

Tang Sect 221

[Chapter 221.1: Heir to the Sea Gods Pavilion](#)

Yan Shaozhe snapped, "Of course we're waiting for you. Didn't you display everything yesterday because you wanted all of us to know? Go and wash up, I'll be waiting for you on the first level. Elder Xuan called a conference specifically for you today. All the elders of the Sea God's Pavilion will be there. Think about how you're going to introduce Spirit to them."

Huo Yuhao suddenly remembered. He'd been too focused on Wang Dong'er last night, and forgot this matter from before. Now, he was immediately jolted awake and acknowledged Yan Shaozhe's words. He quickly went to wash up.

Yan Shaozhe smiled and shook his head as he looked at Huo Yuhao. However, he didn't hide the blatant look of admiration on his face. He seemed to have been reminded of something. He sighed, then he turned and left.

After washing up, Huo Yuhao couldn't be bothered to eat breakfast, and quickly rushed down. Just like Yan Shaozhe had said, both sides of the long table were now seated with elders. With Elder Xuan sitting in the main seat.

Ever since Elder Xuan became the Master of the Sea God's Pavilion, he had stopped acting so sloppily. He was now dressed simply, and his hair was properly combed. There was a gentle, smiling light in his eyes.

"Apologies, elders, for making all of you wait." Huo Yuhao rushed over and lowered his head in guilt.

Elder Xuan smiled and said, "It should've been a good night for you. You and Dong'er are finally together, but we didn't sleep well last night. We were played with like little kids that don't know anything about this world. You should know that you're a part of us now after special permission was granted to you. You broke the age record to be a part of the Sea God's Pavilion."

After hearing Elder Xuan mentioning Huo Yuhao and Wang Dong'er, the elders all started to smile. Huo Yuhao lifted his head up at this moment and saw Teacher Fan Yu and Zhang Lexuan, as well as a few familiar elders. As they saw him looking over, they nodded to acknowledge him.

The vice-dean of the Soul Tool Department, Qian Duoduo, laughed. "Huo Yuhao, come over here. Sit beside me."

As he spoke, he pointed to an empty seat next to him, and even shot Yan Shaozhe a provocative look.

Yan Shaozhe was unmoved as he turned his attention elsewhere, as if he didn't care about Qian Duoduo's attempt to assert his authority over him.

Huo Yuhao rushed beside Qian Duoduo and sat down. Zhang Lexuan was opposite to him. The two of them were seated close to the main seat.

Elder Xuan said, "Shaozhe, host the conference. Let Yuhao settle down first. I don't think he can explain clearly given how anxious he looks."

“Yes.” Yan Shaozhe acknowledged his words respectfully and replied, “Elders, we called for this conference today because of Huo Yuhao’s unprecedented orange soul rings and the special abilities he demonstrated yesterday. At the same time, there are some things we need all of you to decide together.”

Yan Shaozhe repeated a list of important matters to tend to. After a simple discussion, the elders made their decisions. The conference was proceeding very smoothly and efficiently thus far.

Huo Yuhao was still a little flustered at this point, as he was technically considered of equal standing to these various elders. Fortunately, he was spiritually strong. After a short period of tension, he finally calmed down and forgot all about Wang Dong’er temporarily. He thought about what he wanted to say.

“Yuhao, are you ready? Can you introduce your special soul rings to us now?” After they finalized the other matters he had addressed earlier, Yan Shaozhe turned his attention to Huo Yuhao.

Huo Yuhao stood up immediately and said, “Dean Yan, Elder Xuan and elders, let me demonstrate my abilities to all of you again.”

He stood up from his seat and came to a spacious spot to one side of the long table. With but a thought, the Snow Lady crawled out from his body.

When she looked at everyone in front of her, her beautiful, deep blue eyes blinked. She wasn’t afraid of strangers, but was slightly curious as she lifted her hand to point in Elder Xuan’s direction.

Huo Yuhao was stunned and quickly tried to stop her from pointing. He was afraid that she would harm Elder Xuan. After all, she was very unpredictable. Even Uncle Tai Tan was once taken advantage of by her.

“I call her the Snow Lady. My orange-gold soul rings came from her. If we have to categorize her kind, I call her Spirit. She’s a special existence that’s independent of soul rings, soul bones and martial souls.”

Huo Yuhao’s first sentence immediately attracted the attention of the elders. As they looked at the Snow Lady from such a close distance, the elders started to reveal benevolent looks in their eyes.

After pondering for a moment, Huo Yuhao said, “Talking about Spirits, I need to start from the beginning. That’s because this is related to a secret that I’ve kept for a long time. That’s why I’ve never told anyone about it in the past. Only Elder Mu knew a little, but he didn’t know the full story either. To tell the truth, there was another teacher in my spiritual sea.”

As he said this, he shocked everyone present. While the elders weren’t young, their curiosity was greater than most youths. This was especially because there was hardly anything in this world that could arouse it anymore.

When Huo Yuhao decided to develop Spirits, he knew that he couldn’t conceal the secret regarding Electrolux anymore. Otherwise, he couldn’t recount everything in enough detail or explain the history of his seal.

“Before I entered the academy, I left my original family when my soul power reached Rank 10. I headed toward the Great Star Dou Forest on my own. Around the perimeter of the Great Star Dou Forest, I met eldest senior Bei Bei and Teacher Xiao Ya, who has already left the academy.”

“After that, I went into the forest on my own. On the way, I was attacked by a soul beast. It was a ten year soul beast, and I was fortunate enough to kill it. However, I was critically injured too. But then, the sky turned dreary, and a special strength entered my spiritual sea. After that, I was rescued by Bei Bei and Teacher Xiao Ya.”

Huo Yuhao told the truth about Electrolux’s background. Aside from the Skydream Iceworm, he recounted everything. He also mentioned how Electrolux had guided him in his spiritual cultivation and passed on some skills to him.

Of course, he only talked about how Electrolux was a light-type entity. He didn’t mention anything about necromancy. He was certain that the elders would call him an evil soul master if he mentioned Electrolux’s title as the Calamity Necromancer and told them that Electrolux had passed down necromancy to him. He didn’t want that to happen. He only claimed that Electrolux was a spiritual and light-type archmage.

After he finished imparting Electrolux’s background, Huo Yuhao started to talk about the Snow Empress’ Embryo that was auctioned during the last edition of the Continental Advanced Soul Master Academy Soul Dueling Tournament, as well as how the Body Sect had attacked the Illustrious Virtue Hall. That was how he had managed to fuse with the Snow Empress’ Embryo, and how Electrolux had helped to seal the Snow Empress.

After that, he talked about how he and Wang Dong’er went to the Clear Sky Sect, and how he met with danger on the Frigid Jade Essence Bed. He also detailed how Electrolux had burned the last shred of his divine sense to help him fuse with the Snow Empress, which gave birth to this Spirit.

Even with the elders’ wealth of experience, they were stunned after hearing his unbelievable stories. Whether it was the remnants of a powerful archmage’s divine sense, the fusion process between the Snow Empress and Huo Yuhao or the appearance of the Spirit, it was beyond the knowledge of ordinary soul masters.

“This was how I came to possess the Snow Empress’ Spirit. I call her the Snow Lady. Her look now should resemble an Icesky Snow Lady’s appearance when they’re younger. Her abilities are closely related to mine, but she has her own independent thinking. She can coordinate with me in a fight, as well as use my soul power and her spiritual power. From a certain standpoint, she’s a completely independent lifeform. With my help, her fighting abilities are able to increase significantly. Perhaps it’s because the Snow Empress is too strong. There’s also Teacher Electrolux’s divine sense that he combusted. After she fused with me, four soul rings were created. At that point in time, Clear Sky sect master Niu Tian mentioned that it was because the Snow Empress’ strength needed to take up several soul ring spots, and she had many powerful soul skills that could be bestowed upon me. I’m able to tap into the powers of three of these four soul rings now. However, I still have no idea how to activate the power of the last soul ring.”

“After possessing the Snow Empress’ Spirit, I thought about it carefully. Our situation was very special—we encountered the sudden change after the Snow Empress’ strength was sealed. However, what if soul masters fused with the spiritual imprint and soul power of a normal soul beast? It won’t be so dangerous. If the soul beasts are willing, I’m seventy percent confident of completing the seal and

creating another Spirit. If the soul master's cultivation is below mine, my confidence will be even higher."

He stopped speaking here. Then he signaled, and the Snow Lady made one revolution around the elders. She stopped for a moment in front of every elder and allowed them to sense how magical she was.

Finally, the Snow Lady returned to his shoulder. She remained as excited and curious as ever. Evidently, she was more than willing to stay outside Huo Yuhao's body instead of sleeping inside of it.

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The elders were silent. The things Huo Yuhao had just recounted were too special. Their eye shone brighter and brighter. Their heartbeats also became faster and faster as they realized how special of an existence a Spirit was. Huo Yuhao and Electrolux had created it together, and Huo Yuhao was the only one who could seal the pact. This also meant that Spirits could exist in Shrek Academy if the situation was controlled well. This was an extremely miraculous thing to soul masters.

While Spirits were still reliant on soul rings, they possessed their own intelligence that soul rings couldn't compare to. Moreover, Spirits had a special characteristic that soul rings didn't have – if the soul beasts were willing, the tolerance of a soul master would greatly increase during the fusion process. For example, would Huo Yuhao be able to fuse the seven hundred thousand year Icesky Snow Lady into a soul ring, even with Electrolux's divine sense, if the Snow Empress wasn't willing? A large portion of the Snow empress' strength was still accumulated in his body under the Snow Lady's control. As his cultivation increased, he would be able to absorb this strength. This was undoubtedly very beneficial for a soul master's cultivation.

If this spread, Spirits were bound to be the common target of all soul masters on the continent! They could possibly change the entire situation in the world of soul masters, even with the appearance of soul tools.

Elder Xuan looked at the elders, who looked very pensive, and asked Huo Yuhao, "What preparations do other soul masters need to make if they want to fuse with a Spirit? How many Spirits can one soul master have? What are the difficulties in the fusion process?"

Huo Yuhao had thought of these problems for a long time. He replied without hesitation, "Firstly, a soul master must have an empty soul ring spot if he wants to fuse with a Spirit – that's absolutely necessary. If the Spirit he is fusing with is within his tolerance limit, he can fuse with it normally. However, he needs to consider the problem of insufficient soul ring spots if the Spirit's cultivation is way above his. This was what happened to me – four empty soul ring spots were taken up by the Snow Lady. Of course, this was because the Snow Empress was too strong."

Elder Xuan furrowed his brow and said, "However, most soul masters only have one empty soul ring spot."

Huo Yuhao nodded and replied, "That's why I believe that it's better for one to be a seven-ringed Soul Sage first. In that way, their tolerance will be better, and they can fuse with stronger Spirits. Soul beasts of higher cultivations are also more intelligent. They will be more helpful after the fusion."

“Furthermore, there’s one more special situation where there is more than one soul ring spot – twin martial souls.”

Elder Xuan’s eyes brightened and he said, “That makes sense. Twin martial souls are normally divided into the main and accessory martial soul. A soul master with twin martial souls won’t add rings to his accessory martial soul so easily.”

Huo Yuhao replied, “Exactly, this was what happened to me. Twin martial souls are very rare in other places, but in our academy, it’s not just me that has twin martial souls. That’s why we can let soul masters with twin martial souls try out stronger Spirits. However, the soul beasts must be willing first, and elders are also required to protect them during the fusion process to ensure their safety.”

Elder Xuan nodded and replied, “Continue.”

Huo Yuhao said, “As for how many Spirits one can fuse with, I believe that one is the most appropriate. Spirits can greatly increase the abilities of a soul master, and they can also coordinate with soul masters using their intelligence. However, the absorption of a soul master’s spiritual power by a Spirit when it first develops is very terrifying. I’m a spiritual-type soul master, but my spiritual power was almost sucked dry by the Snow Empress’ Spirit. If not for a fortunate encounter, I would have needed at least three years to fully recover.”

“Although most soul beasts won’t absorb as much spiritual power as the Snow Empress, they must be able to do so to some extent. That’s why I believe that soul masters must have sufficiently strong spiritual power first before they fuse with a Spirit. Their spiritual power will likely be over-drafted after fusing with a single soul beast, so it would be very dangerous for them to fuse with more. However, this will require multiple tests and sufficient experience. If the fused Spirit is weak, it might be possible to fuse with more than one soul beast. However, I’m not sure if the soul beasts will clash if there are more than one of them. After all, every Spirit possesses its own intelligence. That’s why I believe a decently strong and compatible Spirit is the best choice a soul master can make.”

Huo Yuhao was completely in the mood after seeing the elders focused on his description. He said in a deep voice, “The biggest problem still lies in soul beasts if we want to try the fusion of Spirits. I’m fairly certain about one point – the difference between Spirits and soul rings mean that the soul beasts have to be willing. It’s very difficult to make them willing. Most soul beasts hate humans. It’ll only be those that are old and weak that are willing to fuse in order to extend their lives. It’ll be very difficult to find such soul beasts. That’s why we need the academy to think of a solution.”

Elder Xuan nodded and said, “This is indeed a pressing problem. Although we have our own soul beasts, they are different from humans. Even for the most intelligent soul beasts, their way of thinking is very different from humans. It’s very difficult to convince them. However, it’s still worth a try. Only the most outstanding soul masters can try fusing with a Spirit. Shaozhe.”

“Yes.” Yan Shaozhe stood up.

Elder Xuan said in a deep voice, “From now on, the academy will carry out code-red secret research on Spirits. You need to coordinate with Yuhao. If you need special help, you can request it from the Sea God’s Pavilion. Safety must come first. After finding suitable soul beasts, you’ll need to pick the best

among those in the inner courtyard. They must be willing to try the fusion. This must be carried out immediately.”

Zhang Lexuan suddenly opened her mouth. “Elder Xuan, do you think there’s a possibility that we can contact the core circle of the Great Star Dou Forest and negotiate with them? It’s not easy to find an old soul beast, but if it’s from their side…”

Elder Xuan shook his head, and the other elders also furrowed their brows.

“Lexuan, your idea is very good, but it’s a little wild. We’ve been enemies for quite some time, and things haven’t cooled down even after so many years. It won’t be easy to discuss it with them. They won’t give us a chance.”

“We can only count on ourselves regarding his matter. We can’t take the risk. If those fellows from the Great Star Dou Forest discover the existence of Spirits, their misunderstandings might deepen. Shrek City is too close to the forest. Don’t forget the wave of soul beasts then. We have to research and experiment, but it has to be done very prudently.

Zhang Lexuan nodded and didn’t say anything else.

The rest of the elders agreed with Elder Xuan. Only Huo Yuhao was slightly moved after hearing Zhang Lexuan’s words. He understood what she was trying to say – she meant that the academy could negotiate with the soul beasts in the Great Star Dou Forest. The strongest savage beasts were as intelligent as humans. If they were willing to try, it would be much more convenient for their research of Spirits.

Of course, he couldn’t help but comment even though it was a little inappropriate, “Elder Xuan, elders, I think eldest senior sister has a point. If we make progress in our research, it could be an opportunity to dispel our hatred with the soul beasts from the Great Star Dou Forest! If we succeed in our research, we can negotiate with them, and we wouldn’t need to hunt soul beasts in the future. We can work with the older soul beasts. They can live longer, and both parties will benefit from this deal. No matter what their style of thinking is, I think it’s unlikely that they’ll reject such a proposition.”

Elder Xuan laughed and looked at Huo Yuhao. He said, “Young people are indeed very rash! However, your thinking is not mature enough. Why did I ask you how many Spirits one person can possess? If a soul master can only fuse with one Spirit like you say, how many soul rings does a soul master need? Nine. Do you think those top-ranked soul beasts from the Star Dou Forest would give us a chance to negotiate knowing that they’d be offering us greater strength to hunt even more soul beasts and add even more soul rings?”

