Ziwen. Compared to the previous competitor, this student looked much more stable. After he entered the arena, he stopped in his waiting area and watched Huo Yuhao with a vibrant look in his eyes. He seemed like a volcano that could erupt any time.

Huo Yuhao acknowledged him mentally. This fight was highly unlikely to be as easy as the previous one. However, the stronger his opponent, the greater his fighting spirit.

He squinted his eyes and looked at this opponent before returning to his waiting area.

Xuan Ziwen observed both parties and calmed himself down.

"Sun Moon Imperial Soul Engineering Academy, Grade 6 student, Wan Yijun. Please advise me!" The youth who looked older than twenty years shouted. His voice rumbled, and was full of a vigorous aura. His figure wasn't exactly huge, but he looked very sturdy.

Huo Yuhao also lifted his hand and shouted, "Shrek Academy. Huo Yuhao. Please advise me!"

"Begin!" Xuan Ziwen gestured suddenly and retreated rapidly.

Huo Yuhao burst forth just like before. The only difference was that a golden light now shone from him as he leapt up. Four white soul rings rose from his feet, one was especially bright.

Wan Yijun had already made sufficient preparations. When Xuan Ziwen signaled the start of the fight, he backed away quickly and two streaks of light shot out from beneath his feet. The lights pushed his body off the ground. More than ten soul tools appeared on his arms, shoulders, chest and other areas.

However, he was stunned when he saw Huo Yuhao's white soul rings. This was weird... White soul rings? What was going on?

Chapter 178: Specter Na Na

Both soul masters and engineers knew what white meant – a ten-year soul ring!

Even for the worst possible soul master, it was impossible to have only ten-year soul rings with a four-ring cultivation.

Wan Yijun had the same thought, too. He was subconsciously stunned.

However, Wan Yijun was much more agile than Xia Xuanchen, though both of them were Soul Kings and Class 5 soul engineers.

While he was still in a daze, his arms had already lifted. More than ten streaks of colored light shot in Huo Yuhao's direction.

Compared to other empires' soul engineers, the Sun Moon Imperial Soul Engineering Academy's superiority was demonstrated through this simple probing attack. Unleashing streaks of soul rays was something that almost all Class 5 soul engineers could do. However, Wan Yijun's soul rays contained four different elements. This wasn't something that everyone could do.

Wan Yijun had two yellow and three purple soul rings. The lights from his five soul rings intersected where a soul tool was shining brightly behind his back, evidently gathering energy. His five soul rings also all contained auxiliary-type soul skills that helped to enhance his soul power. He could last longer in battle through his energy-gathering soul tool. He also retreated quickly as the soul thruster beneath his feet sent him backward, widening the gap between him and Huo Yuhao.

This series of adaptations impressed all the academy's students, teachers, and even Xuan Ziwen. As a Class 5 soul engineer, this was already the best he could do.

However, those who were complimenting Wan Yijun mentally were promptly shocked in the next moment.

Huo Yuhao didn't dodge Wan Yijun's soul rays. He continued to hurtle forward, and the soul rays seemed to avoid him on purpose. They brushed past his body,

none striking him.

Soul rays were faster than soul cannons, but they were less powerful. However, they were very accurate! With Wan Yijun's abilities, it wasn't possible for him to completely miss his target like this.

Wan Yijun's soul thruster was beneath his feet, he instead used his flying-type soul tool to hover in mid-air. Although he couldn't fly too high due to the restrictions that were in place, the flying-type soul tool still managed to help him change directions at will.

However, he had only just risen into the air, he had yet to gather speed. He was moving much slower than Huo Yuhao. The gap between the two of them had been reduced to a hundred meters.

Wan Yijun was also appalled that none of his soul rays hit Huo Yuhao. He even thought that he was seeing things. He tried to fire his soul rays once again, and expended a lot of his soul power doing so. He used the soul rays to form a web that engulfed Huo Yuhao. His goal was very simple – delay his opponent. In that way, he could unleash a barrage of attacks at his foe. He could then employ some of his soul tools that were more powerful.

However, he was immediately shocked again. It wasn't just him who was seeing things, all the spectators were seeing things, too!

Huo Yuhao had used his Spiritual Interference to avoid the soul rays previously. This time, he used the Ghost Shadow Perplexing Track!

Using his Spiritual Detection as a guide, he slipped through the seemingly impenetrable web like a streak of smoke. He could find even the slightest gap and slip through it before advancing forward, still increasing his speed.

Wan Yijun had no choice but to take a breather, as the depletion of his soul power was too great... and he discovered that Huo Yuhao was only thirty meters away from him! How was this possible?! No matter how calm he appeared, Wan Yijun was still frightened at this point. He couldn't bother to attack anymore. He quickly fled using his flying-type soul tool. His entire body turned to one side and flew in that direction.

He didn't forget to fling out more than ten soul bombs, however. These bombs weren't too powerful, so their shockwaves wouldn't affect the user.

They could be detonated using a little soul power, but they couldn't be underestimated, as there were a lot of them. Wan Yijun was only buying time for himself.

Surprisingly, Huo Yuhao stopped. His left foot stomped on the ground, and he leapt up high. This leap allowed him to reach more than ten meters in the air, avoiding all the soul bombs. He then drew his limbs together in mid-air, and something appeared in his right hand.

It was a short spear, around three feet long. The spear was sharp at both ends, the center as thick as a pigeon's egg. The bright silver spear exuded a metallic glow.

Huo Yuhao straightened his gaze, spinning through a half-turn in mid-air. After that, he threw out the short spear in his hand.

When the spear left his hand, a screeching sound suddenly rose. The spear caught up to Wan Yijun instantly.

Wasn't he not supposed to use soul tools? This was the first thought in Wan Yijun's mind as he felt the threat, unleashing his Class 5 protective soul barrier.

Wan Yijun jerked when the short spear stabbed straight through the protective soul barrier. His soul barrier turned extremely bright, before being crushed by the spear. Wan Yijun fell from the air as if he had been struck by a bolt of lightning.

What was shocking was that the short spear didn't stab into him. It changed directions as soon as it touched Wan Yijun's body, and instead pierced through the wing of his flying-type soul tool. He was nailed to the ground as his body fell to the ground.

Huo Yuhao quickly arrived atop Wan Yijun in a flash of motion.

Wan Yijun's fighting will didn't disappear even after he fell from mid-air. He wanted to resist, but he was helpless. When the spear pierced his flying-type soul tool, he felt a wave of indescribable tyranny smash through his body. He couldn't even control his body anymore, and his martial soul was forced to retract.

If he described this feeling to Zi Mu, Zi Mu would certainly understand, as he had been through it before. That was also why he didn't bother to resist Huo Yuhao anymore.

What was in the spear? It contained a powerful fighting skill taught by Elder Mu that was a combination of spiritual power and soul power – the Sovereign's Descent.

That's right, the Sovereign's Descent couldn't be used in a long-range attack. However, that didn't include weapons. When Huo Yuhao threw the spear out, he infused his spiritual and soul power into the throw.

He wouldn't get the throw wrong. He used the Tang Sect's methods to change the spear's direction, since he couldn't kill here. Even Xuan Ziwen wouldn't give Wan Yijun a hand, because no one believed that his spear could overcome a Class 5 protective soul barrier. He wasn't even using a soul skill.

Huo Yuhao chose the Tang Sect when he was still cultivating in the Sea God's Pavilion as a soul master. In terms of soul tools, he chose the close-combat route. As he combined both together, he slowly formed a path that belonged to him.

He had created this spear for the sake of this competition. It wasn't a true weapon, but was very suitable for sparring purposes. Huo Yuhao didn't think that he could beat a Class 5 or 6 soul engineer in terms of speed if they had soul thrusters or flying-type soul tools. However, it was different if he attacked from long-range.

He used his left hand to pull the spear out and pointed its tip at Wan Yijun's neck. After that, he lifted his right hand and stretched out two fingers.

Second opponent down!

He used very little time in these two rounds. While he held his short spear and walked back towards the waiting area, Wan Yijun struggled to crawl up from the ground. There was a complicated look in his eyes.

He knew that he had lost. However, he didn't know how Huo Yuhao had won after he was struck by the Sovereign's Descent. His fighting will had been completely crushed.

Jing Hongchen watched this fight seriously from the main spectator stand. Although he appeared calm, he was troubled internally.

Those who were chosen to spar were the academy's elites. Initially, students from Illustrious Virtue Hall were restricted from competing. However, Huo Yuhao had asked for Class 6 soul engineers from Illustrious Virtue Hall to be included in the competition. They were going to compete the next day.

Jing Hongchen wasn't shocked by Huo Yuhao's performance, but by the way he had beaten his opponent. It was undeniable that Huo Yuhao was capable, since he had represented Shrek Academy in the Elite Continental Advanced Soul Master Academy Soul Dueling Tournament. But he only had a four-ringed cultivation! Even though he had twin martial souls, it wasn't easy to beat a Class 5 soul engineer. However, Huo Yuhao was completely beyond Jing Hongchen's imagination.

He had already won twice, even though he hadn't used too many soul skills. No one even understood how he had gained victory in this round.

Jing Hongchen had been observing Wan Yijun's performance throughout this match. Although Wan Yijun wasn't shockingly good, he had performed relatively well. At least he was much more outstanding than Xia Xuanchen.

However, he didn't last much longer than Xia Xuanchen, even so! Huo Yuhao was just too ridiculous!