Elder Xuan’s words left Huo Yuhao in a daze. Yes! He had been too focused on the benefits for soul beasts, but soul masters didn’t need Spirits. Without soul rings, how was a soul master’s cultivation going to increase? Just like Elder Xuan had mentioned, he was too focused on things on the surface.

This time, Zhang Lexuan also nodded silently and didn’t say anything else.

Huo Yuhao sighed in his heart. He knew that Spirits couldn’t possibly replace soul rings, at least with the knowledge that he had.

Elder Xuan said, "Yuhao, you don't have to think too much now either. Whatever it is, this Snow Empress' Spirit was formed under very special circumstances. We don't know what a Spirit will look like if it's formed for ordinary soul masters. If we discover that Spirits can replace soul rings after further research, it'll definitely improve the relationship between soul masters and soul beasts."

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"I suggest that you work towards a single direction. If the strength of a Spirit can be sealed during the fusion process, a soul master can add another soul skill when he reaches the next bottleneck and undergo a second fusion. If this continues, a Spirit can add many soul skills to a soul master. Our hunting of soul beasts can naturally be greatly reduced like that. You've already proved that a soul master can obtain many soul rings from one Spirit."

Huo Yuhao was in awe. Elder Xuan was indeed deserving of his title as the Master of the Sea God's Pavilion. He managed to point out a clear path for Huo Yuhao using simple words. Huo Yuhao was sorely lacking in terms of experience.

Huo Yuhao nodded and replied, "I will do my best. In addition, I'm willing to contribute the Pact-Sealing Spell to the academy."

"What?" As Huo Yuhao spoke, everyone was stunned. All the elders had a shocked look in their eyes. As they looked at each other, they could see the amazement in each other's eyes.

Elder Xuan had been ready to dismiss the meeting, but after hearing his words, he sat down again and said, "Yuhao, you have to think this over carefully."

Elder Xuan's expression was very serious as he said this. All the elders focused their attention on Huo Yuhao.

Huo Yuhao replied with a sincere look on his face. "Elder Xuan, elders, I've thought over this carefully. I'm an orphan with no family. Everything that I have now was given to me by the academy. I would not be where I am today if the academy didn't nurture me. I received the best education and care here. It's also here that I felt familial warmth. The results of the research will be very beneficial in settling the conflict between soul masters and soul beasts. If it really succeeds, it'll definitely alleviate the dispute between us and soul beasts. How can I do this alone? I don't only wish to offer the academy the Pact-Sealing Spell. I also hope that the academy can develop Spirits and make it a future developmental path for all soul masters."

Elder Xuan said, "Yuhao, you have to understand that it'll no longer be yours once you give it up. Furthermore, have you thought of how valuable it is? I can tell you that it's priceless. The academy can complete it for you, but we can't repay you for such valuable research. I'll feel uncomfortable! You've already contributed countless valuable blueprints for soul tools to the academy. How can we still take something so valuable from you?"

Huo Yuhao smiled and replied, "Elder Xuan, I don't know what to say. However, I believe that it's a good thing for the academy to control the method of developing Spirits. If it's only in my hands, it might be a bad thing for me. That's why I don't just hope to give it to the academy. I further wish that the academy can announce it to the world in the near future. The research of Spirits will be completed by the academy, and not by me alone. I can avoid a lot of trouble this way! The Continental Advanced Soul

Master Academy Soul Dueling Tournament is about to begin in a few months. I'm going to compete in it with the team, and I'll need to use my Spirit then. If any outsiders know that I control the sole method of their creation, it might be very dangerous for me. I still want to contribute more to the academy and the Tang Sect. I'm sure you and the other elders won't watch as I put myself in a perilous spot, right? The academy can take this burden for me."

All the elders started to smile as he sounded very relaxed with his words. However, they couldn't hide their admiration for him.

Before Huo Yuhao had proposed to give the spell to the school, none of the elders had asked him to hand his research over. Why? It was too valuable!

Just like Elder Xuan had mentioned, Spirits were priceless in the eyes of soul masters. With such a secret, Huo Yuhao could become a master of his time no matter where he went. Even though what he said was true, how difficult would it be to find a strong backer with such valuable research?

Elder Xuan looked at all the elders and asked, "What do all of you think? I can only say that the academy did nurture Yuhao, but the contributions that he has made to the academy have far superseded what the academy has given him. Right now, he still wants to offer such valuable research to the academy. Truthfully, I feel very pressured as the Master of the Sea God's Pavilion!" After he finished speaking, Elder Xuan also couldn't help but smile. However, he seemed very comforted as he looked at Huo Yuhao.

All the elders were also silent at this point. For such valuable research, it was really too much to take it for nothing. However, what could the academy give Huo Yuhao? He didn't lack for anything now, since he possessed an Ultimate martial soul and was an advanced-level soul engineer.

Huo Yuhao thought of something quickly and said, "Elder Xuan, we can do it this way. I'll give this research to the academy, and I'll give it directly to my benefactor, Teacher Mu En. I'll represent Elder Mu as the previous Master of the Sea God's Pavilion and pass this information down to the academy. Since teacher has already passed away, the academy should naturally inherit everything that he's left behind. I'm sure this works, right?"

Elder Xuan waved his hand and said, "Isn't that just self-deceiving? Alright, you don't have to say anything more. I'll accept your gift on behalf of the academy. However, this research will always be recognized as yours inside the Library of the Sea God's Pavilion even though we'll claim it to be the academy's research to the outside world. Furthermore, I'll confirm you as the Heir to the Sea God's Pavilion with my current identity as the Master of the Sea God's Pavilion. Does anyone have any objection?"

Huo Yuhao was shocked. Heir to the Sea God's Pavilion? This also meant that Huo Yuhao would succeed Elder Xuan when he left his position as the Master of the Sea God's Pavilion. The Master of the Sea God's Pavilion held the highest authority in Shrek Academy!

"Elder Xuan, you shouldn't do this. I'm not qualified..." Huo Yuhao said anxiously.

Considering how old Elder Xuan was, he only had at most twenty years left as the Master of the Sea God's Pavilion. The person who was most likely to succeed his position as the Master of the Sea God's

Pavilion was Yan Shaozhe. Yan Shaozhe was also more than a hundred years old. It was going to be Huo Yuhao's turn a few decades after him. Huo Yuhao would only be fifty or sixty years old then.

Elder Xuan smiled and answered, "Why would you not be qualified? Ask all the elders about your contributions to the academy and whether they think you're qualified. I'm sure that no one around has contributed to the academy more than you. Even in terms of reward, you should be getting more than anyone. Furthermore, I haven't told you one thing. When Elder Mu was still around, he already confirmed you as the Heir to the Sea God's Pavilion. I didn't announce it because you were still too young. However, you forced my hand this time!"

Huo Yuhao subconsciously took a look at Zhang Lexuan. He had always thought that she would be the Heir to the Sea God's Pavilion. She wasn't recognized as the top talent in the inner courtyard for nothing. Although she had just passed thirty, she already had eight rings. She wasn't far from a Titled Douluo either. Why were the internal courtyard students so submissive towards her? It wasn't because she was pretty, but because she was truly capable!

Elder Xuan smiled. "You don't have to look at Lexuan. Lexuan will be nurtured as a substitute Heir to the Sea God's Pavilion. While the position of the Master of the Sea God's Pavilion is very important, he doesn't have the right to decide everything."

Zhang Lexuan smiled at Huo Yuhao, but her expression didn't seem to change at all. Huo Yuhao's spiritual senses were very acute. He could sense that there was indeed no change in her emotions.

"Does anyone have any objections?" Elder Xuan turned to the elders.

There were none.

Huo Yuhao had already demonstrated his abilities in the Sea God's Fate. As he teamed up with Wang Dong'er, they managed to suppress five inner courtyard students. Even though there was some kind of elemental suppression, the elders still recognized his abilities.

Twin martial souls and an Ultimate martial soul. He was a true talent. He even treated the academy as his family and gave such an important research to the academy. Even the strict elders couldn't find any fault with him.

Elder Xuan said, "Alright, since there are no alternative propositions, we shall vote. Those who agree with me, please raise your hand."

Besides Huo Yuhao, the rest of the Sea God's Pavilion's members raised their right hands. This meant that Elder Xuan's proposition had their unanimous approval. From the start, Huo Yuhao wasn't just a simple member of the Sea God's Pavilion. Although his identity wasn't announced outside of the Sea God's Pavilion, his position in the academy was still enhanced significantly.

Elder Xuan said, "Yuhao, you can pass your research to me directly after you record it. I'll keep it in the Library of the Sea God's Pavilion as a code-red secret document. Whoever wants to read it in the future must seek permission through a conference first."

All the elders agreed with Elder Xuan's suggestion. This research was too important, while the Library of the Sea God's Pavilion was the most tightly-guarded place in the academy. It was the most appropriate place to store the research.

Huo Yuhao nodded immediately and felt more relieved. He only had one feeling at this point – it was good to have a family. With the academy around, he wasn't alone. He had been under a lot of pressure because this research was too valuable! It was undoubtedly the best choice to pass it to the academy.

"Dismissed." Elder Xuan dismissed the conference.

Huo Yuhao stood up hurriedly and watched as the elders left. He only left after them.

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Yan Shaozhe was the last to leave. He patted Huo Yuhao on the shoulder and said, "Yuhao, you should take this time to find suitable soul beasts. We can start our trials once you do. You have to be prepared, we have to try our best to prevent any dangers. Even though I can imagine the inner courtyard's students will be enthusiastic, this is ultimately just a trial."

"Yes." Huo Yuhao nodded his head seriously. The danger with contracting Spirits was self-evident, and the most important part would be the soul master's spiritual power that the pact would absorb when it was being formed. They would have to be extremely careful.

Huo Yuhao suddenly felt something at this moment, and he glanced sideways. He saw Wang Dong'er, who was looking around as she walked in his direction from the staircase.

Huo Yuhao felt a wave of warmth course over his body when he saw her, and his gaze met those huge powdery-blue eyes as he pointed outside.

The Sea God's Pavilion wasn't a place for billing and cooing. The elders' senses were extremely powerful, and they would probably be aware of any disturbance, no matter how minor.

Wang Dong'er nodded in understanding, and tiptoed out of the Sea God's Pavilion first.

Yan Shaozhe was naturally aware of this, and he smiled as he said, "Go. Wang Dong'er is powerful, she's the future heir to the Clear Sky Sect, and that's enough to match you. You have to be good to her."

Huo Yuhao blushed a little, and he nodded hurriedly before bidding farewell and stepping outside.

Wang Dong'er was waiting at the entrance. She wore a long light-blue dress today, which matched her flowing blue hair. Her exceptional beauty caused the Sea God's Pavilion's originally enchanting scenery to lose its splendor. She was like the brilliant and riveting sun, and even just standing there, she could dim all the light in the world.

"You're just so pretty, Dong'er," Huo Yuhao blurted out in admiration.

Wang Dong'er rolled her eyes and said, "Did you only realize that today?"

Huo Yuhao chuckled and replied, "Of course not, except you've been calling yourself a guy before this, so how could I have such reveries? It's different now."

"Here." Wang Dong'er took out a small cloth bag from somewhere. The outer layer was white, and it was clean and spotless.

Huo Yuhao took the bag, and realized it was warm. He opened it and saw two steamed buns inside, along with two deshelled eggs. The eggs were from a bird-type soul beast, with completely transparent

egg-whites, looking like frozen water crystals. They were extremely nutritious, while the two steamed buns had vegetables and pieces of meat inside.

“Go ahead. I know you haven’t eaten yet,” Wang Dong’er whispered.

Huo Yuhao didn’t restrain himself, and he picked up an egg and popped it into his mouth. What he ate wasn’t important; it was the thought that was important. Wang Dong’er’s scrupulousness made him warm all over, and whatever he ate tasted as delicious as could be.

They gobbled down the food in a few mouthfuls, and drank some water from a waterskin Wang Dong’er handed him. Huo Yuhao immediately felt better and more relaxed with food in his stomach.

“You’re so nice, Dong’er.”

Wang Dong’er giggled and said, “Why do I feel like you’re so stupid?”

Huo Yuhao said indifferently, “It doesn’t matter if I’m stupid, as long as you don’t turn your back on me because of that.”

“No, no, I won’t. Let’s go.” Wang Dong’er grasped his hand and started walking away.

“Where are we going?” Huo Yuhao asked, confused at the sudden switch.

Wang Dong’er said, “We are going to look for that Wang Qiu’er! I asked about it when I woke up this morning. Today is the reporting day for the new batch of inner courtyard students who have just passed the examination, so she will definitely show up if she managed to pass the assessment.”

“Ugh... You still remember that? I’d already forgotten about it.” Huo Yuhao actually had forgotten about it; Wang Dong’er was all that was in his mind last night. He had then been called out early in the morning for a conference, so he couldn’t really be bothered about anything else.

Wang Dong’er replied, “You can’t just forget about something like that. We have to figure it out before anything else.”

Huo Yuhao naturally followed her, and the two of them walked on. Wang Dong’er lowered her voice and asked as they strolled along, “You guys were talking about Spirits during the conference held inside the Sea God’s Pavilion?”

“Yes,” Huo Yuhao nodded as he answered. “I discussed and detailed the identity of Spirits during the conference, and I gave the Spirit Pact Sealing Spell to the academy.”

“You passed it on to the academy?” Wang Dong’er was taken aback, but she quickly recovered and nodded. “It’s better if you pass it to the academy. Our academy is trustworthy, and I think it will help lift the pressure off your shoulders.”

Huo Yuhao stared at her with a look of pleasant surprise. “You’re really the roundworm inside my stomach! How did you know that was what I thought, too?”

“Psh, you’re so disgusting. You’re the roundworm!” Wang Dong’er smiled radiantly, and the dimples on her face bloomed like flowers. Her bright smile was filled with pride.

Huo Yuhao gasped in amazement “This is chemistry! What more can a husband ask for in his wife?”

“Who’s your wife?”

“Who do you think?”

“Hmph!”

They were bickering, but their hands had been tightly wound around each other from the beginning to the end. Huo Yuhao hadn’t slept properly last night, but neither had Wang Dong’er. After the night, they still felt a little unfamiliar with their current statuses, but they were starting to get closer to the chemistry that they used to have. Their bodies were becoming closer, and so were their hearts. The feeling where the results flowed naturally when circumstances were right seemed to have arrived.

The new inner courtyard students were supposed to report to the outer courtyard rather than the inner courtyard. In the end, only those students whose identities had been confirmed could be brought into the inner courtyard.

Huo Yuhao and Wang Dong’er didn’t need the ferry. They soared into the sky, and the wings of Wang Dong’s Radiant Butterfly Goddess extended outwards while Huo Yuhao stepped on the lake’s surface and pushed off from it to propel them forward.

What made him a little surprised was that the ice formed from last night’s Snowy Dance of Ultimate Ice hadn’t melted completely, and the two of them crossed the Sea God’s Lake in no time. However, Huo Yuhao’s expression became a little dull.

They were just starting out in their relationship, so their thoughts and senses were the most sensitive. Wang Dong’er immediately detected the change in his emotions and asked, “What’s wrong?”

Huo Yuhao heaved a faint sigh and said, “Do you still remember when we met her on the shore? She flew across Sea God’s Lake from the inner courtyard just like that, and now we have the same ability. She’s been missing for such a long time. There’re still no news about her.”

Wang Dong’er’s expression grew a little sullen when she heard Huo Yuhao mention Ma Xiaotao. She sighed and said, “Yes! I wonder how she’s doing. I’m afraid she...”

Huo Yuhao raised his hand to signal her to stop talking. He had the same intense anxiety and worry in his heart, but he truly didn’t want to hear about that possibility.

Wang Dong’er knew where the new inner courtyard students were supposed to report, and she brought Huo Yuhao to the outer courtyard’s senior grade school block, where they proceeded straight to a large classroom.

It was already lesson time. The outer courtyard looked extremely tranquil, and most of the students were currently taking lessons. However, there were some who were still outside.

There was a class currently having a sparring session in Shrek Plaza. As Huo Yuhao and Wang Dong’er held hands and walked across the plaza, the students that were only twelve or thirteen years old stared and ogled Wang Dong’er.

“Wow, she’s so pretty! She’s so pretty! Guys, look!”

“Eh, why are they holding hands? They must be seniors.”

“She’s just so beautiful. The color of her hair is so nice.”

Huo Yuhao could naturally hear their discussions, and he chuckled as he said, “Dong’er, I think you should wear a veil over your face the next time you come out. You’re already so stunning and enchanting inside the academy. If we go outside, we might even attract some trouble.”

Wang Dong’er laughed and said, “You’ll be around even if there’s trouble, no? What, you don’t like that I’m so pretty?”

Huo Yuhao stared at the mischievous smile on her face, and he really wanted to kiss her.

“Stop right there! I’m talking about the two of you!” A deep and serious voice suddenly rang out, which actually shocked both Huo Yuhao and Wang Dong’er. When they looked up, they could see a teacher that was about fifty years old blocking their way, and he was currently glaring at them with a draconian expression.

“Greetings, teacher. What’s the problem?” Huo Yuhao hurriedly asked politely.

The male teacher pointed at their connected hands and lowered his voice as he said, “What year are you from? What class are you from? Look at you guys, what is this? We’re still inside the academy, and this is the example you want to set for the younger students? What if you teach them the wrong things? I will report this to the teachers, so that you will be punished accordingly.”

“Uh!” Both Huo Yuhao and Wang Dong were rooted to the spot. They were still bickering like lovebirds before this, and hadn’t noticed this point at all. Yes! Most of the outer courtyard’s students were still kids.

Huo Yuhao hurriedly released Wang Dong’er’s hand and bowed respectfully to the teacher before he wore an apologetic look and said, “I’m sorry, teacher. We are in the wrong, and we promise that this won’t happen again in the future. Please forgive us.”

The teacher’s dark and gloomy face regained some color as he said, “You guys are too brazen. This is Shrek Academy, and I imagine it’s not your first or second day at the academy judging by your age. How can you be so unruly? You have to be punished. Tell me, what class are you two from? Send someone to find your teacher, and only then can you leave. Your teacher will bring you back.”

Perhaps it was because of teacher Zhou Yi, but even though this male teacher was strict and unforgiving, Huo Yuhao could feel an unspeakable closeness. Furthermore, this teacher was right. He didn’t talk further about punishment after Huo Yuhao’s apology, so that meant he was cold on the outside, but warm on the inside.

Huo Yuhao and Wang Dong’er hadn’t had any lessons in the outer courtyard since the last big competition. They felt extremely nostalgic when they suddenly “felt” the outer courtyard once again.

Wang Dong’er touched Huo Yuhao and asked, “I’ll go?”

Huo Yuhao nodded, and made a gesture with his chin. Wang Dong’er immediately understood, and she bowed lightly to the male teacher before she walked away briskly.

The male teacher noticed that their attitudes were not bad, and his temper had calmed down considerably. He shouted at the students watching the show from the side. "What are you looking at?! Continue sparring! Don't let me catch anyone slacking off!"

Chapter 222.2: Two Goddesses?

The young students were clearly afraid of him, and everyone began to get back to work, with only a handful still casting curious gazes over from time to time.

Huo Yuhao asked politely, "May I know your name, teacher?"

The male teacher said with a deep voice, "My name is Zheng Zhan."

"Greetings, teacher Zheng. I'm really sorry about what just happened, and I promise we will never do it again. My name is Huo Yuhao."

Zheng Zhan nodded to acknowledge his name, and said earnestly, "All you teenagers! Once you reach adolescence, it's natural for guys and girls to feel good about each other. However, you have to remember this is an academy, and while us teachers can't control how you develop after graduation, you need to watch your behavior and your words when you're still inside the academy. Furthermore, it's not an easy task to join Shrek Academy. You need to work hard when you're here; you can't waste your youth. Even if you can't join the inner courtyard, you should at least aim to graduate smoothly from the outer courtyard. I can understand youths dating each other, but you guys need to have moderation, and you can't overdo it. Do you understand?"

Huo Yuhao nodded guiltily as Zheng Zhan chided him. Zheng Zhan's words whipped him until his face started to blush, but he began to have an even better impression of this teacher.

"Oh, yes, you haven't told me which class you're from. Judging by your age, you should in Year 5, give or take. Let me think, which teachers are in charge of Year 5's classes?..."

Huo Yuhao quickly explained, "Don't trouble yourself, sir. I'm from teacher Zhou Yi's class."

"Oh, teacher Zhou!" Zheng Zhan carried on naturally, but then his eyes widened in the next moment, while his voice seemed to become an octave higher. "What? You're from Zhou Yi's class?"

"Yes! What's the matter?" It was Huo Yuhao's turn to be a little confused.

Zheng Zhan said with a worried look on his face. "You silly boy, why didn't you say so earlier? If you had told me you were from Zhou Yi's class, I wouldn't have asked you to go find her. Aren't you digging your own grave? Do you not know about old lady Zhou's temper? If she gets angry, she may just expel the two of you! Oh man, you should really have told me earlier! Tsk..."

Huo Yuhao felt more heat rush to his head as he saw Zheng Zhan's troubled look, and his nose began to feel a little sour. This teacher is so cute! We've never met before, and he's already so concerned when he learned that I'm teacher Zhou's student. However, teacher Zhou's terrifying reputation... seems like it's still quite well-known...

Zheng Zhan suddenly seemed like he had found a solution, and said seriously, "Seems like you guys are late today. I will be a good Samaritan. When Zhou Yi arrives, don't speak. I'll tell her that I was the one who got the two of you to do some official business. That girl of yours won't spill the beans, will she?"

What did you say your name was? Huo Yuhao, right? What's the girl's name? I should at least know your names."

"Her name is Wang Dong'er. Actually, teacher Zheng-

Huo Yuhao wanted to explain, but teacher Zhou and Wang Dong'er arrived right at that time. Zhou Yi still had the same elderly made-up face, while Wang Dong'er followed beside her. There was a mischievous smile on her face.

Zhou Yi's deafening voice could already be heard before she even reached them. "Who? Who is it? I want to see which blind man dares to detain my students."

Zheng Zhan was dumbfounded. He turned towards Huo Yuhao and forced a laugh as he said, "I think that girl has spilled the beans!"

There was no need to mention the intimacy Huo Yuhao felt when he saw Zhou Yi, and he hurriedly explained, "Don't worry, teacher Zheng. It's alright." He darted out as he spoke and came in front of Zhou Yi before he bowed deeply. His voice was quivering faintly as he said, "Teacher Zhou."

Zhou Yi halted abruptly. She seemed to be overcome with astonishment, and tears glimmered in her eyes. However, Zhou Yi was Zhou Yi after all, and the way she expressed intimacy and affection was different from normal people. She raised her leg and immediately kicked Huo Yuhao on the side of his thigh.

"Huo Yuhao, you still know to come back!? You didn't visit me even when you returned! I wouldn't have known at all if I didn't hear it from Fan Yu. And you, Wang Dong, you've deceived me! So, you're a girl, and you're so pretty! You two people, what am I supposed to say about the two of you? Eh?"

Huo Yuhao and Wang Dong's eyes turned red as they listened to Zhou Yi's fierce and furious speech, and tears poured from their eyes. They would never forget the two years they had spent under Zhou Yi's guidance. Zhou Yi was strict, but she was also really nice to them. Everything felt so familiar when they listened to her voice. This was especially true for Huo Yuhao, as it had been two years since he had last seen Zhou Yi. He reminisced about the old days nostalgically, and his emotions were all tumbling over themselves inside him.

However, teacher Zheng didn't know what they were feeling inside. He could only see Zhou Yi kick Huo Yuhao, so he briskly came forward and said, "Don't misunderstand, teacher Zhou. Calm down, calm down."

Zhou Yi was slightly taken aback as she turned towards Zheng Zhan and asked confusedly, "What's the situation, teacher Zheng? Were you the one who detained my students?"

Zheng Zhan forced a laugh and said, "I didn't! This..." He didn't know how to explain.

Huo Yuhao said hurriedly, "We were the ones at fault, teacher Zhou. We've already apologized to teacher Zheng, and obtained his forgiveness."

Zhou Yi turned back towards Huo Yuhao. She was exceptionally high-spirited at this moment, so she nodded in Zheng Zhan's direction as she said, "Thank you, then. Can I take these two kids away?"

Zheng Zhan came beside Zhou Yi and spoke softly in earnest. "Teacher Zhou, you should restrain your temper a little. You can't keep doing this. These kids toil so much from day do day in their cultivation, so you shouldn't be too fierce towards them. This may cause reverse psychology and incur rebellious behavior, and that's not good."

Everyone knew that Zhou Yi's classes had the highest expulsion and quitting rates. However, her class also produced the best and the most prodigious students. There was hardly anybody else who agreed with her pedagogy and teaching method.

Zhou Yi finally realized that Zheng Zhan misunderstood her, and she snapped, "What's wrong with my temper? Am I not being nice to them? That's a gesture of affection, teacher Zheng! Have you not heard of the saying that beating and scolding are signs of love and intimacy? They won't succeed if we don't beat them! This is for their own good!"

"Ahem." Zheng Zhan's expression became a little dark. He replied solemnly, "If you keep doing this teacher Zhou, then I'm going to have to bring it up to the academy."

Zhou Yi realized that this teacher was really about to get angry. She smiled hastily and said, "Alright, teacher Zheng, don't be so serious. I'm just fooling around. These two are my students from years ago, and they're here to visit me. They're now students from the inner courtyard, I haven't seen them for a long time, and I'm just too happy."

"Students from the inner courtyard?" Zheng Zhan felt his heart skip a beat. When he turned to look at Huo Yuhao and Wang Dong once more, his expression was different from before. What did inner courtyard students mean to Shrek Academy? Sometimes even the teachers from the outer courtyard had a lower status than the inner courtyard students. They weren't allowed to set foot on Sea God's Island without express permission, after all.

"That doesn't sound right, teacher Zhou." Zheng Zhan suddenly thought of something, and immediately continued, "I've seen the new batch of students who've just entered the inner courtyard. I didn't see the two of them, they look very unfamiliar to me."

Zhou Yi was a little exasperated as she watched teacher Zheng's serious and solemn look. She explained, "They didn't join the inner courtyard this year, they entered the inner courtyard two years ago! They were reserve team members representing Shrek Academy in last season's Continental Advanced Soul Master Academy Soul Dueling Tournament, and they are members of this season's official team. They are also outstanding prodigies from the inner courtyard who have been through special training!"

Zheng Zhan finally understood after listening to her explanation. A look of envy came across his eyes as he said, "So they are the exemplary students that you've brought up, teacher Zhou!"

Zhou Yi chortled and said, "Are you still going to report me to the academy?"

Zheng Zhan laughed along and replied, "Of course not. But they are really so young!"

There was only pride in Zhou Yi's eyes. Huo Yuhao and Wang Dong could be said to be the most outstanding students that she had ever taken on. Even though she wasn't one to brag, she was all joy and smiles when she saw her two lovely students. There wasn't a trace of her typical strictness and usual monster-like attitude.

“Alright, we’ll take our leave first, Teacher Zheng. I haven’t seen them in a long time, and we’re going to have a chat.” Zhou Yi gestured towards Zheng Zhan and started to bring Huo Yuhao and Wang Dong away.

Huo Yuhao and Wang Dong bowed towards teacher Zheng respectfully. Huo Yuhao said softly, “Don’t worry, Teacher Zheng. What happened today will never happen again. Sorry!”

Zhou Yi had heard about the situation from Wang Dong before this. She stopped and turned back as she said, “Actually, their circumstances are relatively unique. If those little people have something to say, you can tell them this...” She whispered something to Zheng Zhan after this, and then she brought Huo Yuhao and Wang Dong away.

Zheng Zhan’s eyes became a little lackadaisical, and he only recovered after a long while.

He returned to his own students. “What are you looking at? How’s your training going? Did you see those two seniors just now? They are your seniors from the inner courtyard! Do you know why they’re holding hands? That’s not because they’re trying to break the academy’s rules, I misunderstood them earlier. They’re holding hands because they’re cultivating – they’re cultivating every single possible second. The two of them can use martial soul fusion skills, and only when they’re bodies are in physical contact can they unleash their full power. The two of them are always vigilant and prepared, and this is something every one of you should learn from them!”

Fortunately, Huo Yuhao and Wang Dong were quite a distance away. Otherwise, they would have probably blushed from Teacher Zheng’s speech.

They entered the senior grade school block, and Huo Yuhao asked Zhou Yi, “How are the students from our class doing, Teacher Zhou?”

Zhou Yi answered, “They’re doing pretty fine. However, ever since the two of you left, Class 2 has been stronger than us in terms of overall strength. Mu Jin was extremely proud of that for a long time. However, Dai Huabin and the others are in the inner courtyard now, so Class 1 has become the strongest again. I heard the two of you gave them a good beating yesterday? That’s great! You’ve vented my anger for me!”

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Huo Yuhao and Wang Dong began to smile as they listened to Zhou Yi’s familiar tone. This was the teacher Zhou they liked the most!

“Oh, yes! Teacher Zhou, the new inner courtyard students are supposed to report to this school block, right? We want to take a look. Can we find you later?” Wang Dong’er asked.

Zhou Yi answered, “Let me take you there to avoid both of you being detained by other teachers again. Tsk, the two of you... do you really have to be so intimate all the time?”

Huo Yuhao and Wang Dong’er instantly blushed and exchanged a look. They didn’t dare to hold hands in the academy anymore.

Zhou Yi was much more familiar with the senior grade school block than they were. They twisted and turned around the corridors, and Zhou Yi brought them to their destination.

Huo Yuhao could already hear voices before they reached the room that new inner courtyard students were supposed to report to.

“You can’t wear a veil like that. If I remember correctly, you were like that during the assessment. You had a recommendation letter back then, so we didn’t say much. However, you’re about to join the academy soon, are you really going to wear that veil around every single day? Even if you have some troubles deep in your heart that you can’t discuss, the teachers responsible for registering you have to know so that we can record it. This is our duty and responsibility. If you refuse to take down your veil, then I’m sorry, you can’t be allowed to join the academy.”

“Do I really have to take it down?” An enchanting voice could be heard, and Huo Yuhao trembled when he heard it. A look of astonishment flowed from his eyes. Isn’t this the voice I heard the other day? He picked up his pace and walked forward quickly.

When Huo Yuhao successfully took Wang Dong’er’s hand during the Sea God’s Fate, Huo Yuhao thought that the Wang Qiu’er that he had met was just an illusion and his hallucination, or it was just Wang Dong’er deliberately fooling around with him. However, the voice that fell into his ears now was just so real and true.

“Ah!” He gasped in surprise before they even walked into the room.

Wang Dong tugged on Huo Yuhao’s sleeve and whispered, “What’s wrong with you? Why are you in such a hurry?”

Huo Yuhao lowered his voice and said, “The voice I just heard was extremely familiar. It was just like that Wang Qiu’er I met the other day.”

They arrived at the room as they spoke. The room’s door was open, and they could see what was happening inside.

The first thing they saw were long locks of powdery-blue hair. Both Huo Yuhao and Wang Dong’er were stunned on the spot when the flowing hair fell into their eyes.

She had a lengthy white dress, long light-blue hair, and her profile appeared identical to Wang Dong’er, except she was a little taller.

Most of the people in the room were teachers at this moment, and there were about four to five of them. Their eyes seemed a little lackluster as they stared at the young woman.

“Ah?” Huo Yuhao, Wang Dong, and Zhou Yi were at the door, and the teachers could naturally see them. When they turned to look at Wang Dong’er’s face, high-pitched gasps of surprise could be heard yet again. The young girl with wave-like hair turned around at this moment.