Huo Yuhao was walking towards Xuan Ziwen. He passed him the short spear.

Xuan Ziwen understood his intentions. He injected his soul power to analyze the spear. After that, he mentioned over the sound-amplifying soul tool, "Huo Yuhao is only using an ordinary weapon. It's not a soul tool. Do you need to rest?"

Huo Yuhao nodded. He sat cross-legged beside Xuan Ziwen. He quickly entered deep meditation as everyone watched him.

While the throw appeared very simple, he had used the powers of the Sovereign's Descent, Spiritual Detection and the Tang Sect's hidden weapon skills. This undoubtedly expended his spiritual and soul power. He needed to keep himself in the best possible condition for the many remaining fights.

Jing Hongchen said to Lin Jiayi softly, "Send a Class 5 close-combat soul engineer in the next round. Choose someone defensively strong."

Lin Jiayi acknowledged his instructions and nodded his head. He immediately left to carry them out.

Huo Yuhao didn't rest for too long. After just ten minutes, he leapt up and nodded towards Xuan Ziwen. Following that, he walked to the waiting area.

Two rounds had ended, and the commotion and noises from the crowd had died off. More and more students were puzzled when they looked at Huo Yuhao.

Was this what a soul master was supposed to be like? Was this a soul master's fighting style? But he didn't even use a single soul skill!

So soul masters were that strong... Weren't soul masters of the same level not supposed to be a match for soul engineers? But why were these soul engineers' attacks ineffective against Huo Yuhao?

Some intelligent students were pondering in their minds. What Jing Hongchen wanted them to see was finally realized. Huo Yuhao wanted to at least influence their mindsets, because he hadn't been able to succeed in the other aspects of his plan.

However, Huo Yuhao wasn't coming out of this with nothing. Firstly, he won rare metals and some gold soul coins. Next, he'd managed to boost Shrek Academy's reputation in the Sun Moon Imperial Soul Engineering Academy. And most importantly, he had managed to fuse the results of his Ultimate Soldier Plan's training and his experiences with developing soul tools over the past six months.

This was also a fusion of his paths as a soul master and soul engineer.

Even though he couldn't use soul tools here, it didn't affect his thinking. The usages of different soul tools under different conditions surfaced in his mind, and his immense spiritual power ensured that he had enough thinking capabilities throughout the fights.

The third student to spar with him had already entered by now. It was a female student this time.

This female student couldn't be considered very pretty, but she had a healthy complexion. She had a slender figure, and was around a hundred eighty centimeters tall. However, her figure still seemed very proportionate. There was a sharp look in her eyes. She stared at Huo Yuhao, and there appeared to be sparks coming from her eyes.

A Female soul engineer?

Huo Yuhao had sensed a heavy pressure from this young lady. This female soul engineer was definitely stronger than the other two soul engineers earlier. Huo Yuhao had likely met a real match.

The young lady rose while watching Huo Yuhao, and tied her long, dark-red hair up into a ponytail. She looked much neater this way. Her yellow uniform also made her look more valiant and formidable.

"Sun Moon Imperial Soul Engineering Academy, Grade 6. Active Control Soul Tool Department, Na Na. Please advise."

"Shrek Academy. Huo Yuhao. Please advise."

Active Control Soul Tool Department? Huo Yuhao was flabbergasted when he heard her. As a soul engineer, he knew what that meant. He took lessons on it when he was still in Shrek Academy.

The Active Control Soul Tool Department consisted of special close combat-type soul masters who strengthened themselves by using soul tools. They didn't know how to create soul tools at all, but they were very familiar with all kinds of soul tools. They used soul tools to increase their fighting strength and survivability.

Currently, Shrek Academy's Soul Tool Department and Martial Soul Department were exploring how to train in this aspect. The Soul Tool Department would provide soul tools and guidance for the Martial Soul Department's elite soul masters. As Wang Yan put it, this was the future developmental direction of all soul masters.

Soul masters that could create soul tools and soul masters that could use soul tools shouldn't necessarily be divided into different learning and cultivation paths. This was something Wang Yan had mentioned as he studied in the Library of the Sea God's Pavilion. This was also affirmed by the Soul Tool Department. Even Yan Shaozhe and Cai Mei'er from the Martial Soul Department were moved by those words.

The Active Control Soul Tool Department signified that her fighting strength wasn't just in soul tools. Her martial soul was bound to be powerful too. While there were very few powerful martial souls in the Sun Moon Empire, it didn't mean that they didn't exist.

"Let's go, Na Na. Let's go, Na Na!" Some spectating students stood up and chanted Na Na's name. She was apparently very popular among the student population.

Na Na didn't seem to hear the cheering. She focused her gaze on Huo Yuhao.

She too, was very curious about him. One reason why she was so curious about him was because he might be an opponent in future Elite Continental Advanced Soul Master Academy Soul Dueling Tournaments.

Na Na wasn't part of the back up team in the last edition of the tournament, but she had managed to excel based on her own capabilities in the academy. After she managed to become a Soul King at the age of seventeen, she was finally confirmed as a member in the next tournament. She would compete along with the Hongchen siblings.

Since Na Na didn't know how to create soul tools, she was definitely not as familiar with them as normal soul engineers. However, she was much stronger in her combination of soul tools and martial souls than most soul engineers. Furthermore, students from the Active Control Soul Tool Department truly lived to fight. With the academy backing them, they were always exposed to the newest and most suitable combative soul tools. They could also place more attention on fighting, rather than being distracted by the creation of soul tools.

She was one of the best among all the Soul Kings in the Sun Moon Imperial Soul Engineering Academy. She was far stronger than both Xia Xuanchen and Wan Yijun. Her soul power had reached Rank 54 already. In the next two years, she aimed to reach Rank 60, and become a Soul Emperor before the tournament.

After learning that there was an opportunity to spar with a student from Shrek, she was one of the first few to sign up. Huo Yuhao's arrogance roused her fighting spirit, but she didn't think that Huo Yuhao was very strong. After all, he was only a four-ringed Soul Ancestor. She could certainly defeat him!

Xuan Ziwen nodded in his heart as he observed the intense competitive spirit from both sides. This round was bound to be more intense than the previous two rounds.

He also knew who Na Na was. That was because the academy had once asked him to create soul tools specially for Na Na. Although she couldn't enter the Illustrious Virtue Hall because she belonged to the Active Control Soul Tool Department, she was still highly valued by the academy.

"Begin!" As Xuan Ziwen shouted, the third round of sparring began.

Both contestants acted immediately. Huo Yuhao wasn't the only swift attacker now. Na Na immediately burst towards Huo Yuhao, unlike the two soul engineers before her.

A close-combat soul engineer? Huo Yuhao was shocked. He also chose the close-combat path. While Na Na didn't know how to create soul tools, she was adept at using them. She was very likely to be strong too.

Two yellow, two purple and one black soul ring drifted up from Na Na's feet. Her entire body transformed as her martial soul was unleashed.

She looked a little illusory now. Her entire body looked very surreal. However, her speed soared as her martial soul was unleashed. She wasn't any slower than Huo Yuhao.

Agility-type? This was Huo Yuhao's second judgment of her. She was indeed an active control soul engineer who didn't lose her abilities as a soul master. With her speed and destructive soul tools, she must be capable of high-frequency attacks.

Huo Yuhao's guess and judgment were absolutely on point. Lin Jiayi wanted to find a Class 5 close-combat soul engineer that was defensively strong after being instructed to by Jing Hongchen, but Na Na happened to be third on the list. She wouldn't agree to being substituted no matter what, and with her

position in the academy, Lin Jiayi couldn't persuade her either. Furthermore, Lin Jiayi really wanted to see how she would fare against Huo Yuhao. They were likely to be opponents in the near future! That was why he didn't substitute her.

The hundred and fifty meter gap between them was quickly reduced. They were almost in front of each other.

Both of them burst towards each other from the start. It was only when they were finally ten meters apart that the situation changed.

A streak of fiery-red light flashed from Na Na's body. It was a blade only one foot and two inches in length. She grabbed the hilt of the very weird looking blade.

This blade was different from ordinary blades. It was as wide as palm, and seemed blunt. There were elegant flower patterns carved on it, but Huo Yuhao was unable to tell what materials had been used to make it.

The blade was dark-red, but an almost two foot long scarlet-red radiance flashed on its surface, which appeared to be very unstable. It was like a flame, one that chose its target carefully.

After unleashing this blade, the surrounding air heated up. Na Na's surreal-looking body turned even more illusory as the heat caused the air around her to ripple.

The blade instantly turned into a rainbow and the blade light extended from two feet to ten feet. Na Na disappeared amidst the blade light as she unleashed its power. Her body combined with the blade and she slashed at Huo Yuhao. At that moment, the blade light was like the rising sun. Regardless of whether it was her speed, strength, soul master type, or soul tool, she had reached the peak of a Class 5 soul engineer.

When Na Na started her attack, Huo Yuhao started moving. A dark-golden light shone brightly and his Darkgolden Terrorclaws appeared. He stomped to cease all forward momentum. He stabilized himself in place, choosing not to advance further.

The ten-foot-long scarlet-red blade light was extremely terrifying within that patch of red air. However, the scarlet-red light was concealed by Huo Yuhao's Darkgolden Terrorclaws as they appeared.

They appeared as five enormous dark-golden blade lights. The huge terrorclaws exuded a terrifying killing aura that nearly covered twenty feet. When they came out, they swept aside everything in their path. Huo Yuhao was like a Darkgolden Terrorclaw Bear in human form. His right arm was dyed completely dark-gold.