Huo Yuhao and Wang Dong’er felt as if they had been struck by lightning. They stood there with sluggish eyes, their expressions completely frozen.

The long-haired girl who had turned around also had a pair of huge blue eyes... and her gorgeous looks were identical to Wang Dong’er’s. Besides the fact that she was slightly taller and more well-developed, there were hardly any differences between her and Wang Dong’er at all!

The young woman was also shocked speechless when she saw Wang Dong'er and Huo Yuhao. She even raised her hands to rub her eyes, before she fixed her gaze upon Wang Dong'er once more.

The two girls hollered at the same time, "Why do you look exactly like me?!"

Yes, they were the same – exactly the same. Furthermore, their beauty was unrivaled. All the teachers in the room were overcome with amazement as they stared dumbly.

Zhou Yi's eyes moved between Wang Dong'er and Wang Qiu'er. She couldn't help but ask, "Wang Dong, is that your sister?"

Wang Dong'er shook her head stiffly. Her mind was a complete blank as she said, "I... I don't have a sister! It's just me..."

Wang Qiu'er was the first to reorient herself, and she shook her head decisively. "I don't have a younger sister, either. But how do we look so alike?"

Huo Yuhao forced a laugh and said, "You two look alike, and even your names are extremely similar. Nice to meet you – do you remember me?"

Wang Qiu'er glanced at Huo Yuhao, and a strange look flashed in the depths of her eyes. She muttered coldly "So you're the lecher. What did you want to do when you chased me that day?"

Huo Yuhao's face froze. Did he just become a sexual predator?

"Don't misunderstand me, Wang Qiu'er. I thought you were Dong'er when I saw you the other day, and I recognized the wrong person, so I decided to follow you. I lost you when we reached the city."

Wang Qiu'er said plainly, "What else do you want?"

Huo Yuhao snapped his eyes around to Wang Dong'er. Wang Dong'er had recovered by now, but seemed like she was deep in thought.

"Nothing. Sorry to disturb you," Huo Yuhao replied to Wang Qiu'er before he dragged Wang Dong'er out of the room.

"Something's not right, Yuhao." Wang Dong'er looked up and stared at Huo Yuhao with pondering eyes.

Huo Yuhao frowned faintly and said, "Yes, something's not right. How can the two of you look so similar? It's unbelievable that the two of you aren't siblings. Why don't you send a letter to Uncle Niu and Uncle Tai, and ask them if you actually do have a sister?"

Wang Dong'er shook her head and replied, "No, I'm sure I don't have a sister. When I looked at her just now, I felt like something was off. It's not a feeling caused by blood relations. Her soul power undulations are vastly different from mine, and I can feel that her blood essence is exceptionally vigorous, possibly stronger than mine. However, she's not light-type like me. Except for our looks, I don't think there's any other similarity between the two of us."

Zhou Yi had a skeptical expression as she asked, "What's going on? Dong'er, I remember you've always been dressed like a guy. Perhaps Wang Qiu'er made herself up to match your appearance? But what is her motive, then?"

All three of them were clueless, and nobody knew what was going on.

Huo Yuhao's reaction was slightly faster. He contemplated momentarily and said, "How about I go look for Dean Yan, and ask him to investigate her identity and background, along with her martial soul and her examination situation. It's truly difficult to believe that two people in the world can look so alike, but not be related by blood."

Zhou Yi snorted, "You can't be so sure. The Douluo Continent is vast, and there are all sorts of miracles and strange things. It's not as if two people who look so alike but are not related by blood have never been seen before. You two keep your cool. We will analyze this in more detail, and if we don't find anything amiss, then you two don't have to entangle yourselves with her anymore, you can treat her like a normal student. If she does have a motive, she will give the game away at some point."

Wang Dong'er said, "Yes, that's all we can do. Yuhao, you haven't seen teacher Zhou for so long, you should stay and accompany her. I'll go look for Dean Yan. It's a good opportunity for me to compare her abilities and mine."

Huo Yuhao nodded as he replied, "Alright!"

Wang Dong'er walked away briskly, and Huo Yuhao turned back towards Wang Qiu'er in the room, who was wearing her veil again and carrying on with the registration.

It was possible for two people who were not related by blood to look alike, but such identical appearances were truly extraordinary and unbelievable.

Huo Yuhao took his doubts away and followed Zhou Yi back to her office. He had no choice but to push his misgivings to the back of his mind as he sat down with teacher Zhou. He began to describe his various encounters over the past two years after they were separated from each other. Fan Yu had probably conveyed Huo Yuhao's general situation to Zhou Yi, but he still recounted his life in detail to her, while he also asked about his classmates from before.

Too many things had happened to him over the past two years, and it took a long time for him to recount everything.

They were still talking when Wang Dong'er returned.

"Dong'er." Huo Yuhao stood up hurriedly when he saw her.

Wang Dong'er said, "I got the information. We are indeed different."

Huo Yuhao gave her some space to sit down. Wang Dong'er's face was a little lost, and it was clear that she had run into a conundrum.

"What's the situation?" Zhou Yi asked.

Wang Dong'er answered, "Her name is Wang Qiu'er, and she's nineteen years old, so she's slightly older than I am. She only has one martial soul, but it's an extremely rare pureblood dragon-type martial soul. Furthermore, it's a martial soul that's rarely seen even amongst dragon-type martial souls: the Golden Dragon."

Huo Yuhao and Zhou Yi exclaimed in astonishment at the same time, "The Ancestor of Strength, the Golden Dragon?"

Wang Dong'er nodded.

Both Huo Yuhao and Zhou Yi were even more bewildered.

Gold and Silver had special meanings amongst top-tier soul beasts. Silver represented multiple elements, or that one possessed a formidable element. Such soul beasts could evolve, or they possessed a powerful innate ability. It was similar to the Silvermoon Wolf King that Huo Yuhao had come across back then.

On the other hand, Gold represented extreme bodily strength and power. Silver soul beasts were already extremely rare, but Golden soul beasts were even more uncommon and exotic. It was hard to come by even a single one for many years, and some people had already claimed that Golden soul beasts were long extinct.

There wasn't a single Golden soul beast amongst the known Ten Great Savage Beasts in the world of soul beasts. Amongst the known Golden soul beasts, the most reputable one was definitely this Golden Dragon.

Legend had it that the Dragon God had two children: one was the Golden Dragon who controlled strength and power, while the other was the Silver Dragon who controlled elemental laws and rules. The two of them had inherited a portion of the Dragon God's powers.

Over the passage of time, the Golden Dragon and the Silver Dragon gave birth to offspring, and their descendants gradually formed the entire Dragon race...

[Chapter 223.1: Intimacy](#)

Dragons were almost extinct today, and few people alive had actually seen a real dragon on the Douluo Continent. However, the legends and chronicles had always been there.

The dragons who descended directly from the Golden Dragon and the Silver Dragon were the rarest amongst the dragons, but they were touted as the most pure-blooded species, and also known as the strongest of the dragons.

Elder Mu's Radiant Holy Dragon was only a subspecies of the Silver Dragon, a dragon that controlled the power of light.

The Golden Dragon didn't have the all-inclusive elemental prowess that the Silver Dragon did, but the Golden Dragon possessed a strange power that could break through all things, and this was how its title, Ancestor of Strength, came about.

Wang Dong's Radiant Butterfly Goddess and Huo Yuhao's Spirit Eyes were already considered exceptionally rare. However, even Huo Yuhao's Ice Jade Empress Scorpion was inferior when compared to the Golden Dragon. This was because the Golden Dragon was also an Ultimate martial soul, and its Ultimate factor was Strength. Ultimate Strength was more powerful than a single Ultimate Element in the end.

Huo Yuhao and Wang Dong'er could guess that Wang Qiu'er was probably quite powerful, as she was able to join the inner courtyard as a student from another academy, but they hadn't expected her to be that powerful. Even though she didn't have twin martial souls, her martial soul was the strongest among all the martial souls that both Huo Yuhao and Wang Dong had ever seen.

Zhou Yi was full of admiration as she said, "So someone on the Continent actually inherited the Golden Dragon martial soul!" She was a teacher from Shrek Academy, so she had the same intense longing for the Golden Dragon. If she hadn't been in front of her two students, she would have probably gone to check it out herself.

Huo Yuhao quickly calmed down and said to Wang Dong, "In that case, her martial soul has nothing to do with you. We should just treat her like a normal student."

Wang Dong'er pouted and said, "But...she looks just like me, what if you recognize the wrong person?"

Huo Yuhao smiled and said consolingly, "It will be fine as long as that doesn't happen. We have the Haodong power, and we will feel it the moment we touch each other. No matter how powerful Wang Qiu'er is, she doesn't share martial soul fusion skills with me, and she doesn't have our Haodong power. Don't think too much. We have to work a little harder now, we're not far from the start of the competition."

Wang Dong'er nodded, she knew that Huo Yuhao was right. Wang Qiu'er looked exactly like her, but even something was miraculous as this didn't prove anything. However, she still felt as if something was amiss from beginning to end. She could confirm that she wasn't related to Wang Qiu'er by blood, but ever since she first laid eyes on her, and especially when she saw her eyes, Wang Dong'er still had that familiar feeling.

They chatted idly with Zhou Yi for a while longer before Huo Yuhao and Wang Dong'er bid their farewells. They had to pick up the pace when it came to their cultivation, and Huo Yuhao also had to swiftly conclude the situation with the Spirits and hand the entire issue over to the Sea God's Pavilion.

On their way back to the Sea God's Island, Wang Dong'er lowered her voice and said, "Yuhao... what you said yesterday was right. She does look more like the Goddess of Light in the Raiment of Light than I do. Do you think she's been sent by the heavens to steal you from me? Did you not say that the Goddess of Light was the image you fell in love at first sight with?"

Huo Yuhao caressed her flowing hair, and he said in amusement, "Stop thinking about it. Have I not said this before? The goddess is right beside me. She will never be you, no matter how identical the two of you look. There's nothing at all between me and her... but we have been living together ever since we joined the academy. I've hugged you to sleep before, so you can't recant!"

"Psh! Hugged you to sleep, that sounds disgusting! I don't care, you have to stay away from her next time, alright?" Wang Dong'er spoke with a look of stubbornness and determination.

Huo Yuhao chuckled and said, "Alright, alright! I can promise you that. You're quite possessive, huh... but that proves you care about me! From today onwards, we should move back in together. Of course, we'll only be cultivating, and only then can we be together at all times. That should work, eh?"

Wang Dong'er thought about it for a moment before saying, "Alright."

“Eh? You’re really agreeing to that?” Huo Yuhao stared at her in surprise. “You’re not afraid of the differences between guys and girls anymore?”

A radiant smile flashed across Wang Dong’er’s face. “We’ll only be cultivating together. Furthermore, even if you want to do something mean to me, you might not even be able to take me down. Don’t forget, you’re just a Soul King, while I’m a Soul Emperor.”

“This... are you trying to be a bully?”

“Yes! I want to bully you. I can’t do that?” Wang Dong’er spoke with a sweet smile on her face. They were now by the shore, and she grabbed Huo Yuhao’s hand. The Haodong power began to circulate, and the two of them soared into the sky as they flew towards the Sea God’s Island at the lake’s center.

There was a pair of pretty eyes staring slackly at their shadows in midair not far from where they left the ground. There was a clear look of confusion in those eyes. “How can this be? Why is there a girl that looks exactly like me? What’s going on?”

The owner of these enchanting eyes was Wang Qiu’er. She had just completed her registration, and she watched Huo Yuhao and Wang Dong’er hold hands as they flew away. She frowned faintly and walked towards the shore. It was also time for her to enter the Sea God’s Island.

Huo Yuhao returned directly to his room once they reached the Sea God’s Island, and began to write down the steps to create Spirits, along with the Pact Sealing Spell. This was the most important thing at hand to him.

Wang Dong’er didn’t disturb him, and cultivated by herself to one side.

Huo Yuhao took an entire day to pen down the method of creating Spirits, and added “to be verified” at the end. There hadn’t been enough experiments or trials on Spirits yet, and it couldn’t be pushed out as the norm. There was far too much to do; refining, perfecting, and making the creation process as safe as it could be wasn’t something that could be done in a year or two. No matter how wealthy Shrek Academy was and how many resources they possessed, there was still a lot of work to be done. The hardest component to settle was searching for soul beasts in their declining years for negotiation and discussions.

It was already difficult to find old soul beasts, and it was even harder to find intelligent ones. Shrek Academy would have to find old soul beasts with intelligence, and those with a mentality that leaned towards a fear of death, because only then would they choose the path of a Spirit.

The most troublesome part about creating a Spirit pact was that these soul beasts had to volunteer, and they had to be entirely agreeable. The Spirit pact would transcend soul rings, and the soul beast’s acceptance was probably the most important part of that process.

Huo Yuhao recorded everything down, then sought out Yan Shaozhe and showed it to him before anything else. He described everything in detail, and went over it several times before he rearranged his draft and handed it over to Elder Xuan.

Elder Xuan immediately sealed the final draft into the Library of the Sea God's Pavilion. According to Elder Xuan, the Library of the Sea God's Pavilion was well-fortified, and Shrek Academy would probably have ceased to exist if this place was broken into.

It was late into the night by the time everything was settled. Even with Huo Yuhao's vitality and endurance, he could still feel intense exhaustion and fatigue.

Staying inside the Sea God's Pavilion was convenient. After he finished the job with Elder Xuan, he returned to his room directly.

Wang Dong'er was not yet asleep, but neither was she cultivating. Instead, she was quietly waiting for him by the table. There were four exquisite dishes laid out there, along with a bowl of porridge.

"You're back! Let me heat it up." Wang Dong'er immediately stood up and started to pour the food into boxes.

Huo Yuhao stepped forward hurriedly and said, "There's no need, I like to eat cold food. I'm sorry, Dong'er, it's my fault for being late, you must have been waiting anxiously for a long time. You should go ahead and rest first. If something like this happens again, you don't have to wait for me."

Wang Dong'er looked up and stared at Huo Yuhao with a slightly dazed look. She could tell that he was a little exhausted, but his eyes were still filled with warmth, and his gaze was just so serene and tender. She told herself in her heart, This man is mine! Why do I love waiting for him, and why do I enjoy the feeling of waiting for him to return so much?

Huo Yuhao stared into Wang Dong'er's blue eyes, and pulled her back down onto her seat. "What's wrong? What are you thinking about? Are you still thinking about that Wang Qiu'er?" He filled a bowl of porridge for Wang Dong'er as he spoke.

Wang Dong'er hurriedly pushed it back to him. "I've already eaten. You should eat quickly; fortunately, the porridge is still warm. You should teach me how to cook! That way, I don't have to find food for you from the canteen, and I can make a meal for you myself."

Huo Yuhao shook his head without hesitation. "No."

Wang Dong'er was perplexed as she exclaimed, "Why not? Sentimental attachment?"

Huo Yuhao stared at her white and pale hands and said, "I don't want you to worry about any day-to-day things at all; I want you to live like a queen. I should be the one cooking for you every day! I will take care of you, I will shower you with love, and I will stay by your side for eternity."

He said all this while he was still eating. However, the way he said was so natural, as if everything had long been engraved into his bones, and he was simply expressing everything matter-of-factly.

Faint tears began to well up in Wang Dong'er's charming eyes. "You're so good to me, Yuhao."

Huo Yuhao laughed and said, "Why are you crying when I'm being nice to you? Stop crying. It's useless to just say these things. I will prove my words with actions." He flexed his lean right arm as he spoke.

Wang Dong'er giggled and said, "Don't forget, you're still a Soul King."

Huo Yuhao said, "This has nothing to do with strength, mentality is the key!"