Both parties weren't using any flowery skills against each other when they collided. On one side, there was a combination of woman and weapon aided by a powerful soul tool. On the other side, there was the frightening offense of a person equipped with the Darkgolden Terrorclaws, a rare external soul bone from the overbearing Darkgolden Terrorclaw Bear.

When these parties collided, a metallic clanging sound rung out. It sounded like gold and steel had struck each other head on.

Following that, the illusory figure was thrown more than ten meters away.

As this figure was flung back, it unleashed a golden light barrier. This light barrier forcefully dispelled those dark-gold blade lights that pestered Na Na so, but it was also crushed instantly.

Na Na was the one who was flung. While her soul tools were strong, they weren't destructive enough to compete with the Darkgolden Terrorclaws.

Huo Yuhao didn't even use all his strength, when he unleashed the Darkgolden Terrorclaws, as he didn't want to harm her. Otherwise, given his current cultivation, it would've been much more powerful had he injected all of his soul power into them.

However, Na Na's soul tool was of great quality. Only a few flaws appeared after it was struck. But the automatic defensive soul tool barrier on her body had been completely destroyed.

The students supporting Na Na cheered when her scarlet-red blade light appear. However, their cheers were stuck in their throats shortly afterwards, and they were devastated. Na Na, who gave off an extremely powerful seeming gaze, was forced back in one blow. It was evident that she was at a disadvantage.

Na Na's illusory figure suddenly became a little more realistic. She lifted her head as she landed on the ground, and her eyes met Huo Yuhao's.

She saw the intense competitive will in Huo Yuhao's eyes.

Did I just lose to him in a direct confrontation? Na Na was very indignant. However, she managed to keep her cool even under such circumstances. Her body flashed, and she once more burst towards Huo Yuhao. She increased her speed again, then her first and second soul rings flashed sequentially.

Na Na's figure divided into three, all of them illusory. These three figures separated from one another once they were less than five meters away from Huo Yuhao, before swiftly gathering in towards Huo Yuhao at the center. Three scarlet-red light streaks shot toward Huo Yuhao.

Huo Yuhao grinned. He acted just as the Na Na figures grouped together. His body also turned illusory like Na Na's, but the illusionary aspect came from the Ghost Shadow Perplexing Track.

In this fight, many of the spectators couldn't even see what was going on clearly. They could only see Huo Yuhao shuttling between the three figures, and hear clanging or knocking noises resonated continuously.

Sitting in the main spectator stand, Jing Hongchen's expression turned serious. He naturally knew who Na Na was. He'd been the one to grant approval for her to compete in the next Elite Continental Advanced Soul Master Academy Soul Dueling Tournament.

However, he saw her inferiority compared to Huo Yuhao after just a short bout fighting him.

In terms of absolute speed; Na Na was quicker than Huo Yuhao with the enhancements from her first and second soul skills. However, she was only fast. She wasn't nearly as accurate as Huo Yuhao.

Huo Yuhao's Ghost Shadow Perplexing Track allowed him to appear at the weaker areas in Na Na's onslaught. While it seemed like Na Na had encircled him, he was the one attacking her incessantly with his Darkgolden Terrorclaws.

Na Na's first soul skill increased her speed and made her body more illusory, which meant she would suffer less harm when she was attacked. Her second soul skill allowed her to form doppelgangers. With these abilities and her powerful close-combat type soul tool, she was fighting like an agility-type soul master with the strength of an assault-type.

The doppelgangers weren't real; they were just her second soul skill. They didn't possess any offensive strength. They purely used speed to create illusions. These three figures were actually just the one person.

But how could her doppelgangers trick Huo Yuhao, and his spiritual detection? Huo Yuhao could take the initiative easily even if he used less effort than her. While they appeared to be on par with one another, Na Na was actually being suppressed, and was at a disadvantage. This was clear from how relaxed Huo Yuhao was—he didn't even use his left hand, instead placing it behind his back.

Na Na was panicked as the battle dragged on. She no longer underestimated Huo Yuhao.

Did he really just become a Soul Ancestor? According to the academy's information, he should be more inclined towards a control-type soul master!

However, she suffered every time she collided with him even though he was just a Soul Ancestor. The ScarletFlame Blade she was using, was a brilliant Class 5 close-combat soul tool. It contained a scarlet flame, which had a temperature of one thousand degrees Celsius. She tested it once on a wild beast, and the wild beast had been instantly cooked as she slashed it with the blade. However, the scarlet flames were dissipated before they even touching Huo Yuhao's body. They couldn't affect him in the slightest. This also meant that it was completely ineffective against Huo Yuhao.

"Clink!" A crisp sound resonated. Na Na was forced back again. Huo Yuhao's strength numbed her right hand.

"Wait a minute!" Huo Yuhao shouted. He stopped Na Na just as she was about to burst towards him again.

"What?" Na Na stared at him warily.

Huo Yuhao said, "This isn't fair for you. I suggest you change your weapon. I have twin martial souls. My first martial soul is spiritual-type, while my second martial soul is ice-type. Using fire-type or ice-type soul tools against me won't be very effective."

Na Na was confused. "Why are you telling me this?"

Huo Yuhao's eyes flashed with burning light. "Your close-combat strength is impressive. But I can also tell that you haven't given your all yet. Since this is the case, I want to spar with you in your best condition. That's the point of sparring, isn't it? You would've already lost if I simply wanted to defeat you."

Na Na snorted furiously. "Don't be so arrogant. Let's go again." As she spoke, she burst towards Huo Yuhao again. But she didn't use her second soul skill this time. She only used her first soul skill to increase her speed.

Although she was unconvinced, her soul tool had already changed while she made her move. The ScarletFlame Blade disappeared, replaced by a green blade.

She seemed to fancy blades. Huo Yuhao was under greater pressure when this blade appeared.

It was also a Class 5 soul tool, but it was a wind-type soul tool. The blade unleashed six wind blades towards Huo Yuhao, which came from different directions. Huo Yuhao found it tough to navigate even though he had both the spiritual detection and the Ghost Shadow Perplexing Track.

Na Na inched closer to him. She wielded her 'Swift Blade', and six more wind blades attacked from different directions towards Huo Yuhao. She also got closer to Huo Yuhao with the speed boost from the blade. She wasn't slashing the blade anymore, instead she stabbed it towards Huo Yuhao's chest.

He lifted both his hands, they were instantly covered in diamond ice crystals. He retracted his Darkgolden Terrorclaws and switched to the Ice Empress' Pincer with Mysterious Jade Hands. He did something else too, something weird. His left hand grabbed forward towards the Swift Blade, while his right arm started to make large revolutions like a huge windmill.

Something even weirder happened. As he revolved his right arm, the six wind blades seemed to be attracted by something, and changed their direction. They all slashed towards a corner of the arena, leaving several marks. While his left hand touched the Swift Blade.

Both of their bodies jerked. But the Ice Empress' Pincer couldn't compare to the Darkgolden Terrorclaws. Even though he managed to block the Swift Blade, there wasn't enough strength. Huo Yuhao's staggered two steps back. However, Na Na was forced back too.

How did he deflect the wind blades? Na Na was shocked once again. But the blades were still useful, or at least they were better than the ScarletFlame Blade.

Her attacks began anew after her discoveries. She kept on wielding the Swift Blade as she surrounded Huo Yuhao with attacks. Her assault continued swiftly.

Chapter 179: An Avenging Spirit in Front of a Necromancer?

At the start, Huo Yuhao could still accurately judge and adapt using his Ghost Shadow Perplexing Track. But Na Na was getting faster and faster. The wind blades unleashed from her Swift Blade were also increasing. A new batch of wind blades would appear before he had a chance to dispel the previous batch. The entire place was filled with green lights, and Huo Yuhao had disappeared within them.

Huo Yuhao had no choice but to unleash his Ice Empress' Armor, as he was under immense pressure. The diamond ice crystals resisted the wind blades, piercingly sharp noises were released when both powers clashed. Huo Yuhao seemed to be at more and more at a disadvantage.

But Na Na was also a little anxious. Huo Yuhao's defensive soul skills were very strong, and her wind blades had a negligible effect on him. The Swift Blade was much inferior to the Scarletflame Blade in terms of offensive strength, and could be blocked by Huo Yuhao using just his hands. They were stuck in a stalemate. Na Na didn't really have much of an advantage.

"If this is all you're capable of, you're going to lose," Huo Yuhao's voice sounded in her ears. Following that, Huo Yuhao's footsteps became a little messy, and his speed increased slightly. His Darkgolden

Terrorclaws appeared again. However, he wasn't just resisting the Swift Blade this time. Rather, he was also attacking Na Na.

Na Na's momentum was such that she couldn't dodge when Huo Yuhao positioned his terrorclaws right at a specific position that she had to cross. She clashed with them heavily, using her blade to block their attack.

However, it wasn't just a simple meeting of blades this time. Huo Yuhao's terrorclaws closed up, and his body was about to ram into Na Na. The two of them were approaching each other rapidly.

Oh no! Na Na's third soul ring lit up as she reacted, and her body turned illusory. Huo Yuhao brushed past her, and there was no impact between the two of them.

This was Na Na's third soul skill, Spectre Possession. She could turn her body into a spectre, and not be struck by anything physical, but only for a second. It was a life-saving technique. She couldn't attack as this soul skill was unleashed, which was why Na Na hadn't used it before.

But she couldn't hold back this skill any longer. When their paths crossed, her fourth soul ring also lit up. Her shadow detached from her body as she paled, and it suddenly landed on Huo Yuhao's body.

Huo Yuhao was engulfed by a layer of black gas. He couldn't move even though he struggled mightily.

Na Na suddenly turned back and burst towards him with the Swift Blade. She slashed the blade towards his neck. This was the effect of her fourth soul skill, Avenging Spirit!

Her soul skill had a powerful restraining effect, but it had a lot of restrictions. It was operated using her spiritual power. But if the opponent couldn't be restricted, she would suffer from the backlash.

I've won! Na Na said to herself in her heart. However, she abruptly realized that something was amiss when she saw the look in Huo Yuhao's eyes. He was too calm. He didn't seem to be restrained...

Huo Yuhao was a little amused at this point. In his mind, Elder Yi remarked, "She must be tired of living, using an Avenging Spirit in front of a necromancer!"

As Na Na realized something was wrong, Huo Yuhao's eyes turned grey, and an indescribable fear instantly engulfed Na Na. Following this, Huo Yuhao seemed to mutter something. The Avenging Spirit surrounding Huo Yuhao's body instantly disappeared, seeming to fuse into Huo Yuhao's body.

No backlash occurred. Na Na only felt a sense of emptiness, and staggered a little, but she still managed to react. Her fifth soul ring lit up, and she reached out with her left hand. A small and short white dagger that was only five inches long was flung towards Huo Yuhao at lightning speed.

This was Na Na's trump card. She finally used it as she was in deep peril. It was a Class 6 close-combat soul tool, the Blinkknife.

The throwing knife didn't make a sound, but it instantly reached Huo Yuhao.

Huo Yuhao had been too careless. When he used Elder Yi's necromancy to deal with the Avenging Spirit, he had the ability to restrain Na Na's martial soul through their soul connection, and had done so. That's why Na Na's fifth soul skill wasn't really unleashed.

However, the Blinkknife still reached him.

The knife was hidden in a storage ring on Na Na's left hand. It possessed a tremendous destructive strength. In this critical situation, Huo Yuhao had no choice but to lift his hand to block the knife.

The Ice Empress' Pincer didn't completely resist the Blinkknife. His palm was instantly pierced. However, the Ice Empress' Pincer and Mysterious Jade Hands' defensive strength managed to buy Huo Yuhao some time. He lifted his hand as he looked backward. The Blinkknife almost kissed Huo Yuhao's face as it flew past him. It turned into a streak of white light as it went on by, and only stopped when it hit the defensive barrier around the arena.

Huo Yuhao broke out in a cold sweat, even though it was a sudden change. He was too careless, and had almost been killed by the Blinkknife!

Fresh blood flowed from his left hand. His expression also turned colder. He shrugged his left hand and sealed the blood on it, then continued to attack Na Na.

Na Na was indeed resilient. She couldn't get closer to control the Blinkknife without the help of her martial soul. Otherwise, she believed that she would've won. Even so, she continued to wield the Swift Blade and slashed at Huo Yuhao.

But Huo Yuhao's gaze was extremely cold now.

Boom, boom, boom, boom, boom...! A series of booms rang out in front of Na Na. Huo Yuhao's blood also contained soul power! He used his own blood to unleash the Ice Explosion Technique, and forced Na Na back with a series of explosions, and the Swift Blade was also torn from her hand. She couldn't resist the explosions in such a condition.

Huo Yuhao didn't chase after her. He only shouted, "Don't move!"

Na Na's body suddenly jerked, and she was actually frozen in place. She was horrified. She couldn't understand why her body didn't listen to her.

"You're so intent on killing me? We're only sparring," Huo Yuhao said coldly. He slowly placed the Darkgolden Terrorclaws in front of Na Na. The wound on his left hand had already been sealed by ice, and stopped bleeding.

Na Na couldn't calm down at this point. This situation that she couldn't comprehend left her extremely afraid.

"I've won." Huo Yuhao wasn't above hitting a woman, but the killing spirit that he restrained wouldn't be unleashed at this point.

Electrolux taught him that there were different regions in a person's spirit, even though it was a complete entity. He had also taught Huo Yuhao the different capabilities of a human's body.

Na Na's Avenging Spirit aimed to restrain a person's movements, which was why it now controlled Na Na's own movements. After her Avenging Spirit was snatched using necromancy, Huo Yuhao easily found the characteristic of her spirit, which was why he could restrain her now. If Huo Yuhao destroyed this part of her spirit, she might be paralyzed. Without her spirit, she would be unable to move.

He relaxed his will and released his control on Na Na before turning around. He walked back towards the waiting area. His energy had been greatly depleted in this battle.

Na Na chased after him and shouted, "What did you do to me?"

If it were somewhere else, others might misunderstand her words. But no one could sense the fear in Na Na's heart at this moment. When Huo Yuhao had controlled her body, she felt as if she lost something important.

Huo Yuhao said, "You're the one who's been attacking me."

She wanted to question him further, but she realized that she once again couldn't move. She could only watch as Huo Yuhao walked away.

Her fear grew stronger. She couldn't sense Huo Yuhao unleashing any undulations of soul power. The force that was restraining her seemed to come from inside her. This also meant that she wasn't being restrained by one of his soul skills. After she thought of how her Avenging Spirit had disappeared earlier, she roughly guessed that it was a side effect that was more scary than a direct backlash.

While the Avenging Spirit was powerful, it became her nightmare once it met a worthy opponent!

The restraint on Na Na was only removed when Huo Yuhao reached the waiting area, leaving her trembling. At this point, she didn't dare pester him anymore. As she thought of how completely helpless she was in front of him, that she could only let him do what he wanted, she wanted to kill him!

Huo Yuhao didn't think about it too much. He was furious, as Na Na had almost killed him. He decided to punish her since she hadn't treated this as a sparring match. He was going to keep this spirit with him, and he would only return it to her after some time.

"Do you need a break?" Xuan Ziwen's voice was gentle.

He had seen Na Na's actions, but had been too late to stop her. They had clashed at such close range that even the Hallmaster of Illustrious Virtue Hall wouldn't have been able to separate the two of them if he was the referee.

Xuan Ziwen was surprised when Huo Yuhao shook his head and said, "I'm alright, I can keep going."

"Oh?" Xuan Ziwen was stunned and asked, "Are you certain?"

Huo Yuhao nodded and replied, "Yes."

Although he was curious as to why Huo Yuhao had chosen not to rest, Xuan Ziwen still respected his choice and called for the fourth competitor.

The fourth competitor was nearly two meters tall. He was extremely burly, and his shoulders were very broad, which caused him to appear very tough.

The moment he entered the waiting area, he lifted his right hand and hooked his index finger towards Huo Yuhao. He then extended his thumb and wriggled them together in front of Huo Yuhao condescendingly.

Everyone couldn't help but laugh as they saw him doing this, the depressing atmosphere turning rapturous again as they did so. This student evidently wanted to repay Huo Yuhao tit for tat as he tackled Huo Yuhao's arrogance with his own haughtiness.

Huo Yuhao turned to look towards Xuan Ziwen and then asked, "Teacher Xuan, can we start?"

"Alright. The match begins!" Xuan Ziwen only realized that both parties had forgotten to name themselves after he'd announced the start of the match; he'd made a mistake. However, he soon witnessed the end of this round.

Huo Yuhao's opponent immediately moved as soon as the round began. A heavy soul shield appeared in his hands, followed by thick armor on his body.

However, Huo Yuhao didn't burst forward like he had in the previous three rounds this time. Instead, his golden Spirit Eyes gained a purple hue, and a ray of golden-purple flames were unleashed from them a moment later. Even Xuan Ziwen felt his surroundings light up a little.

A moment later, the previously-conceited student groaned and then collapsed to the ground, along with his soul shield and armor.

Huo Yuhao wriggled his wrist, after which the short spear that had appeared earlier appeared in his palm. He twisted his head towards Xuan Ziwen and asked, "Teacher Xuan, are you confident in my accuracy? I should be able to hit my target accurately within one hundred and fifty meters."

It's over?

Xuan Ziwen couldn't conceal the shock in his eyes. He hadn't expected Huo Yuhao's spiritual-type soul skills to be effective over such a long distance. Furthermore, his opponent had been a five-ringed Soul King! Yet, he hadn't been able to resist at all. Huo Yuhao didn't even need to throw his spear; this student wasn't likely to get up anytime soon.

"You've won." Xuan Ziwen said with a little difficulty.

The surrounding commotion instantly turned to silence. Huo Yuhao raised his right hand, and then extended four fingers.

He'd not only completed, but had won four rounds in less than an hour. Aside from his battle with Na Na, he'd overwhelmed all of his opponents up to this point.

Jing Hongchen was a little restless as he sat in the main spectator stand. He'd discovered that, to his horror, Huo Yuhao's spiritual-type martial soul was actually extremely powerful. A Class 5 soul engineer had been knocked out in a single blow, even though he was a hundred and fifty meters away. Who could challenge him? In the Soul Tool Department, there wasn't any student who specialized in dealing with spiritual-type soul skills. After all, spiritual-type soul masters were quite rare.

Based on this soul skill, it was evident that Huo Yuhao had been holding back in the previous rounds of the competition. The rest definitely wouldn't have been able to bear this spiritual-type attack of his.

Huo Yuhao chose to rest after completing the fourth round. He sat down cross-legged and began to meditate.