Wang Dong'er laughed and said, "Let's not talk about all that. The Sea God's Fate concluded soon after we left. He Caitou and Xiao Xiao finally got together! They didn't have it easy, and the truth is that I could tell fifth senior sister was conflicted inside, but she chose him in the end. What's inside is far more important than appearance! Second senior brother may be a little ugly, and he's a little too dark-skinned, but he's truly very good to her."

[Chapter 223.2: Intimacy](#)

Huo Yuhao laughed and said, "Yes—what's inside is absolutely more important than your beauty. I'll still love you even if you become ugly in the future."

Wang Dong'er rebuked him. "You're the one that's going to get ugly." Even though her tone sounded angry, there was only sweetness and warmth in her eyes.

There wasn't much light in the room. She rested her cheeks in her hands and planted her elbows on the table while she watched Huo Yuhao eat.

"I investigated Wang Qiu'er's situation a little more. Her soul power is around Rank 60, which is quite impressive, considering she isn't even twenty yet. She doesn't have her sixth soul ring yet, and I've heard from vice-Dean Cai that the inner courtyard will organize a soul beast hunt soon, where they'll gather all the inner courtyard students at a bottleneck and venture into the Great Star Dou Forest. I imagine she will be participating—don't you need your fifth soul ring for your Spirit Eyes? Let's tag along."

Huo Yuhao glanced at her suspiciously and said, "Tag along? What for? Do you still want to spy on her?"

Wang Dong'er said determinedly, "I still feel like there's something wrong with her, but I can't put my finger on it. Maybe it's just because we look too alike—we're almost carbon copies! It wouldn't hurt to monitor her for a little bit longer, and I also want to see how she's like as a person."

Huo Yuhao smiled and said, "It's me who has to go anyway. You don't even need a soul ring, why do you want to go?"

Wang Dong'er giggled and said, "I have to protect you! We have martial soul fusion skills, so we'll be a lot safer that way. Furthermore, you're a member of the Sea God's Pavilion now, and you're the future heir of the academy. Shouldn't we be protecting you with everything we have? I'm going to risk my own safety to protect you."

Huo Yuhao had finished two bowls of porridge by now. "Alright, alright. It's always nice to have a pretty girl to protect me. We can go, but it's not easy to find a soul beast suitable for my Spirit Eyes! You know how difficult it's always been to find spiritual-type soul beasts in the past, and I think we might just waste our time. My Ultimate Ice martial soul has five soul rings now, and if I can't find a suitable spiritual-type soul ring, my Ice Jade Empress Scorpion might just become my main martial soul, so I'll have to try my luck with my Spirit Eyes to find a suitable soul ring."

Wang Dong'er nodded and said, "That's not a bad idea. However, we still have to try. The competition will be upon us in a few months, and another soul ring is another layer of protection."

Huo Yuhao wiped his mouth, and swiftly put the bowls and plates back inside the lunchbox. He made an "after you" gesture to Wang Dong'er and said, "Wifey, come onto the bed to rest."

"Psh! Go and take a shower." Wang Dong'er slapped his hand away, and evaded him as quickly as she could. Her pretty face was blushing.

Huo Yuhao's eyes sparkled and said, "Take a shower? I'll be clean then, and we can..."

Wang Dong'er snapped, "Then we'll cultivate! I'm warning you, if you dare to mess around, don't blame me for what comes next. Hmph." She waved her little fist in front of Huo Yuhao as she spoke.

Huo Yuhao was full of exasperation. "Why should I bathe if we want to cultivate...? We're not going to hug each other to sleep, anyway. The truth is, we've never slept together ever since that night before I left for the exchange program. Didn't you say that I should learn how to relax? I think there's nothing more relaxing than hugging you to sleep. Do you think we...?"

Wang Dong'er's face blackened, and she snapped her head around before she strode towards the door and said, "I'm leaving."

"Ugh... Sorry, I messed up." Huo Yuhao hurriedly grabbed her as she was slowly walking away, and gave her a warm smile as he said, "Alright, alright. You should get ready on the bed first, and I'll take a shower now, and then we'll cultivate. Cultivation is too important, and every ounce of soul power that we gather will be imperative for our victory during the competition."

He suddenly acted like he had a strong sense of justice, and Wang Dong'er reached out and pinched him on the waist. Huo Yuhao flinched from the pain and hurriedly went ahead to the bathroom.

Guys bathed a lot faster than girls, and a wet Huo Yuhao was back on the bed after a few minutes.

He was always teasing Wang Dong'er, but he didn't dare to be a nuisance physically. He sat across from her, obedient and well-behaved, and they placed their palms against each other while the Haodong power began to circulate.

Wang Dong's soul bones flickered with golden light, catalyzing their soul power recovery.

They were a little unsettled in the beginning. In the end, this was the first time they had cultivated on the same bed after their relationship status had changed.

But the gentle Haodong power gradually became stronger, and they had no choice but to fix their state of mind and focus on cultivation. It didn't take long before they finally entered meditation.

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Dawn was breaking, and the sun peeked out from the eastern horizon in the distance. Huo Yuhao and Wang Dong'er opened their eyes at almost the same time.

Soul power surged within their bodies, and they were both pleasantly surprised when they felt the progress in their cultivation. Ever since Huo Yuhao fused with the Snow Empress, the repression he felt

from his Ultimate Ice's cultivation speed became less and less obvious. His cultivation speed was also greatly boosted with the help of the Haodong power.

Huo Yuhao got off the bed first with a faint smile on his face, and he gestured politely to Wang Dong'er to follow suit.

Wang Dong'er was smiling too and leapt off the bed before they walked towards the window together.

They stared towards the east as they waited patiently for the dash of purple to arrive. They listened to the symphony of bird calls and the other peaceful sounds of nature that pulsed with life and vitality, and they felt the tranquility of this moment.

The crisp fragrance of plants and vegetation wafted in, and the clean and fresh feelings seemed to lift their spirits.

How comfortable!

When the sun rose in the east, the pinch of purple came as it always did. Their eyes sparkled as they absorbed the purple energy, and purple hues glimmered in their eyes.

One could tell the clear difference in the level of their Purple Demon Eyes. Huo Yuhao's eyes became like purple crystals, while Wang Dong's light-blue eyes were only masked with a faint purple layer. The difference in their martial souls meant there would be quite a gap in their mastery of the Tang Sect Secret Techniques.

They took a deep breath at the same time and gradually exhaled. Their routine Purple Demon Eyes cultivation came to an end.

They were both revitalized and in high spirits after a night of cultivation. This wasn't just because of the increase in soul power—they had rediscovered their mutual feelings of familiarity. The unfamiliarity and that invisible barrier brought about by Wang Dong's change in gender gradually disappeared, and their friendship was slowly and imperceptibly converting to a romantic relationship.

"Do you have anything to do today?" Wang Dong'er asked Huo Yuhao.

Huo Yuhao shook his head and replied, "No, I don't. I've settled the materials regarding Spirits yesterday, and Elder Xuan has stored it away in the Library. I think I'm going to focus on cultivating over the next few days to prepare for the big competition."

They didn't really feel any pressure at all when they talked about the competition. They were so much stronger compared to five years ago, and others of the same age group would have a very tough time challenging them and Shrek's Seven Monsters. Huo Yuhao and Wang Dong had claimed the championship five years ago, so it was natural that they didn't think anybody could threaten their dominance today.

Wang Dong'er thought for a moment, then said, "We should register for the hunting expedition. If not, they may leave us behind, still in the dark."

Huo Yuhao said amusingly, "You're still thinking about that? Alright, I'll listen to you. Let's look for eldest senior brother and the others afterwards—I met him yesterday, and he said that everyone is here now,

and we should temporarily lay our responsibilities in the Tang Sect aside. Everyone should come together to train and practice our coordination, as we have a lot more soul skills now than before.”

“Okay.”

They washed up and got some breakfast before they arrived in the outer courtyard once more. They would have to look for the Martial Soul Department’s vice-Dean Cai Mei’er for registration, as she was in charge of the expedition, and her office was in the outer courtyard’s Martial Soul Department.

“What? You guys want to participate in this hunting expedition?” Cai Mei’er looked astonished as she stared at Huo Yuhao and Wang Dong’er.

Huo Yuhao nodded and said, “Dean Cai, I have serendipitously obtained a fifth soul ring for my secondary martial soul, but my main martial soul still only has four soul rings. I am mainly a spiritual-type soul master, so I want to take this chance to add a fifth soul ring. This will be extremely beneficial for us during the Continental Advanced Soul Master Academy Soul Dueling Tournament.”

Cai Mei’er’s eyebrows were tightly knitted together, and she began to contemplate the matter.

Huo Yuhao couldn’t help but feel a little surprised. He didn’t think his request was outrageous at all—it was just him and Wang Dong’er, and he was confident that they wouldn’t become a burden to the group.

Wang Dong’er asked, “Dean Cai, does this expedition have a restriction on the number of people who are allowed to participate?”

Cai Mei’er shook her head and said, “There’s no limit. However, it’s a bit troublesome if you two want to go, I can’t make this decision. Don’t forget, Yuhao, Elder Xuan has officially announced that you’re the heir to the position of Master of the Sea God’s Pavilion, your status is now drastically different from before. No matter what activity you wish to participate in, we have to ensure your safety before anything else.”

Huo Yuhao finally realized what was going on—so, Dean Cai was actually feeling conflicted about that.

“Dean Cai, there will be so many people moving together, and everyone is a member of the inner courtyard. There shouldn’t much risk or danger.”

Cai Mei’er answered, “You’re wrong—it’s dangerous because of the fact that you guys are all students from the inner courtyard. If everyone were from the outer courtyard, we would only be hunting soul beasts in the Great Star Dou Forest’s Peripheral Regions. There would be a low chance for things to go awry as long there were teachers who were powerful enough leading the group. However, it’s different for you guys. All of you are five-ringed and six-ringed, and all of you have high standards for soul rings. We’ll have to venture deeper into the Great Star Dou Forest to find suitable soul rings for you guys, and under such circumstances, even the teachers-in-charge cannot guarantee absolute safety for everyone. The further we go into the Great Star Dou Forest, the more perilous it gets—I’m sure you’re both aware of that.”

[Chapter 223.3: Intimacy](#)

Huo Yuhao didn't know what to say anymore. The academy was concerned for his safety, so it was hard for him to object to that. However, he actually needed a soul ring, and Wang Dong'er still wanted to monitor and investigate Wang Qiu'er.

Cai Mei'er pondered momentarily before saying, "Alright, let's do it this way. I will report this to Elder Xuan after I return to the Sea God's Island, and it should be fine as long as Elder Xuan agrees. Lexuan is leading this group, but if the two of you do participate in the end, we might have to add one or two more teachers to tag along."

They left Cai Mei'er's office, and Wang Dong'er couldn't help but laugh and comment, "See, you're now a VIP. The academy is making a big fuss about this, but it's not about me! It's clear that this is all about you."

Huo Yuhao laughed along and said, "Don't undervalue yourself. Don't forget that you're also the heir to the Clear Sky Sect, and the academy must ensure your safety as well. Dean Cai is trying to guard against surprises. We have been to the Great Star Dou Forest many times, and if we don't meet hundred-thousand year soul beasts, we will definitely be able to escape with our lives with our current cultivation."

They returned to the Sea God's Island, where they went straight to Bei Bei and Xu Sanshi's dorm.

They could hear the cacophony of laughter and banter as soon as they walked through the door.

"You have to treat everyone, Caitou. I wonder how a pretty flower like Xiao Xiao could have chosen you." Xu Sanshi's hearty laughter could be heard.

He Caitou didn't back down at all. "That's right, a pretty flower like Nannan has chosen to plant herself on a pile of shit like you. You shouldn't have walked away with him that day, Nannan! Look at him – he's so proud and happy that his eyes have almost grown to the top of his head."

Xu Sanshi was sprawled out inside the living room, while He Caitou was sitting on a chair not far from him, bickering with him. Jiang Nannan and Xiao Xiao were cleaning up the room on the other side, and they casually ignored the banter as they whispered into each other's ears.

"Second senior brother, third senior brother. Fourth senior sister, fifth senior sister!" Huo Yuhao called out the moment he walked in.

All four of them looked over, but the first person they looked at was Wang Dong'er.

Wang Dong'er evaded everyone's gazes and hid behind Huo Yuhao. "What are you looking at? Have you never seen me before?"

Xu Sanshi laughed out loud and said, "We've seen you before, but we only recognize Wang Dong, and not Wang Dong'er. Where's this pretty lady from? Come on out, let me tease you a little... Aiyo!"

"Your skin must be itchy," Jiang Nannan said as she withdrew the duster she had just whipped across Xu Sanshi's back.

Xu Sanshi hurriedly smiled at her and said, "Wang Dong has lied to us for so long, don't you think she deserves to be teased? I don't mean anything else, you're the only one I love in this entire world."

“Get lost.” Jiang Nannan kicked him angrily, and then circled behind Huo Yuhao and dragged Wang Dong’er out.

“You’re so beautiful, Dong’er. Everyone will fall in love with you when they see you! Why are you hiding?” Jiang Nannan laughed as she spoke softly.

Wang Dong’er lowered her head and said, “You’re mocking me too, fourth senior sister.”

Jiang Nannan said, “The truth has been revealed, and the two of you are truly fated. Love will be victorious in the end. What a fantastic outcome! You have to be nice to our Dong’er, Yuhao. She’s so pretty... if you are not nice to her, she might just run away, and you’re going to regret that.”

Huo Yuhao could only laugh along foolishly, and say nothing. No answer was better than him just keeping quiet and giving his silent consent.

Bei Bei’s voice could be heard from upstairs at this moment. “That must be Yuhao and Wang Dong’er! Alright, everyone’s here.”

Bei Bei came down from upstairs. He was still dressed like he had always been, and one couldn’t tell anything was different from his expression. However, everybody else’s expressions changed a little, and the three couples toned down their intimacy and affection.

There was still no news about Xiao Ya, even today. Everyone knew how painful Bei Bei’s heartache was, so nobody wanted to provoke him or upset him in that way.

Bei Bei walked down the stairs and came before everyone. “It’s been more than two years, and we’re all finally back together again. It hasn’t been easy! We have a few more months before the next season’s competition will begin. I know we are all very confident, but we cannot be too complacent and careless. We have to look down on our opponents as part of our strategy, but we have to be careful with our battle tactics. Come, let’s find a place to exercise a little. Everyone will take this chance to show each other how we have improved over the years.”

Xu Sanshi jumped to his feet and said, “I’m with Huo Yuhao and Nannan! You can pick the rest however you like.”

These two equally reputable prodigies would lead one team respectively during every one of their sparring sessions. Xu Sanshi didn’t forget to make the first move to gain the upper hand. Everyone had seen Huo Yuhao’s display of prowess during Sea God’s Fate, and his Spirit Eyes naturally provided extremely formidable support. The presence or absence of Huo Yuhao’s support would determine which side would win the fight.

Bei Bei snapped, “You think you’re clever? Let’s go, we’ll talk about it later.”

The inner courtyard students had a place set aside specifically for sparring; they didn’t have to go to the outer courtyard. They couldn’t be vying with the outer courtyard students for a sparring venue.

The inner courtyard’s venue for practice battles was located on a hill that was roughly a hundred meters high, near the eastern side of the Sea God’s Island.

The top of this hill seemed like it had been shaved and flattened. Besides the Sea God’s Pavilion itself, this was the highest location in the entire Sea God’s Island. There was a patch of flat irregular land on

the hilltop that was about a hundred meters in diameter. Tough but uneven granite of stunning durability was laid out over the ground. It was connected to the hill itself, and thus the flooring was exceptionally tough.

The inner courtyard had its own rules. If the inner courtyard's Sparring Arena was damaged or destroyed, whoever did it would be responsible for getting more granite and repairing it. For this reason, the inner courtyard students were quite careful when they sparred in this area, and they typically only came to this place to test out or demonstrate new soul skills. Everyone would rather leave the city if they wanted to spar properly.