He'd wanted to go for one more round in order to deplete more of his energy. This had been to allow his spiritual and soul power to recover together as he meditated.

The first few students to challenge Huo Yuhao had been the best of the Class 5 soul engineers. Thus, the later rounds of the competition were even easier for Huo Yuhao.

After resting for a short while, Huo Yuhao continued with the competition. He completely dominated, and won seventeen rounds in the morning. He only stopped to rest when noon approached. No further cheers were heard from the spectators.

The most shocking thing was that the skills he was using seemed very simple—apart from his Spiritual Shock—but even the spectators couldn't tell how these simple skills were able to achieve such powerful and shocking effects.

Seventeen consecutive rounds! Huo Yuhao had benefited greatly at this stage. Not only had he won seventeen kilos of rare metal, but he'd also received the stakes wagered upon earlier.

After stopping for a quick lunch, he didn't leave the Soul Tool Experimentation Area. He found a resting place and quickly restored his energy and power beneath the protection of the other Shrek students.

Huo Yuhao was still a human, not a God. He'd fought for seventeen rounds straight against the elite Class 5 soul engineers of the Sun Moon Imperial Soul Engineering Academy at this point. His opponents had watched his previous rounds and tried to adapt to his changes. However, Huo Yuhao's fighting strategy had also changed. He'd thought of as many ways as possible to achieve victory without exposing too much of his abilities since he couldn't use soul tools.

He was already fatigued after a long morning of battling. However, this fatigue was refreshing in a sense. The feeling of venting left Huo Yuhao very refreshed. He also felt that his soul power had increased during his deep meditation.

Lin Jiayi had mentioned that he would only be facing Class 5 soul engineers today. Tomorrow, he would face the Class 6 soul engineers. As for the third day, the Sun Moon Imperial Soul Engineering Academy would give Huo Yuhao the authority to choose who he wanted to challenge from the Illustrious Virtue Hall as a form of reward for him. After all, challenging the higher-level soul engineers would be a valuable experience for Huo Yuhao. He would also be able to use his soul tools on the third day.

Fan Yu sat to one side and watched Huo Yuhao. He revealed a slight smile and comforting look on his face.

Although he couldn't say that the Ultimate Soldier Plan had succeeded yet, he was clearly aware of Huo Yuhao's performance in the battles today. This was the Sun Moon Imperial Soul Engineering Academy, where the most talented soul engineers in the continent resided. And yet, even these soul engineers with higher cultivations than him weren't able to beat him. He was only fifteen years old! Besides the fact that his soul power increased very slowly, Huo Yuhao was almost perfect.

Huo Yuhao had two hours to rest in the afternoon. After these two hours passed and Huo Yuhao re-appeared in the Soul Tool Experimentation Arena, he was already full of energy again.

However, he was still a bit fatigued from the morning full of sparring. The time he took rest between each opponent increased with each. Finally, he defeated thirteen more competitors, and ended the day with a total of thirty victories.

When it was close to dark, the students from the Sun Moon Academy walked out of the Soul Tool Experimentation Arena with serious looks on their faces. The looks in their eyes was a little heavy.

Fifteen years old; this was merely a fifteen year-old soul master from Shrek Academy. He'd somehow defeated thirty Class 5 soul engineers, including more than seventy percent of the Grade 6 students, without any soul tools.

This also meant that practically no one could defeat him, apart from those in the Illustrious Virtue Hall. This was a humiliation. Tomorrow, the Class 6 soul engineers from the Illustrious Virtue Hall were going to compete. But... could they really win?

The effect that Jing Hongchen wanted to see had been realized, albeit a little too heavily. Not all the students' fighting spirits had been motivated. A few of the students were in low spirits and doubted soul tools after witnessing Huo Yuhao's strong showing. This wasn't something that Jing Hongchen had wanted to see.

"We're rich, we're rich! Hahaha..." Ye Xiaosheng laughed in Huo Yuhao's room.

Currently, Fan Yu, He Caitou, Huo Yuhao, and Ye Xiaosheng were all standing around. Huo Yuhao had just finished dinner and was about to collapse. If not for the Life Gold's life power that enabled him to recover faster than an ordinary person, he wouldn't have been able to last until now.

The Life Gold's power was indeed quite great. The wound on his left hand had already fully recovered despite the fact that it had only been a day.

Huo Yuhao leaned on his bed and felt very refreshed as his body relaxed. "Brother Sheng, how much did we profit?"

Ye Xiaosheng chortled. "The odds that you wouldn't clear ten rounds were three to one. Most people wagered on this. Their bets took up more than half of our total bets. With just these alone, we'd already earned quite a lot. Then there's the odds that you wouldn't clear twenty rounds, which were one to one. Those're also in our pockets now. The remaining twenty percent of the wagers are on you not being able to clear fifty rounds. Even if you don't clear fifty rounds, we'll only have to pay twenty percent of what we have. We've profited a lot, no matter what happens. I believe that the rare metals we've won are equivalent to a year of the Sun Moon Empire's production of these metals as well."

Huo Yuhao shook his head and then said, "Brother Sheng, don't be too delighted. Tomorrow, several people will bet on me not being able to clear fifty rounds."

"Ugh... surely not?" Ye Xiaosheng was stunned for a moment.

He Caitou added, "Why not? Brother Sheng, think about it. The most talented soul engineers in the Sun Moon Empire are enrolled in this academy. And then there's the Illustrious Virtue Hall. They're definitely wealthier than we think they are. Little junior, do you remember the soul tool produced by the Illustrious Virtue Hall that we saw in the Starlight Auction house? It was extremely costly! It was already extremely tough to survive thirty rounds. Why don't we cancel betting for tomorrow?"

Huo Yuhao shook his head and said, "No, let the betting continue. Otherwise, it'll affect my fighting spirit. From the odds, we'll only lose our profits if I eventually lose and they increase their wager. Moreover, I may not lose. I'll give it my all tomorrow."

Ye Xiaosheng's lips twisted a little, and he laughed bitterly, "Talking to the both of you dampens my spirit. I shall not talk to the both of you anymore. Teacher Fan Yu, I'm leaving first! You're already so ferocious today, but it's still not your... gosh!" Ye Xiaosheng was depressed as he walked out with his hands on his forehead.

Huo Yuhao and He Caitou couldn't help but think of how he had asked them to call him Brother Sheng as he left. They grinned as that thought crossed their minds.

Fan Yu stood up and said, "Yuhao, take a break. I don't have many instructions for you. Give it your best tomorrow, but safety comes first. You should know how important you are to Shrek."

"Yes, teacher. I won't be careless again." Huo Yuhao sat up straight on his bed and wanted to send them off. However, he was stopped by Fan Yu and He Caitou. After that, the two of them left on their own.

Huo Yuhao dragged himself up and forced himself into a cross-legged position. He couldn't just sleep. Otherwise, his efforts for the day would be wasted. It was only through restoring his energy in his cultivation state could he assimilate the gains he had made during the sparring today.

The doorbell suddenly rang. As he was too tired, Huo Yuhao didn't unleash his Spiritual Detection. He assumed that it was either Fan Yu or He Caitou, and so took in a deep breath and walked to the door.

However, it was neither of them. Rather, it was a young lady with a well-proportioned figure. She was Na Na, the Soul King from the Active Control Soul Tool Department who he had defeated today.

"Why are you here?" Huo Yuhao furrowed his brows, but he wasn't too wary of her. Part of Na Na's spirit was still under his control. If he wanted to, he could restrict her movements and even harm her.

Na Na furrowed her brows as she said, "Can I come in?" Although she wasn't that ravishing, her bravery gave her a sense of charm. This charm greatly accentuated her well-proportioned figure.

Huo Yuhao opened the door wide and gestured for her to enter.

Na Na entered the room, but Huo Yuhao didn't close the door. It was too late, and it wasn't too appropriate for the two of them to be together in the same room, thus it was better for the door to be left ajar.

"What's up?" Huo Yuhao was too tired, and went to take a seat on a chair at the side.

Na Na retorted, "I should be the one asking you that! What did you do to my body? How did you manage to control it?" She was filled with hatred as she demanded an answer.

After she lost to Huo Yuhao, the matter had been bothering her, she only came to talk to him after the entire competition was over. She didn't approach him as there were others with him, but only came to his room after Fan Yu and He Caitou had left.

Huo Yuhao answered indifferently, "I don't know what you're talking about. If there's nothing else, please excuse yourself. I still need to spar tomorrow."

Na Na was enraged. "You don't have the guts to admit it?"

Huo Yuhao's brows lifted and he said coldly, "What did I do? You're the one who unleashed your Avenging Spirit. You're also the one who tried to kill me. It's a joke that you're interrogating me now. Please see yourself out."

"You..." Na Na wanted to erupt, but she held it in. She bit her lips until they were red, "What exactly do you want? I can feel that my Avenging Spirit has been restrained by you. Return my spirit to me."

Huo Yuhao was stunned by her sensitive judgement.

Na Na continued to say, "Don't tell me it's not your doing. If my spirit was dissipated or destroyed by you, I would've been critically injured. But I'm fine. It's just that my body is not under my control. You must've done something to my spirit. Return it to me!"

Huo Yuhao laughed and answered, "Alright, even if I did so, why should I return it to you? You almost killed me. What right do you have to comment on my actions?"

"You... I'll report you to the academy." Na Na was furious.

Huo Yuhao pointed towards the door, "If you wish. But someone must believe you. Even if someone believes your words, what evidence do you have? To soul masters, our spirit is a magical thing. Even a Titled Douluo can't claim to be completely familiarized with one's spirit. Moreover, no one can test that your spirit is with me."

Na Na's expression changed. As she saw Huo Yuhao's calm look, she slowly walked to the door.

Huo Yuhao sniggered to himself. Since he was scared by her in the morning, he had to make her pay for it. However, his heart still softened. He would return her spirit to her once the competition was over.

Na Na walked very slowly. When she reached the door, she stopped in her tracks. She didn't leave, but shut the door.

"Oh? What're you doing?" Huo Yuhao stood up from his seat. Even though he was tired, his soul power was still in its peak condition. Furthermore, Na Na was still under his control.

Na Na turned around, and two streams of tears flowed down her cheeks. Her body shuddered slightly, and her entire figure seemed to become illusory. Her clothing slipped off her body, revealing her naked figure.

Huo Yuhao was stunned. He didn't expect her to do that.

"You..." Huo Yuhao was shocked as he looked at her. Her figure was flawless. All women craved a body like hers.

Undoubtedly, Na Na was blessed in this area. There was no fat on her body, and her skin was extremely smooth and tender. Although her skin wasn't completely snow-white, there was a healthy sense to it.

Her slender waist was springy, and her flawless curves extended all the way down. As she wasn't facing Huo Yuhao directly, he couldn't see everything. But he could still see her perky buttocks.

Huo Yuhao couldn't stand looking any further. At his age, one was supposed to be extremely curious but unclear about the matters of the heart. He had once sensed feminine beauty from Ma Xiaotao, but he was very young then. That was why he wasn't as tempted. But he had developed biologically over the past two years.

He panicked a little and turned around. After that, he said, "Put your clothes on. What're you doing?"

Na Na was teary-eyed as she said, "I know that you're an elite student from Shrek. I don't have anything valuable to exchange for my spirit. I can only use my body. I've never been touched by a guy. If you promise to return my spirit, I'll give my body to you."

"I..." Huo Yuhao hadn't expected something like this. He didn't know whether to laugh or cry.

He was a little anxious as he said, "Put your clothes on and get out immediately. When the sparring is done, I'll return your spirit."

Na Na was stunned for a moment, and only reacted after a while. Huo Yuhao seemed to be scared of her current self, and looked rather pathetic. He wasn't as arrogant as he was earlier under everyone's gazes.

Due to his outstanding performance during the sparring competition, many students now treated him as a target. In their eyes, Huo Yuhao was a powerful soul master. But Na Na now realized that he was still a fifteen-year-old youth. It seemed like she was reading too much into things.

She blushed a little before hurriedly dressing herself.

Huo Yuhao was indeed awkward. He felt his nose getting hot as if it were about to bleed. Furthermore, he didn't dare to use his Spiritual Detection to tell whether she was done. After all, he would still be able to see her body!

"I'm done." Na Na replied softly.

Huo Yuhao heaved a sigh of relief at this point. He turned back to confirm that Na Na was indeed dressed before turning his whole body around. His face heated up, and his nose was as hot as before. He tried to resist his nosebleed. Even though Huo Yuhao tried his best to cover his nose, Na Na still managed to see it.

Na Na broke out into laughter.

"Quickly leave." Huo Yuhao snapped. He was trying to expel the erotic scene from his mind.

Na Na was evidently not as furious as before. "You'll really return my spirit? Why not now? Why must it be after the end of the competition?"

Huo Yuhao said, "That's because I want to guarantee that you won't find trouble with me in the next two days. Quickly leave." Even he felt that his reply was a little incoherent.

Na Na took a deep look at Huo Yuhao and said, "I hope that you can fulfill your promise. Anyway, I've nothing that I can use to exchange for it. If you back out and want my body again, just tell me."

Huo Yuhao felt his nose heating up even more, and there seemed to be blood flowing out of it.

Na Na opened the door before turning back to look at him. She smiled, "You don't seem that annoying now. Better than that arrogant self in the morning."

Chapter 180: A Sovereign-like Victory

Bang! Huo Yuhao couldn't help it as he shut the door to his room. After that, he quickly ran to the washroom to clean his face.

Na Na couldn't help but laugh as she stood outside his room. It seemed like dealing with him was just this simple! She had been overthinking things. How bad could such an innocent young man be?

Suddenly, her body jerked. Since he can restrain my spirit, it means that he can also... As she thought of this point, she started to become excited. She turned around and wanted to knock on his door again.

She lifted her hands, and her breathing became a little rapid. She muttered to herself, "Don't be anxious, don't be anxious. I'll find him when the competition ends. I hope that he can really do it." As she spoke, she clenched her fists tightly. However, the excitement on her face couldn't be concealed.

Huo Yuhao sat on his bed for half an hour before he entered his meditative state. He wondered whether he was the one punishing Na Na, or if she was the one punishing him!

Morning. Huo Yuhao awoke from his meditation.

He was filled with energy. He opened his windows, and clear air flowed into his room, refreshing him.

After a night of rest, his energy had been restored, and he was in his best condition. His soul power circulated, and streaks of white gas rose from his body before he inhaled them again. Huo Yuhao was delighted to discover that his overnight cultivation was equivalent to ten days of normal cultivation. It seemed like sufficient pressure was beneficial to his cultivation.

I should be under greater pressure today! Let it come then.

The golden light in Huo Yuhao's Spirit Eyes shone at this moment as the first ray of sunlight shone down. A dim purple appeared in the sky, and Huo Yuhao used his Purple Demon Eyes to absorb this color.

The Soul Tool Experimentation Arena was just as packed as yesterday, but it was much quieter and more peaceful today. Many of the Sun Moon Imperial Soul Engineering Academy students sacrificed sleep to watch the competition, and hadn't had a good night's rest. Huo Yuhao had shocked them too much with the difference between a soul master and soul engineer's fighting styles. It was also their first time witnessing the abilities of a powerful soul master. They now understood why Shrek Academy was so dominant on the continent.

The increased use of soul tools represented progress, but soul masters had been around for many generations. It would take a long time before soul tools could suppress soul masters in a battle. At the very least, soul engineers couldn't do it now.

The Class 6 soul engineers from Illustrious Virtue Hall were going to compete today. Could Huo Yuhao maintain his winning streak?

Wagers were still being accepted, but there was only one choice. The odds were still five to one. However, the Sun Moon Imperial Soul Engineering Academy students didn't think they had a chance to win.

Jing Hongchen also arrived at the main spectator stand early. He had been greatly affected by the competition yesterday. Huo Yuhao was only fifteen years old, but was shockingly rich with actual combat experience. Although he didn't think Huo Yuhao was that strong, there wasn't anyone the same age that could match up to him. Were his grandchildren even that capable at his age?

Perhaps the only problem with Huo Yuhao was that his soul power increased very slowly. This was something that Jing Hongchen was slightly comforted by. Otherwise, he would need to come up with ways of dealing with the young man before he became a serious danger to the empire.

After a period of set-up and resolution, the matter regarding the attack on the base of Illustrious Virtue Hall was finally suppressed... but it had also forced Jing Hongchen to join the Crown Prince's side. With his support, the Crown Prince had now gained an absolute advantage. The two remaining competing princes lost ground immediately. The Sun Moon Empire Emperor's condition was worsening, and no one knew how much longer he would live.

Jing Hongchen's only wish was to restore Test Subject One. After all, it was incomplete. No one besides him knew the password to activate it. Without the password, it was only a stack of rare metals. While dismantling the stack of metal and selling it would definitely be valuable, it was still better than exposing Illustrious Virtue Hall's greatest secrets.

A dim light flashed, and Huo Yuhao revealed a faint glow on his face. He was much calmer when he arrived at the Soul Tool Experimentation Arena for the second time in two days. He also didn't provoke anyone today, as he just wanted to use this sparring competition to enhance himself. Since he couldn't leave, he would use these two years to become even stronger.

In yesterday's competition, he had intended to suppress his skills to prevent being exposed. But after a night of cultivation, this intention had already disappeared. That's because he believed that he could only benefit if he gave his all to the fight. There were still two and a half years left until the next Elite Continental Advanced Soul Master Academy Soul Dueling Tournament. Shouldn't he be trying to become stronger and more capable in these two and a half years? Moreover, most of his capabilities couldn't be understood by mere visual observation.

To ensure greater improvement, Huo Yuhao set his mind to not to hold back in today's competition, he wanted to go all-out. In addition, he also knew that his competitors today were the elites. The Class 6 soul engineers weren't just one class above Class 5 soul engineers, they were all from Illustrious Virtue Hall. Their understanding of soul tools and excellence in soul tool production was far superior to the students that he sparred with yesterday.

Huo Yuhao was unsure of how many of them he could beat today, but he was determined to give his all.

The referee was still Xuan Ziwen. As he watched Huo Yuhao, he felt slightly envious.

He was young once. When he was young, he was also an outstanding talent. However, he seemed to lack something compared to Huo Yuhao. He lacked the sharpness, as well as the stability to wield that sharpness. His student was only fifteen! However, why did he feel as if he were interacting with

someone of the same age throughout their entire exchange? What price did the young man pay to attain such maturity?

Xuan Ziwen smiled as he asked, "Yuhao, how was your rest last night?"

The first thing that popped up in Huo Yuhao's mind was Na Na's body. He forced a smile and replied, "It was rather good."