When the seven of them climbed up to the inner courtyard's Sparring Arena, they realized to their surprise that there were already people there, even though people rarely came here.

There were four of them, and everyone knew one another.

Two people were having a practice battle. More accurately, one was chasing the other, while the other was trying to escape.

"Hey, are you even a man? All you know how to do is run! Can you fight me head-on?" Wu Ming exclaimed as she raised her hand and fired off a stream of Golden Crow Primordial Fire. A pillar of fire swept across the entire arena, and lightning sparkled as it nimbly evaded this attack...

Chu Qingtian's voice could be heard in response. "You want to talk about reason, eh? You're an assault-type soul master, and your Golden Crow Primordial Fire is not far from Ultimate Fire. I'm an agility-type soul master, so how can I face you head-on? If I make a go for it, then it won't be a practice battle anymore, but suicide. You can't murder your own husband, can you?"

"What husband? Are we married?"

The sparring pair were Chu Qingtian and Wu Ming. After Huo Yuhao and Wang Dong'er left the other day, the two of them also successfully completed the last segment, Eternal Love. With Wu Ming around, who would want to fight her for her man? That person would have been asking for trouble.

Wang Yan and Han Ruoruo were spectating on the other side. They watched Wu Ming and Chu Qingtian, and they smiled faintly from time to time while they occasionally glanced at each other, at which point their smiles would become a little warmer. It was apparent that they were having a good time together.

"Teacher Wang, senior sister Han!" Bei Bei took the lead as he greeted them both.

Wang Yan and Han Ruoruo naturally saw them as well, and they both stood up to greet everyone.

Han Ruoruo didn't have an obvious reaction, but Wang Yan began to feel a bit surreal. He knew the Shrek's Seven Monsters too well, after all, and the entire process of him courting and wooing Han Ruoruo had fallen into these little fellas' eyes.

But Wang Yan quickly returned to normal, however, and he asked with a subtle smile on his face, "Why are you guys here?"

Bei Bei said, "The competition is going to start, and everyone is here. We should take this chance to spar and practice, so we can all see how we have improved over the years. We can also take this chance to train our coordination and teamwork."

Wang Yan had a look of revelation on his face as he said, "Yes! Time really flies. It's been five years in the blink of an eye, and everyone has grown up. I still remember Huo Yuhao and Wang Dong were only this tall during the last competition." He gestured with his hand to show height as he spoke, and he turned towards Wang Dong'er. "I have only just found out that you are a girl, and you're so pretty. Did you know about this before, Yuhao, and you've been hiding it from us? Puppy love is not right."

Huo Yuhao blushed and forced a laugh as he said, "I'm also a victim!"

Wang Dong'er shot a glare in his direction and whispered, "How are you the victim?"

"Alright, you're the victim!" Huo Yuhao changed tack as quickly as he could.

Beside Wang Yan, Han Ruoruo was amused by their bickering as she laughed and said, "Don't forget about the Spirit that you're supposed to explain to everyone, Huo Yuhao."

Huo Yuhao replied, "Don't worry, senior sister. I've already reported the business with Spirits in detail to the Sea God's Pavilion, and I believe it won't take long before the inner courtyard disciples will be setting up for trials and experimentation. However, how it's going to be carried out exactly is still up to the academy. Dean Yan is directly responsible for this."

Wang Yan's eyes sparkled. "That's going to be a new topic for our curriculum. Dean Yan has told me to look for him tonight about this matter. That was an impressive innovation, Yuhao!"

Huo Yuhao chortled and said, "That has nothing to do with me, it's the academy's research. I'm just the first guinea pig." He had already thought this through. Since he had announced that he would give everything to do with Spirits to the academy, then the way he discussed it would also have to change. He would rather accord all research credit to the academy as a way of him giving back to the academy.

Wang Yan stared deeply into his eyes. He was the vice-head of Shrek Academy's Martial Soul Research Institute, and was extremely clear about what direction the academy's research had taken in recent years. However, he didn't question how Huo Yuhao had explained things.

On the other side, Wu Ming and Chu Qingtian stopped when they saw everyone. Chu Qingtian seemed like he was drenched with sweat, and he wore an expression as if he had been liberated while he walked over with Wu Ming.

[Chapter 224: Fighting Intent Surges During the Meeting of the Seven Monsters](#)

When Wu Ming saw Huo Yuhao and Wang Dong, her eyes brightened. "Oh, you two are here! You're here to practice for the competition, right? Come, come, come! Spar with me! I had a good time watching that fight on the Sea God's Lake! Let me experience the strength of your ice-type domain at close range. How about it?"

Han Ruoruo was a little annoyed as she said, "Ming'er, they just arrived. Can't you act more like a senior?"

Wu Ming just answered excitedly, "Sister Ruoruo, you don't know how great they were that day, even though they are young, they're worthy of respect! You should know Ling Luochen, if I'm not wrong. Under Ling Luochen's leadership, one Soul Emperor and four Soul Kings fought them. Guess what happened? Total suppression. The two of them suppressed the other five, who had no chance at all.

They overwhelmed them right from the start. Between them, one's a Soul King and the other's a Soul Emperor. Tell me, how can I not spar with them?"

Han Ruoruo hadn't stayed long enough to watch Huo Yuhao and Wang Dong'er's fight that day, but she had heard about what had ensued in that particular fight. And listening to Wu Ming's detailed description, she was also quite shocked.

Wang Yan was very familiar with Huo Yuhao and Wang Dong'er. But he hadn't mentioned them to her, even though he had been confiding a lot in Han Ruoruo over the past few days.

At this moment, Han Ruoruo demonstrated how sweet-tempered she was. She turned her attention to Wang Yan and gave him a probing look.

After two days of interaction, Wang Yan's love for Han Ruoruo had grown to an all time high. Why did he like Han Ruoruo in the first place? Through all these years, he had definitely had his chances to find a partner. However, his requirements were very demanding. The greatest thing he liked about Han Ruoruo was the chemistry between them. He could understand what she was thinking with just the look in her eyes, or a simple gesture.

Wang Yan laughed and replied, "It's fine to let them spar. Why don't all of you join? I don't think you know each other well. Let me give all of you a chance to officially get to know one another."

"The seven of them are Bei Bei, He Caitou, Xu Sanshi, Jiang Nannan, Xiao Xiao, Huo Yuhao, and Wang Dong'er. They entered the inner courtyard later than the three of you. However, they hold a title that I'm sure will make the three of you surprised. They were given the title of Shrek's Seven Monsters by the Sea God's Pavilion. This title will remain with them for life."

As Wang Yan said this, Han Ruoruo, Wu Ming and Chu Qingtian were all shocked. They looked at the seven of them with a differently now.

Shrek's Seven Monsters for life? What did that mean? The Sea God's Pavilion always adopted the principles of fairness and justice, and these seven were awarded such a prestigious title. Before the seven of them came around, this title had only belonged to the main competing members of the academy that took part in the Continental Advanced Soul Master Academy Soul Dueling Tournament each time around. After the tournament was over, these members could retain this title for five years before it was taken back before the next edition of the tournament.

Thus, they were extremely shocked when they heard from Wang Yan that the seven of them had been given this title for life.

Chu Qingtian was still fine with it, but Han Ruoruo and Wu Ming were once members of a team that had participated in the tournament. They were once holders of that same title, and thus they were well aware of how valuable this title was.

Wu Ming was a very direct person, so she couldn't help but ask, "What did they do? The academy..."

Wang Yan was very proud, and he replied, "Five years ago, they were all substitutes for the tournament. But before the tournament, something terrible happened. In a tragic event, one of the official team members was killed while pursuing an evil soul master. The rest were also injured to varying extents.

Eventually, only Ma Xiaotao, Ling Luo Chen, and Dai Yueheng competed with injuries. Besides the three of them, it was only Bei Bei and the other six."

Wu Ming lost her voice. "Don't tell me that they won the tournament even though they were just fifteen years old then?"

Han Ruoruo was calm as she replied, "If I'm not wrong, our academy was the champion during the last edition of the tournament, as always."

Wang Yan nodded and said, "She's right. During that tournament, they played the part of the main team, where not only did they obtain victory through their own abilities during the earlier rounds of the tournament, but they even gritted their teeth and emerged as the eventual champions in the later stages of the tournament. They didn't give up, and upheld our glory. They went through a lot, and brought home the title of champions. I was their teacher back then. The difficulties they went through can't be described with words."

After Huo Yuhao and the rest heard his words, they looked at each other, and their eyes once again burned with reminiscent passion. It was as if they had returned to the tournament and teamed up with one another once again. They had given their best in every round. Even when they sustained critical injuries, they still gave everything they had for Shrek's glory! It was too memorable!

Wang Yan continued, "When they obtained the title of champions, they were all hurt to varying extents. Some of them were even gravely injured. However, Shrek's glory was preserved. Eventually, the Sea God's Pavilion decided to award them the title of Shrek's Seven Monsters for life when they returned to the academy, after a conference was held. This matter is only known internally, but this glory belongs to them forever. If I don't remember wrongly, Xiao Xiao, Wang Dong'er, and Huo Yuhao were only twelve back then. Huo Yuhao only even had two rings then, but the three of them possess twin martial souls. That was why they were selected by the academy."

Wu Ming and Han Ruoruo looked at each other and saw the shock in each other's eyes. Those three had competed in the tournament at the age of twelve! Wasn't that a record? Furthermore, they didn't sound like they were sent to compete as substitutes. They really competed!

Wu Ming spoke up, "Teacher Wang, I should seek more advice from the few of them after what you've mentioned. Let's see how strong they are."

Wang Yan smiled and replied, "I would also like to see how much they've grown after five years. I won't be leading the team in the upcoming tournament, so I can only see their abilities now."

"Bei Bei, what do you guys think?"

Bei Bei smiled and replied, "It's our honor to receive your guidance. Teacher Wang, how do you think this sparring should be carried out?"

After pondering for a moment, Wang Yan said, "In terms of raw ability, Ruoruo and Wu Ming have a definite advantage over you guys. Don't think that the seven of you have an advantage just because you outnumber them. Ruoruo is a control-type Soul Douluo, and her control abilities are extremely strong. Let's do it this way. Ruoruo, Wu Ming, Qingtian, the three of you can fight together. Bei Bei, the seven of you can team up together. What do you think?"

Bei Bei laughed bitterly. “Senior Han is also fighting? That puts a lot of pressure on us!”

Han Ruoruo was an eight-ringed Soul Douluo. Furthermore, she wasn’t some lowly soul master, but a tried and true Soul Douluo from the inner courtyard of Shrek Academy! She wouldn’t be at a disadvantage even against any ordinary Titled Douluo. Among the inner courtyard students, Han Ruoruo was the strongest apart from Zhang Lexuan. She was even recognized as the best at control in the inner courtyard. She had once competed in the Continental Advanced Soul Master Academy Soul Dueling Tournament with Zhang Lexuan, and her current status in the academy was definitely not inferior to Wang Yan, an inner courtyard teacher.

The strongest among the current Shrek’s Seven Monsters was only a six-ringed Soul Emperor. While it was seven versus three, the opposing party had a Soul Douluo, a Soul Sage, and a Soul Emperor. They weren’t easy opponents to deal with!

Wang Yan smiled and said, “How can we test how your cultivations have improved without any pressure? It’s only a spar. Why? Are you claiming that you’re really weaker?”

Bei Bei laughed and turned to his compatriots. He saw the burning will to compete in their eyes. Wang Yan’s words hadn’t been just to shock Ruoruo, Wu Ming, and Chu Qingtian. At the same time, they had reminded Shrek’s Seven Monsters of their memories together.

Eight-ringed Soul Douluo? Does that mean we can’t win against them?

“Alright, let’s give it a try. Seniors, please show mercy on us.” Bei Bei said to Wang Yan as he smiled.

Wang Yan replied, “Alright, I’ll be the referee then. Remember to stop when I call for it.”

“Yes.” The seven of them acknowledged his words politely at the same time, demonstrating their respect for Wang Yan.

Wang Yan turned to Han Ruoruo, and she nodded at him. From the look in her eyes, he could tell that she understood him.

Wu Ming was already raring to go. “Come on, come on, let’s fight.”

Wang Yan said, “Although it’s only a spar, it must be slightly formal. Please retreat to either side of the arena. I’ll give both parties three minutes to discuss your team strategy before the sparring begins.”

Wu Ming wanted to say something else, but she was stopped by Han Ruoruo. She dragged Chu Qingtian with her as they moved back. Chu Qingtian’s lethargic look seemed to have disappeared at this point. He was a little eager now, too. It was evident that his prior lethargy had been an act. However, Wu Ming was too excited now, and didn’t notice his change.

Both parties retreated to their positions. Bei Bei and the rest moved to the left of the arena. Han Ruoruo, Wu Ming, and Chu Qingtian retreated to the right of the arena.

Bei Bei immediately arranged a set-up as he looked at his compatriots.

“Sanshi, the two of us will be at the front. Nannan will react from one side. He Caitou will be located in the center to send out long-range attacks. Xiao Xiao, you’ll be in charge of helping the rest and providing

control along with Yuhao. Dong'er, you'll team up with Yuhao to react to any changes. Yuhao, you'll be the main controller. You'll guide us all in the arena. Does everyone understand the plan?"

Even though it had been two years since they had last teamed up together, their chemistry hadn't waned. This was especially evident as they were all eager to fight together. The young and inexperienced often lacked fear. Against a senior who was a Soul Douluo, it wasn't embarrassing even if they lost! Moreover, they were more likely to show their true abilities under pressure. Challenging Han Ruoruo and the other two was much more beneficial for them than fighting each other, and they could also practice all together.

As they spoke, the seven of them were already lining up in their formation.

Bei Bei and Xu Sanshi were in front. Jiang Nannan was to the right and slightly behind them. He Caitou was in the middle further behind. Xiao Xiao, Huo Yuhao, and Wang Dong formed one line with Huo Yuhao in the center. He was already holding Wang Dong'er's hand at this point.

This wasn't a very neat formation, but they looked mighty as they stood in their positions.

When Han Ruoruo and the other two turned their attention to the seven of them, they didn't see seven people, but a single entity. It was a complete unit.

Wu Ming was already ready to fight, and she leapt excitedly to the front. Chu Qingtian followed beside and slightly behind her, doing what Jiang Nannan did. This was the most common spot adopted by an agility-type soul master. Han Ruoruo stood at the back. The three of them formed a simple, yet effective formation.

Seeing that both parties were ready, Wang Yan shouted, "Both parties, please get ready."

Suddenly, the soul rings from both parties started to rise. Blinding light started to illuminate their surroundings, and intense undulations of soul power caused the air above the Sparring Arena to distort.

At this point, the differences in their cultivations became evident. While there were only three people on Han Ruoruo's side, their aura was far more overwhelming.

Han Ruoruo only stood silently in place, but she gave everyone the feeling that she was the anchor of the team. Her eyes started to shine brightly. She didn't look at Bei Bei and Xu Sanshi, but turned her attention directly to Huo Yuhao.

Huo Yuhao only felt a strong spiritual pressure approaching him. He could clearly tell that Han Ruoruo was locking onto him.

Yes, she was locking onto him. She wasn't locking onto him using a soul skill, just with her spirit. Only a control-type soul master who was at least a Soul Sage could perform such a Spiritual Lock.

Under the effect of this Spiritual Lock? she was able to accurately predict her opponent's moves and exert immense spiritual pressure on her opponent's spiritual sea. This helped her suppress her opponent. When there was a huge gap in cultivation, the effect of her Spiritual Lock was even greater. Not only did it restrict her opponents, but she could even enhance the results of her own abilities.

Of course, it wasn't without any limitations. Once she used her Spiritual Lock, it also meant that her main target was Huo Yuhao. He would become her sole priority.

A control-type soul master against a control-type soul master. When one side was outnumbered, it was best for them to target the control-type soul master on the opposing side first. As a top-ranked student in the inner courtyard, Han Ruoruo's abilities were undoubtedly outstanding.