Xuan Ziwen said, "That's great. Today, your opponents are going to be stronger. After discussing things with the Hallmaster yesterday, we've agreed to let you use soul tools today. After all, you only have four soul rings. If you're restricted too much, it'll be unfair. This isn't the academy's style. Do your best to strut your stuff today and unleash your full abilities."

Huo Yuhao was stunned for a moment. "I'm allowed to use soul tools? The Hallmaster must be interested in how I combine soul tools with my martial souls."

Xuan Ziwen replied "I don't know that about that. If you're absolutely confident in yourself, you don't have to use them."

Huo Yuhao laughed, "Why not? It's nothing anyway. Since we're sparring, I have to live up to the meaning of it. I just hope that my competitors don't disappoint me today."

Xuan Ziwen looked at him with a meaningful gaze and said, "You won't be disappointed. Go and prepare yourself."

Huo Yuhao nodded and shut his eyes. He focused, and circulated his Mysterious Heaven Technique. He quickly adjusted his body to its best condition.

In truth, he didn't think that he could beat twenty-six Class 6 soul engineers from Illustrious Virtue Hall. It was unrealistic to think that he could defeat all of them in one day unless his Light of Destiny could be used continuously. That might give him a glimmer of hope.

But Xuan Ziwen's words gave him hope again. If he could use soul tools, it was a different matter! In terms of soul tools, Xuan Ziwen recognized his abilities in soul tool use and production, even though his soul power wasn't up to par yet. This also meant that he wasn't that inferior to the soul engineers from Illustrious Virtue Hall.

Perhaps this was the first test he had to take after choosing the close-combat path. Huo Yuhao started to become excited as his competitive will was piqued. Fighting was the best way to test his abilities. He became extremely focused now.

After getting approval from Jing Hongchen, Xuan Ziwen returned back to the stage.

Lin Jiayi was still the emcee for the sparring today. His voice boomed out through the sound-amplifying soul tool. "Teachers and students, today is the second day of the sparring against Shrek Academy! It will still be Huo Yuhao competing on behalf of Shrek! After yesterday's competition, I'm sure all of you have witnessed the difference in fighting style between a soul master and a soul engineer! I hope that all of you can use this chance to discover your own problems, and enhance your real-life experience with soul masters! At the same time, I hope that all of you can work hard and be like Huo Yuhao, achieving glory for your academy!"

“Today, we’ll be sending out Class 6 soul engineers from the Illustrious Virtue Hall. We have twenty of them with us today. We’ll carry out as many rounds as we can until dinnertime. The competition’s about to start. Please observe carefully, and reference what you see with your own abilities. If you can learn something from this, this sparring competition will be a success. Due to the gap in cultivation, Huo Yuhao will be allowed to use his own soul tools today. All of you must also carefully watch how he combines his martial souls with soul tools. This is especially pertinent for students from the Active Control Soul Tool Department. Alright, the competition’s going to start.”

Huo Yuhao was still the center of attention, but he wasn’t treated like an enemy anymore. Whether it was in the world of soul masters or soul engineers, one’s abilities were the most important. Huo Yuhao had already proven that he had true ability by being able to win thirty consecutive rounds against Class 5 soul engineers. Those with true ability were always respected, even in the Sun Moon Imperial Soul Engineering Academy. Many of the other students were wondering how far Huo Yuhao could progress as he faced the Class 6 soul engineers from the Illustrious Virtue Hall.

Many continued to wager today, but very few wagered on Huo Yuhao. It was just like how Huo Yuhao lacked self-confidence. No one believed that he could win all the way against the Illustrious Virtue Hall’s Class 6 soul engineers. At least, he couldn’t win twenty consecutive rounds.

But there were exceptions. For example, Ke Ke wagered ten kilos of rare metal on Huo Yuhao. Besides her, another female student also bet on Huo Yuhao. She was Na Na.

Even Na Na didn’t understand why she did that. She wasn’t exactly wealthy, and thus she only staked a hundred gold soul coins.

Xuan Ziwen gestured for the first Illustrious Virtue Hall’s Class 6 soul engineer to enter.

He was a youth that looked to be around twenty-five or twenty-six years old. He was burly. His short hair was brown, and he had a tanned complexion. It was obvious that he was somehow related to the imperial family. His arms were slightly longer than normal, and were thick. As he slowly walked into the Soul Tool Experimentation Area, his aura had already swept over Huo Yuhao. But Huo Yuhao wasn’t fearful. He watched his opponent calmly, and was ready to enter his fighting mode.

“Sun Moon Imperial Soul Engineering Academy’s Illustrious Virtue Hall. Shen Musu.”

“Shrek Academy. Huo Yuhao.”

Xuan Ziwen looked at both parties. He lifted his right arm before slamming it down, “The competition begins.”

As he proclaimed the start of the match, both parties made their move. Shen Musu burst forward just like Huo Yuhao. The gap between them was shrinking quickly.

Shen Musu’s hands were held at his side as he burst forward. He held a long dagger in each hand. These two daggers were the same – they were four inches long, their hilts were thick and their blades were wide.

A dirt-yellow radiance was released. As his soul power was unleashed, there was an overwhelming sense of power.

Earth-type, close-combat soul tool!

Huo Yuhao didn't unleash any soul tools. He acted the same way he had yesterday. There was helmet on Shen Musu's head with a colorless ruby mounted on it. This ruby shone weakly under the sun.

There were bound to be heavy sparks in this clash between two close-combat soul engineers.

Both parties were getting closer and closer to each other. Shen Musu shouted, and his third soul ring started to shine. A layer of purplish light engulfed his body, and his aura became even more overwhelming.

He stopped suddenly before leaping forward. He slashed his daggers towards Huo Yuhao.

The yellow daggers didn't seem to release any force. The air around Shen Musu's center also started to distort.

Huo Yuhao squinted his eyes. His toes touched the ground, and he sprang up from the ground in a swifter manner compared to Shen Musu. The Darkgolden Terrorclaws appeared once again.

Just as both parties were getting closer and closer to each other, a wing flapped open from Huo Yuhao's back. After that, he dodged to one side, avoiding Shen Musu's daggers. This happened instantly, and his Darkgolden Terrorclaws had already clawed towards Shen Musu's shoulder.

He used this half of his flying-type soul tool to displace his position. The wing of the flying-type soul tool even flashed before disappearing. He must possess immaculate control!

Even a Class 6 protective soul barrier couldn't resist the destructive force of the Darkgolden Terrorclaws.

But Shen Musu wasn't an easy target to deal with. He didn't panic. His sixth soul ring suddenly lit up, and a Boulder Armor surfaced in front of his body.

The appearance of the Boulder Armor greatly increased his weight. He immediately landed back on the ground as he was dragged down by the increased weight. He even bore the attack of the terrorclaws.

Several rocks were peeled off from the armor as a screech was heard. But Shen Musu wasn't hurt. Huo Yuhao was surprised that Shen Musu's daggers continued to slash down in the same trajectory. They stabbed into the ground.

"Bang" A deep rumbling sound was heard, and Huo Yuhao felt a huge rocking motion beneath his feet. This rocking motion sent his body flying through the air. Following that, countless sharp spikes shot out from Shen Musu's body.

These spikes were shot upwards to a height of three meters. Huo Yuhao couldn't possibly avoid them. He was in great danger now.

Lin Jiayi had pondered carefully before sending Shen Musu out to spar first. Shen Musu's helmet had a protective effect against spiritual power, and was designed to withstand attacks like Huo Yuhao's Spiritual Shock, while his martial soul was a Boulder, which wasn't easily curbed by Huo Yuhao's Ultimate Ice. In addition, it was especially useful in close-combat. Shen Musu was both offensively and defensively resolute. He was one of the best among the Class 6 soul engineers in the Illustrious Virtue Hall.

However, they had still underestimated Huo Yuhao.

When he was jerked into the air, Huo Yuhao could already sense the undulation from the ground. His Spiritual Detection accurately sensed the surge of his opponent's soul power.

Huo Yuhao could sense an immense force from the yellow daggers. Perhaps their speed couldn't increase by much, but their aura gave off an irresistible feeling.

Huo Yuhao had to be decisive under such a circumstance.

That was why he unleashed the Ice Empress Armor as he was sent flying. He tried to reduce the impact on him. Following that, everyone could see his body lighting up.

An azure-green radiance surged from his backbone. He opened his arms wide and braced his chest. An indescribable, mighty aura was exuded from his body.

No soul rings lit up yet. But one could see the air around Huo Yuhao distorting. After this, an azure-green beam of light shot out from his belly.

Right now, Huo Yuhao was at Shen Musu's side. Shen Musu couldn't dodge this strike. He was struck directly.

The heavy impact propelled Huo Yuhao's body upwards. He avoided the spikes that came towards him, whereas Shen Musu's body had turned azure-green.

One of the soul skills of the Ice Jade Empress Scorpion's skeleton, the Ice Empress' Wrath!

Huo Yuhao had had two choices. Either he unleashed the complete version of the Darkgolden Terrorclaws, or he used the Ice Empress' Wrath. He made his decision quickly.

These two skills expended roughly the same amount of energy and power, but the Darkgolden Terrorclaws were half a beat slower than the Ice Empress' Wrath, as he needed to wield his arm.

Huo Yuhao tapped into the impact generated by the Ice Empress' Wrath to make a revolution in mid-air. When his body unfolded again, his right hand was already out. The complete Darkgolden Terrorclaws! He swept it toward his opponent, who was frozen still.

Shen Musu's Boulder Armor was his sixth soul skill, and was even a ten thousand year soul skill! But Huo Yuhao's Ice Empress' Wrath was a four hundred thousand year soul skill. While Huo Yuhao couldn't unleash its full strength, he had no trouble freezing Shen Musu on the spot.

"Stop." A golden barrel lit up in Xuan Ziwen's hands. A cannon shell accurately landed on Shen Musu's body and turned into a golden light barrier that protected him.

Huo Yuhao's terrorclaws didn't really strike him. They disappeared as a light projection flashed. His toes touched the golden light barrier, and he landed on the ground after he deflected himself into the air.

Xuan Ziwen was astonished. How's he able to retract his attack so easily after unleashing it so furiously? How good is his control?

He didn't know that Huo Yuhao couldn't retract his terrorclaws if he unleashed the complete version. But it was another matter if he used Imitation to imitate his terrorclaws!

He was going to face a series of tough battles today. Why would he waste his soul power? He could decide victory with the Ice Empress' Wrath. Since Xuan Ziwen intervened, it meant that he had won.

After ten seconds, Shen Musu's Boulder Armor was crushed, and his face turned pale. He staggered and almost collapsed to the ground. A layer of golden light flashed continuously on his body. It was evident that some protective soul tool had been activated.

In truth, it was impossible for Huo Yuhao's Ice Empress' Wrath to overcome Shen Musu's Boulder Armor and Class 6 protective soul barrier.

While Shen Musu's armor was able to Huo Yuhao's attack, it also restricted his own strength at a critical moment. After the armor was frozen, he couldn't break free even if he wanted to. Huo Yuhao then used the Darkgolden Terrorclaws to force Xuan Ziwen into intervening. Shen Musu could only concede defeat.

Shen Musu's brows furrowed as he looked at Huo Yuhao. He was also shivering because of the extreme chill he had felt earlier, "You've won. But I'm not convinced."

Huo Yuhao nodded his head and said, "I know that, I can sense it. Your daggers are indeed powerful, and aren't easy to deal with. If I'm not wrong, the spikes were supposed to come at me relentlessly after they forced me to divulge my flaws. That's why I didn't give you the opportunity to unleash your full fighting strength. Let's hope I have another opportunity to spar with you again."

Huo Yuhao was also much more courteous against a worthy opponent. He was indeed impressed by Shen Musu's abilities.

Shen Musu nodded at Huo Yuhao before turning around. He told himself that he needed to place a protective soul barrier outside the Boulder Armor the next time he sparred with Huo Yuhao. In that way, his defense would be even greater.

Yet another victory? Another commotion ensued. This fight had been very short, and the spectators' stand was very far away. It was difficult to make out small events.

While Huo Yuhao seemed to win the fight quickly, it wasn't easy for him. He won because of his Ultimate Ice. The Ice Empress' Wrath froze his opponent's earth-type ten-thousand year soul skill. In addition, he had also tricked Xuan Ziwen. Even if he had really used the complete Darkgolden Terrorclaws, he might not even have been able to crush the Boulder Armor.

Huo Yuhao sat cross-legged on the ground and meditated as he returned to the waiting area. Although the Ice Empress' Wrath had depleted some of his soul power, he had no problem continuing.

However, he realized how powerful the Class 6 soul engineers were after fighting Shen Musu. Although he was confident of going against them, he might lose if his focus and energy weren't at their best.

After fifteen minutes, Huo Yuhao leapt up and nodded towards Xuan Ziwen.

The second soul engineer from the Illustrious Virtue Hall was an ordinary-looking woman with an average figure. She looked to be almost thirty years old.

“Illustrious Virtue Hall, Jing Ziyān.” This woman was the most concise among those who had competed against Huo Yuhao.

“Shrek, Huo Yuhao.” Huo Yuhao was also concise.

“The competition begins!”

Huo Yuhao burst forward as usual... but this time, he let everyone witness his top speed.

As he burst forward, four semi-circular soul tools appeared behind his back. They revealed four nozzles as they flipped out. The four nozzles started to spurt fire backwards. Four streaks of flames shot out, and Huo Yuhao’s body burst forward like a shooting star.

Those with keen eyes realized that Huo Yuhao was now covered by a layer of diamond ice crystals as the four streaks of bright flames shot out. He had no choice, as without the Ice Empress’ Armor’s protection his body couldn’t tolerate the incredible thrusting force or the wind resistance.

However, Huo Yuhao managed to reach a frightening speed with the explosive thrusting force. He covered a hundred and fifty meters almost instantly, arriving right in front of Jing Ziyān with a terrifying aura.

Jing Ziyān was very calm when she appeared. But when Huo Yuhao’s speed soared and he burst straight towards her, she was slightly surprised.

Huo Yuhao gave off a feeling like he was a powerful soul beast now. The Sovereign’s Descent seemed almost unstoppable as Huo Yuhao’s speed increased dramatically.

What greeted Jing Ziyān was Huo Yuhao’s fist. It was covered by diamond ice crystals and combined both the Ice Empress’ Pincer and the Mysterious Jade Hands.

He didn’t use the Darkgolden Terrorclaws because he couldn’t combine both the Sovereign’s Descent and Darkgolden Terrorclaws perfectly at such a high speed.

But he still managed to control the speed, strength, intent, energy, angle, and timing of this fist precisely. This was Huo Yuhao’s true ability, as he unleashed an ultimate strike!

Jing Ziyān drifted back instantly, and a layer of intense golden light shone from her body. It was an Invincible Barrier that could last for three seconds. Not only that, but a layer of thick purplish fog also surged up from her body. More accurately speaking, her entire body seemed to change into a ball of fog. Following this, her fifth soul ring lit up.

She was much stronger than Shen Musu. She had two yellow, two purple and two black soul rings – the perfect combination of soul rings for a Soul Emperor. Huo Yuhao had felt a sense of crisis, thus he unleashed such a powerful attack.

Huo Yuhao’s fist struck the Invincible Barrier heavily. The collision caused the lights in the Soul Tool Experimentation Arena to dim a little. Did the weather change?

The resolute Invincible Barrier started to crack after Huo Yuhao’s fist struck it. This crack started to extend, with his fist at the center of it. But it still looked like it had managed to resist Huo Yuhao’s strike.

But did it really manage to resist his strike?

The purplish fog instantly gathered within the Invincible Barrier and re-adopted human form. Jing Ziyan looked pale.

Yes, the Invincible Barrier could withstand Huo Yuhao's all-out strike. However, it couldn't resist the intent of his Sovereign's Descent. Jing Ziyan was forced back into her human form by this intent, and was even spiritually impacted.

Kacha! The Invincible Barrier broke completely.

A purplish light flashed in Huo Yuhao's eyes before disappearing.

Jing Ziyan groaned. The back of her head seemed to have hit by something extremely strong. Fresh blood started to flow from her nose.

In the next instant, Huo Yuhao's Darkgolden Terrorclaws were already in front of her. However, he stopped one inch away from her, and watched her as she collapsed to the ground.

She didn't pass out. She covered her head with her hands and groaned in pain. More blood started to flow out of her eyes, ears, and mouth.

Huo Yuhao braced his chest as he let his Darkgolden Terrorclaws down. The entire place went silent at this point. He was just like a sovereign as he stood there.

"Tyrannical! He only has four rings?" Jing Hongchen muttered these words. Right now, he was in a daze.

Absolute speed, absolute strength, and absolute dominance.

Huo Yuhao didn't even give Jing Ziyan a chance to counterattack before he ended the battle.

He returned to the waiting area without uttering a word. He sat where he was originally and started to meditate. Only Xuan Ziwen noticed that he was breathing heavily, and his right arm was trembling slightly. It seemed as if he could collapse.

That strike...

Huo Yuhao must have had suffered a huge price to unleash such a powerful strike.

It wasn't a speed that a Class 5 or Class 6 soul engineer could reach. With Huo Yuhao's standard in soul tool production, he couldn't possibly create a Class 7 soul thruster. But he had used four Class 6 soul thrusters, allowing him to reach a speed equivalent to that of a Class 7 soul thruster.

The impact on his body was very heavy at such a high speed. Moreover, he hadn't held back at all when he struck the Invincible Barrier. It was no surprise to him that he felt as if he was going to collapse.

It was also no wonder Jing Ziyan lost to him!

Xuan Ziwen was very familiar with Jing Ziyan. That's because Jing Ziyan was his junior, and was once touted as a genius. The reason why she was only a Class 6 soul engineer now was because she got too greedy. She had researched all types of soul tools without choosing a path for herself. That was why she

stagnated as a Class 6 soul engineer. But she still managed to enter Illustrious Virtue Hall, a testament to her talent. She was recognized as the Queen of Class 6 soul engineers in Illustrious Virtue Hall.

Illustrious Virtue Hall sent out Shen Musu and Jing Ziyan first in a bid to regain the face they had lost yesterday. However, both of them had now lost to Huo Yuhao. They even lost very quickly.

Xuan Ziwen was shocked to realize that Huo Yuhao had quickly entered a stable meditative state and stopped trembling after a while. Everything seemed to become calm again. The huge burden and pressure that he was under earlier seemed to have disappeared. His aura and soul power undulations returned to normal once again.

Yes, this was how quickly Huo Yuhao could heal. The immense life power of the Life Gold ensured that his body was very tough. Otherwise, he would've died when he saved Ju Zi and Ke Ke. The Ultimate Soldier Plan had proceeded smoothly because of his ability to fight continuously for long periods of time.