However, Huo Yuhao wouldn't have been specially promoted to membership in the Sea God's Pavilion if he were that easy to deal with.

[Chapter 225.1: Golden Crow True Body](#)

Huo Yuhao's eyes shone with golden light as he faced the immense spiritual pressure placed on him by Han Ruoruo. A layer of golden light soon engulfed his entire body.

When the golden light shone, a dim golden fog also rose from his body.

"What?" Han Ruoruo exclaimed slightly. She was stunned to discover that her Spiritual Lock had lost its effect, or rather, it had been isolated. She hadn't expected such a thing to occur, especially considering that she had eight rings and was facing a five-ringed opponent.

"Ming'er, be careful. Huo Yuhao's spiritual cultivation isn't below mine. How could his spiritual power be so strong?"

Just as Han Ruoruo was becoming perplexed, Wang Yan watched as both parties unleashed their martial souls. He shouted, "Begin!"

Both parties acted immediately. Wu Ming was the fastest. As she tipped her toes to the ground, she leapt forward. Her Golden Crow Primordial Fire was unleashed, and intense sparks started to illuminate the entire arena. Han Ruoruo and Chu Qingtian were completely concealed by the sparks.

As she shouted and burst forward, she pointed her right hand toward the sky. Her fourth soul ring shone brightly, and a ruby ball of light the size of a longan shot into the sky.

This ball of light was very small when it appeared, but it grew continuously as it ascended. When it was thirty meters from the ground, it had already grown to the size of a head. After this, it started to crash down towards Shrek's Seven Monsters like a meteorite.

Shrek's Seven Monsters were mostly unfamiliar with Wu Ming's soul skills. Xu Sanshi took a step forward and lifted his Shield of the Xuanming Turtle up high, preparing to resist Wu Ming's attack.

Ripples spread out across the pitch-black shield. Among Shrek's Seven Monsters, Huo Yuhao was an ice-type, while Xu Sanshi was truly water-type. His defense didn't just possess the resilience of his shield, but also the gentleness of water. At least in terms of element, his shield wasn't inferior to the Golden Crow Primordial Fire.

However, something weird suddenly occurred. The scarlet-red fireball that was moving extremely quickly stopped in the air just as it was about to crash against the shield. After that, it made a turn and glided past it. It seemed to sweep past Bei Bei, Xu Sanshi and Jiang Nannan, and started to crash down towards He Caitou at the center of the formation.

Her control over this soul skill was immaculate. If Wu Ming only attacked with brute force, how would she be able to reign with terror in the inner courtyard? She was truly capable.

Even with Huo Yuhao's Spiritual Detection, he could only judge that Wu Ming was controlling her soul skill. However, he didn't know what transformation was going to happen to her soul skill.

Wu Ming revealed a smile on her face. Her fourth soul skill was called the Golden Crow Primordial Fire Ring. Once it blew apart in the center of the opponents' formation, it would cause a tremendous impact and scorching effect. Even if it couldn't harm them, it could at least destroy their formation and separate them. Once their formation was disrupted, they could be dealt with individually using Han Ruoruo's control.

In such a perilous situation, Shrek's Seven Monsters were indeed quite frantic. After all, the seven of them hadn't teamed up with one another for more than two years. All seven of them wanted to attack at the same time, but they were lacking slightly in chemistry.

However, this lack of cooperation could be made up for using their capabilities.

Xiao Xiao shouted, "Let me handle it!"

Chemistry was built on trust. When she shouted this, the rest of the six didn't bother with the Golden Crow Primordial Fire Ring and continued to burst forward.

A ball of black light appeared just as the Golden Crow Primordial Fire Ring crashed down. It was a huge cauldron.

The cauldron was around one-and-a-half meters high, one-and-a-half meters across, and it was as heavy as a mountain.

From the looks of it, the Golden Crow Primordial Fire Ring was going to crash into this cauldron. Its strength was undoubtedly going to be contained by it.

However, Wu Ming controlled her soul skill again.

The crashing Golden Crow Primordial Fire Ring moved three inches laterally before it continued to descend.

This was the second shift of her soul skill. As a Soul Sage from Shrek Academy, Wu Ming's spiritual power was superior to most other ordinary Soul Sages.

However, her smile froze just as she revealed it on her face.

The cauldron divided into three components just as the Golden Crow Primordial Fire Ring moved. Wu Ming's control was limited, and so, her ring landed in one of the cauldrons.

Huo Yuhao's Spiritual Detection couldn't judge how Wu Ming was going to control her soul skill, but he could accurately grasp the timing of her actions.

Xiao Xiao's Threelives Soulcrush Cauldron divided at that timing, and the Golden Crow Primordial Fire Ring was caught in one of them.

A loud boom resonated from the Threelives Soulcrush Cauldron, and the entire cauldron turned golden-red. But no heat seeped out because Xiao Xiao contained Wu Ming's soul skill completely. It wasn't just one cauldron that turned red; all three changed color at the same time. The attack's was distributed

evenly across all three cauldrons. Although Wu Ming's cultivation was far superior to Xiao Xiao's, it wasn't easy for her to overcome the Threelives Soulcrush Cauldron.

Xiao Xiao's expression changed slightly before it returned to normal. As long as the Threelives Soulcrush Cauldron wasn't destroyed, only her soul power would be depleted. She wouldn't be hurt.

She was delayed for a moment, however, and thus was now slightly behind Huo Yuhao and Wang Dong'er. She pointed her fingers at the three cauldrons, and they started to revolve rapidly. The golden-red color emanating from the cauldrons also started to quickly disappear.

Wu Ming's name was built on her offense. She was shocked that her fourth soul skill was resisted so easily. However, she didn't stop given her wealth of experience.

As she lifted her right hand, her second soul ring started to shine brightly. A golden-red flame started to dance above her palm. In the next instant, an intense golden-red spark started to burn around her body, bathing the entire Sparring Arena in a golden-red light.

This was Wu Ming's second soul skill—Golden Crow Primordial Fire Combustion!

Both parties were now only a hundred meters apart. After the initial attack, the gap between both parties had been pulled closer.

Bei Bei and Xu Sanshi didn't rush forward recklessly. They maintained their formation with the rest behind them. From the side, Jiang Nannan had vanished directly behind Xu Sanshi. She couldn't be located anymore.

On their side, the agility-type soul master had disappeared behind their defense-type soul master. On their opponent's side, Chu Qingtian also hid behind Wu Ming.

Wu Ming clasped her hands in front of her. Since her soul skills wouldn't work, she changed her strategy. A beam of golden-red fire instantly shot out from her hands. This beam of fire was almost a meter across, and shot straight towards Shrek's Seven Monsters. It was a direct confrontation.

At this point, Huo Yuhao finally made his move. He quickly took a step forward, coming beside He Caitou. Bei Bei and Xu Sanshi moved to either side of him.

With Huo Yuhao's Spiritual Detection, they didn't need to rely on sound to warn one another. The entire process proceeded smoothly, and their cohesion was great.

An azure-green light started to shine from Huo Yuhao's chest and belly. In the next moment, a huge beam of azure-green light shot out towards Wu Ming's first soul skill, the Golden Crow Primordial Fire.

While it was only Wu Ming's first soul skill, it was enhanced by her second soul skill. As both soul skills complemented each other, the air seemed to be scorched as the golden-red beam of fire passed. The air started to distort, and revealed ripple-like patterns.

However, this was the complete opposite of what was happening on Huo Yuhao's side. The azure-green beam of light caused all the heat to be replaced with a chill. His attack clashed directly with the Golden Crow Primordial Fire.

It was the Ice Empress' Wrath.

This was once Huo Yuhao's strongest soul skills, and it was still very effective now. Under the effect of his Haodong Power and with help from Wang Dong'er, the depletion of his soul power was negligible.

The contrasting beams of light clashed together in the air. This was also the first direct clash of abilities.

Dense fog started to diffuse from the center of the collision. A piercing sound reverberated, and the two beams of light were destroyed at the same time. Neither party gained an advantage.

"Impressive. It earns its name as the Ultimate Ice!" Wu Ming shouted as she jumped up high. A pair of golden-red wings flapped open behind her back. Her martial soul was the Golden Crow, and possessed flying abilities. It wasn't a soul skill or soul tool.

The Golden Crow Primordial Fire continued to be unleashed. As she flew into the air, a streak of dim-golden light also flashed across. It was unleashed quickly beneath her feet towards Shrek's Seven Monsters—Han Ruoruo had finally acted.

When Han Ruoruo made her move, all seven of her foes turned serious. She was an eight-ringed Soul Douluo, the strongest opponent they had ever faced.

Han Ruoruo's first soul ring lit up, and the streak of golden light that came from it was like a golden line that stretched into infinity. It was like a spiritual snake that slithered forward. After it flashed beneath Wu Ming's feet, it reached Bei Bei and Xu Sanshi in the next moment. This was Han Ruoruo's control-type soul, the Dazzling Golden Rope.

The Dazzling Golden Rope was like living matter, and started to quiver towards both sides. At the same time, two golden rings arced out towards Bei Bei and Xu Sanshi.

Bei Bei pressed his hands down, and two Thunderous Dragon Claws were unleashed.

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Amidst reverberating booms, two huge claw prints were left behind on the granite layering the ground as the Thunderous Dragon Claws struck. However, the Dazzling Golden Rope twisted slightly before it managed to circle around them. It seemed to have eyes. At the same time, its speed didn't drop at all as it continued to loop towards Bei Bei and Xu Sanshi.

Huo Yuhao made a move again. He didn't know how strong a control-type Soul Douluo was, but he was certain that this sparring would end if he allowed Han Ruoruo to gain the upper hand.

A purple light flashed across Huo Yuhao's eyes. Han Ruoruo's body jerked slightly, and she took a step back. Her Dazzling Golden Rope was also retracted, and arced out in a huge golden ring in the air.

Yes, it was Huo Yuhao's Spiritual Shock – one of the few offensive soul skills of his Spirit Eyes.

A main control-type soul master against another main control-type soul master. Huo Yuhao managed to gain a slight advantage over Han Ruoruo as she was caught off-guard.

However, her spiritual power was indeed strong. Although she was a little lost for a moment, her eyes then started to shine brightly.

A dim silvery glow shot out of her eyes, engulfing her entire body. It was yet another embodiment of her spiritual power, although it was a different color. When this layer of silvery spiritual power flowed out, Huo Yuhao felt as if she were unstoppable.

However, he had still managed to buy some time for the rest. As Han Ruoruo's Dazzling Golden Rope was restricted, Shrek's Seven Monsters unleashed their full powers.

Xu Sanshi was the first to make a move. He took a big step forward, and his shield lit up with a weird black glow. In the next instant, he flew into the air. Wu Ming was about to unleash a strike towards him when he suddenly disappeared. Xu Sanshi was displaced to her position.

Mysterious Underworld Displacement. This was the soul skill that stole the limelight during the last edition of the Continental Advanced Soul Master Academy Soul Dueling Tournament.

The most unique trait of this Mysterious Underworld Displacement was its element of surprise. If caught off-guard by it, it was impossible to break free once one was locked on. That was why it became one of Xu Sanshi's strongest soul skill as a defense-type soul master. For defense-type soul masters, this was a divine skill. At certain times, the Mysterious Underworld Displacement could change the outcome of a situation entirely. Unless the opponent's soul and spiritual power were completely overwhelming his, his Mysterious Underworld Displacement would never fail.

Even though Wu Ming was a Soul Sage, Xu Sanshi was a Soul Emperor! He wouldn't have any confidence if he used it against Han Ruoruo, but it shouldn't be resisted easily by Wu Ming, considering her cultivation.

As he was displaced, Xu Sanshi faced Chu Qingtian.

Chu Qingtian saw a sly smile on his face before gloomy clouds starting to appear.

The shield formed a Shield Wall. Following this, a huge illusory projection of a Xuanwu surfaced. In the next instant, the Shield Wall had converted into the shape of a turtle shell. It had a diameter of over ten meters, and it started to crash down towards Chu Qingtian.

The terrifying thing was that Chu Qingtian felt as if there were a black whirlpool in the center of the shield. A strong suction force was unleashed from this whirlpool, dragging his body towards it, and causing his speed to fall tremendously.

Right now, more than one of Xu Sanshi's soul rings had lit up. Besides his second soul ring, his pitch-black fifth soul ring was also shining.

His fifth soul skill was called Turtle God's Strike. This soul skill was different in that it couldn't be used on its own. This also meant that Xu Sanshi's fifth soul skill was ineffective if it was used without any other soul skills. It needed to coordinate with his second skill. He could only complete this blow by using the soul power needed to unleash these two soul skills at once.

However, it was also because of this that this blow was very strong. If not for the fact that Xu Sanshi had the Xuanwu's blood lineage in his martial soul, it couldn't have been so strong.

Wu Ming was also in a crisis on the other side.

When Xu Sanshi struck, Bei Bei also burst forward. However, he turned back immediately after bursting a few meters out. Jiang Nannan did almost exactly the same thing as him, whereas Huo Yuhao, Wang Dong'er, Xiao Xiao and He Caitou completed an arc-shaped formation.

When Wu Ming was displaced, she was already completely surrounded by the six of them.

Wu Ming was in a daze as she was encircled. Shrek's Seven Monsters were familiar with such a strategy and coordination. Their chemistry hadn't seem to fall even after more than two years.

Huo Yuhao struck her just as Wu Ming landed. He unleashed the complete version of the Darkgolden Terrorclaws supported by the Ice Empress' Pincer.

Xiao Xiao changed to her second martial soul, the Ninephoenix Worshipping Flute. Even though it only had one soul ring, her soul power was much superior to before. The pleasant sounds of the flute caused Wu Ming to feel dizzy, and her speed dropped significantly.

Bei Bei let out a huge amount of electricity. As the Vigorous Thunderbolt was unleashed, it turned into an electric web that engulfed her.

Wang Dong'er flapped her wings, and the Light of the Butterfly Goddess flowed towards Wu Ming. A huge amount of golden light started to flood her body.

Four out of the six attacked. Only Jiang Nannan and He Caitou remained where they were. Jiang Nannan was waiting for an opportunity, whereas He Caitou was lifting a heavy cannon to his shoulder. His target was Han Ruoruo. An intense red light flashed, and a huge ball of red light shot out into the air towards Han Ruoruo.

This was a Class 6 high-power cannon shell. This kind of high-power cannon shell was extremely explosive and fiery. It could only be fired by a Class 6 high-power soul cannon, and even then, it could only be fired three times consecutively. The Class 6 high-powered soul cannon could only be used again after a two hour cooldown period, otherwise it might overheat and explode. Its offensive strength was one of the best among Class 6 soul tools.

Moreover, He Caitou still had Huo Yuhao's Spiritual Detection to guide him. He didn't need to worry about his accuracy.

Shrek's Seven Monsters were spiritually connected at this point. Xu Sanshi had flown out and used his strong domain-type soul skill. He didn't just want to stop Chu Qingtian; he also wanted to trap Han Ruoruo. Along with He Caitou's cannon shell, their aim was not to kill or hurt their opponents. Rather, they wanted to delay Han Ruoruo and Chu Qingtian's assistance to Wu Ming.

On the other side, the four of them teamed up to attack Wu Ming. However, Wu Ming wasn't easy to deal with.

At such a critical moment, Wu Ming demonstrated her outstanding abilities.

Her seventh soul ring lit up at this point. Instantly, she turned into a fiery golden-red lady. She let out a sonorous whistle, and her wings flapped to propel her upwards. She clashed with Huo Yuhao's Darkgolden Terrorclaws.

As reverberating booms sounded, the granite under Wu Ming's feet started to crack. However, she had first managed to resist the delay that the Ninephoenix Worshipping Flute had imposed on her as she unleashed her Golden Crow True Body. Bei Bei's Vigorous Thunderbolt was also resisted by the Golden Crow True Body.

As the Light of the Butterfly Goddess landed on the Golden Crow True Body, it caused huge ripples to surface. However, it couldn't force Wu Ming back. Only the Darkgolden Terrorclaws had some effect on her.

Yes, this was her Martial Soul True Body! A powerful skill that only a Soul Sage possessed.

Huo Yuhao and Wang Dong'er had once faced Zhao Yang's Martial Soul True Body. His Violet Goldbear had left a deep impression on them. But at this point, they realized the true terror of a Martial Soul True Body as Wu Ming unleashed her Golden Crow True Body.

Wu Ming's aura soared, and her scorching Golden Crow Primordial Fire forced Bei Bei and Jiang Nannan to retreat a few steps.

Even as she withstood the attacks of several soul skills, she wasn't at a disadvantage. Although she was surrounded, she seemed to be counterattacking.

"Open up!" Wu Ming shouted as she revealed her strong side. Her third soul ring lit up, and she pressed her hands downward.

She was about to unleash her third soul skill, the Golden Crow Primordial Fire Explosion. It was a soul skill that caused immense destruction, and was most suitable to be used when one was trapped.

However, Jiang Nannan started to act at this point.

As she leapt into the air, she had already arrived behind Wu Ming. A dark-golden glow lit up on her body.

Wu Ming was very confident in her Golden Crow True Body, and thus didn't bother with Jiang Nannan at all. She believed that she wouldn't be hurt even if Jiang Nannan struck her, since she only possessed a five-ringed cultivation. As her Golden Crow Primordial Fire Explosion was about to erupt, the six of them were definitely going to be blown apart. Their encirclement would also be overcome, and it would be time to chase victory once she was freed.

However, Wu Ming felt something amiss as Jiang Nannan stuck close to her.

The heat from the Golden Crow Primordial Fire was useless against Jiang Nannan. She didn't attack either, but only stuck close to Wu Ming. Her hands and even legs were wrapped around her. The dark-golden glow turned into an intense bright gold. After this, Wu Ming's third soul ring was extinguished. The Golden Crow Primordial Fire Explosion wasn't unleashed...

Jiang Nannan's fourth and fifth soul rings shone. Yes, it was the result of her fourth soul skill, Invincible Golden Body, and her fifth soul skill, Soft Bone Lock.

The defensive strength of the Invincible Golden Body had increased greatly, but it still only lasted for a few seconds. As her cultivation increased, it was currently able to last for seven seconds. The Soft Bone

Lock could also seal all non-Martial Soul True Body soul skills once the opponent was locked on, at the cost of her mobility.

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Due to the gap in their abilities, Jiang Nannan couldn't possibly stay on Wu Ming forever. After all, the Golden Crow Primordial Fire would burn her once her Invincible Golden Body disappeared.

As a result, the Golden Crow Primordial Fire Combustion and Golden Crow Primordial Fire Explosion that Wu Ming was going to unleash were sealed even though her Martial Soul True Body was still on display. Jiang Nannan was fighting for this little bit of time for the rest.

An orange-gold figure flew out from Huo Yuhao's body at this point. In the next moment, Huo Yuhao arrived in front of Wu Ming. He gently tapped her shoulder. At the same time, Huo Yuhao's Ice Jade Empress Scorpion's third soul ring and the second of his four orange-gold soul rings lit up.

Jiang Nannan disappeared as Huo Yuhao tapped Wu Ming's shoulder. Her third soul skill helped her to escape after she bought enough time for Huo Yuhao.

His palm was gentle, as well as smooth and spotless.

As his palm struck Wu Ming's shoulder, her entire body started to tremble. The Golden Crow Primordial Fire that had broken free from the restraint of the Soft Bone Lock was instantly extinguished, as if a basin of ice water had been poured over it. Wu Ming's body also froze. The golden-red faded from her body, and her Golden Crow True Body seemed to have been dissipated by Huo Yuhao's gentle palm.

Empress' Palm! Snowless Glacier.

Niu Tian had once mentioned that the only way to avoid the Snowless Glacier was to avoid being struck by it. The Empress' Palm had to make contact before it could take effect.

Considering his status as the Clear Sky Sect's sect master, his appraisal of the Snow Empress' Snow Glacier showed how strong it was.

Sword and Palm sends the sky into a Chill, the Empress' Sword, Palm, and Chill. Among these three soul skills, the Empress' Palm was ranked second. However, it was the strongest among the three in terms of its direct offensive strength. After fusing with the Snow Empress' Spirit, Huo Yuhao no longer possessed Ultimate Ice, but Ultimate Ice and Snow. Among all cold-type soul masters, no one could compare to him.

Even without the enhancement of the Snowy Dance of Ultimate Ice, Huo Yuhao's Snowless Glacier still managed to achieve a temperature of absolute zero. While the Golden Crow True Body was very strong, the strength of Huo Yuhao's Snowless Glacier was still exhibited as it struck at such a close distance.

Wu Ming felt her shoulder turning numb as it was hit. In the next moment, she discovered that her soul power seemed to have solidified. Her Martial Soul True Body disintegrated instantly, and her entire right arm went numb. A lukewarm feeling started to gush from her shoulder to the rest of her body.

Yes, it was a lukewarm feeling. However, it gave her chills! Reversal!

Even though Huo Yuhao's palm wasn't enhanced by the Sovereign's Descent, it still managed to surprisingly turn the chill into a warm feeling.

After Huo Yuhao struck Wu Ming, he also felt something amiss, and pressed his palm down again. As the warm flow returned to his body, both he and the Snow Lady started to shine with bright orange light.

The attack was absorbed back into Huo Yuhao. Not only was his soul power restored, but even the Snow Lady benefited greatly.

Wu Ming unleashed her Golden Crow Primordial Fire once again, but her face had turned pale-white.

She didn't know if she would have survived if Huo Yuhao hadn't absorbed the warm flow in time. However, she knew that it had been gushing towards her heart.

What soul skill was that?

Wu Ming was stunned. The rest of Shrek's Seven Monsters didn't continue to attack her after they were informed by Huo Yuhao's Spiritual Detection. However, the sparring still continued.

Just as Wu Ming was struck by the Snowless Glacier, Xu Sanshi also ran into trouble...

Chu Qingtian couldn't handle the Turtle God's Strike, and was forced back. However, there was still Han Ruoruo behind him.

Han Ruoruo lifted her hand as she faced the Turtle God's Strike and He Caitou's high-power cannon shell. A golden ring light was unleashed with her body in the center.

She didn't rush to save Wu Ming, as she knew Wu Ming well, and had absolute confidence in her. Han Ruoruo believed that Shrek's Seven Monsters couldn't defeat Wu Ming easily since she had unleashed her Martial Soul True Body, even if they encircled her. Xu Sanshi didn't have to bother helping them defeat her either.

The golden ring looked very simple, as if it were a thick arm. It had a diameter of around five meters. However, a shocking scene appeared when the golden ring collided with the Turtle God's Strike and He Caitou's high-power cannon shell.

"Boom, boom..."

Two loud booms sounded at the same time. The first to blow apart was the high-power cannon shell. He Caitou chose to fire at this timing in order to coordinate with Xu Sanshi. As an advanced-level soul engineer, he had great awareness. In addition, he had Huo Yuhao's help.

However, the golden ring appeared to be impregnable.

The terrifying impact generated by the high-power cannon shell affected the entire Sparring Arena. A mushroom fog rose over the entire arena, but Han Ruoruo didn't move a single step. The golden ring only shook slightly before it collided with the Turtle God's Strike.

The Turtle God's Strike was a combination of two soul skills, and was even unleashed by Xu Sanshi, who possessed the Xuanwu's blood lineage. As it collided with the golden ring, it created an intense

whirlpool that generated a suction force. This whirlpool wasn't simple – the suction force could continuously deplete the opponent's soul power.

However, the golden ring suddenly divided into three when the Turtle God's Strike collided with it. They intersected and connected together. As a buzz sounded, they started to be pulled in three different directions.

The instant they collided, and as the boom from their collision reverberated, the Turtle God's Strike was overcome and converted into countless projections of shields. Eventually, it returned to Xu Sanshi's shield.

Xu Sanshi cursed, but before he could react further, a streak of golden light had already entangled him. No matter how he tried to struggle and resist with his shield, the Dazzling Golden Rope still dragged him down. He was restrained like a dumpling.

Chu Qingtian couldn't give up such a perfect opportunity. He snuck up behind Xu Sanshi, and a panther projection formed by lightning shone brightly before striking Xu Sanshi's body forcefully. Suddenly, Xu Sanshi's body started to flash with lightning. He appeared to be convulsing.

As Han Ruoruo flung her right hand, Xu Sanshi was thrown forward. Wang Yan made his judgment – Xu Sanshi had been eliminated.

This was the first time the Shrek's Seven Monsters' attack had ever been stopped once the Mysterious Underworld Displacement was used. Xu Sanshi didn't stand a chance against Han Ruoruo. The rest also started to feel that the Dazzling Golden Rope was going to be difficult to deal with.

The rope could loosen, tighten, whip and block. When it tangled, it was flexible. However, it seemed indestructible when it tightened.

Han Ruoruo controlled her martial soul very well. Xu Sanshi was defeated before he could unleash his full strength. Although that was partly due to the fact that Han Ruoruo's martial soul was very effective at curbing Xu Sanshi, it was also undeniable that the gap in their cultivations played a huge part in his defeat.

Shrek's Seven Monsters were stunned, but Han Ruoruo was also shocked. She had defeated Xu Sanshi in the shortest time possible. However, she was appalled to discover that the rest of the six were rushing towards her, while Wu Ming didn't move from her spot. What did it mean for the six of them to turn their backs on her? It meant that she had been defeated.

So quickly? Ming'er only just showed her Golden Crow True Body! At the same time as she was puzzled, she also became warier. Her eyes turned fiercer, and she snorted. The Dazzling Golden Rope struck forward towards the six of them. She was aiming for Huo Yuhao.

He Caitou, who was in front of the rest, suddenly stopped. A crisp, clanging sound rang out as he stood firmly rooted to the ground.

A circular metal disc appeared beneath his feet. The bottom of the disc was conical, and stabbed right into the granite below. He Caitou stood above this disc. Following this, a large number of soul tools started to combine with his body. In a matter of seconds, he had become a metal monster with countless barrels pointing outwards, all aimed at Han Ruoruo.

Among Shrek's Seven Monsters, who had the greatest abilities? In terms of explosiveness, it wasn't Bei Bei, Xu Sanshi, Huo Yuhao or Wang Dong'er. It was He Caitou.

He Caitou was already a Class 7 soul engineer, which was equivalent to a Soul Sage! Although a Class 7 soul engineer was still some way off from a Soul Sage's Martial Soul True Body, the gap was still within the same level.

After five years, He Caitou once again used a soul tool fort strategy. However, it was on a different level compared to five years ago.

He lifted a huge, heavy dark-gold cannon that was more than two-and-a-half meters long onto his shoulder. He used the rest of his soul tools to support the weight of this cannon. When the cannon was unleashed, even Han Ruoruo felt a chill down her spine.

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Other than this heavy cannon, He Caitou looked just like a steel porcupine, as uncountable cannon barrels emerged all over his body. He was practically a metal monster! He Caitou's entire body was completely covered by this soul tool fortress.

He Caitou and Huo Yuhao were the only soul engineers among the Shrek's Seven Monsters. Huo Yuhao was both a soul engineer and a soul master, while He Caitou was a pure soul engineer. Most of the time, Huo Yuhao was far too outstanding, to the point where he would steal all the limelight away from He Caitou. However, He Caitou had been working hard this whole time, and had been able to casually focus on his own cultivation and research with Huo Yuhao's halo masking him. His improvements and advancements with soul tools over the past two years in the Sun Moon Imperial Soul Engineering Academy were definitely comparable to Huo Yuhao's.

The other five immediately separated, and He Caitou was all by himself as his body flickered before countless beams of light erupted and went straight for Han Ruoruo.

Wang Yan was the referee, but even his jaw hung slack at this moment. This explosive attack from He Caitou is way too powerful!

Han Ruoruo could feel the imminent threat from her opponent acutely. She finally chose to avoid meeting this force head-on, and opted to evade this attack instead. The Dazzling Golden Rope that was soaring forward suddenly changed direction and plummeted downwards before it planted itself steadily onto the ground, while Han Ruoruo's shook her body subtly before she propelled herself away.

One could see from a distance that there was an enormous pillar of light surging forward like a shooting star somewhere high up on the Sea God's Island. This was the effect of He Caitou's soul tool fortress being used at full power. Juxtaposed with the disturbance caused by his explosive shell, the academy was finally riled up.

Everybody else began to move when He Caitou launched this attack. Xiao Xiao began to blow her Ninephoenix Worshipping Flute once more, and one soul ring sparkled on her body as light rippled outward. However, these circles weren't targeting Han Ruoruo, they were going for the Berserk Lightning Panther, Chu Qingtian, who was evading the attack on one side and currently watching He Caitou with a look of astonishment.

Chu Qingtian had truly been frightened. He was part of the Shrek Academy's inner courtyard, but this was the first time he had seen a high-level soul engineer's prowess.

Another person slunk out when He Caitou fired his attack... Jiang Nannan.

Jiang Nannan was an agility-type soul master, and her lean and slender thighs pushed off the ground and jumped more than ten meters horizontally. She arrived next to Chu Qingtian after another bounce.

Chu Qingtian was also an agility-type soul master, and he was even known as the fastest person in the inner courtyard, so his reaction wasn't slow at all. Even though Jiang Nannan had a weaker cultivation, he had already seen the Shrek's Seven Monsters' prowess, and he didn't dare to be complacent at all. His body image flashed as he attempted to escape the battlefield. He was still confident in his own speed.

However, a dash of golden light suddenly flickered across his eyes right at this moment, and another streak of white light flashed by immediately afterwards. His mind was instantly thrown into a complete blank, while everything around him became blurry. The sky around him seemed like it was spinning round and round, and his body had only just left the ground before he touched down once more.

Huo Yuhao's fourth soul ring was sparkling; it was his Spirit Eyes' fourth soul skill, Spiritual Confusion!

All Jiang Nannan needed was this little bit of time. Han Ruoruo had been forced away by He Caitou's assault, who had been positioned towards her right side. This forced Han Rourou to dodge towards the left, while Chu Qingtian was already on the right. This meant Han Rourou and Chu Qingtian were separated the moment He Caitou launched his attack.

Han Ruoruo knew that he was in trouble, but it was too late to help him. On the other side, Jiang Nannan had arrived right next to Chu Qingtian.

She planted her right foot on Chu Qingtian's abdomen and kicked Chu Qingtian's body until his back arched upwards. Jiang Nannan grabbed Chu Qingtian's shoulder immediately afterwards, while her soft and tender waist flipped backwards, tossing Chu Qingtian heavily onto the ground.

There was no need to see what happened next. Their cultivations were similar enough, and Chu Qingtian was disoriented because of Huo Yuhao's Spiritual Confusion. Jiang Nannan threw another right kick before she used Waist Bow and threw him into the air.

He Caitou's soul tool fortress rapidly turned towards him, terrifying Chu Qingtian, who had just recovered his senses.

Fortunately, this was just a practice battle. He Caitou's petrifying cannon barrels flickered once before they returned to normal.

Han Ruoruo had been forced backwards, but she responded immediately. Another golden soul ring sparkled as her elegant figure bounced off the ground, and circles of light waved outward. While she defended herself in every possible way, her Dazzling Golden Rope snaked with lightning speed towards Jiang Nannan and Chu Qingtian.

Providing aid to their compatriots was the most important role of control-type soul masters.

However, Huo Yuhao was also the main control-type soul master of his team. How could he give her this chance?

He channeled his Spiritual Confusion as he reached out with his right hand, and Wang Dong'er slid into his embrace. She hadn't been doing much throughout the entire battle.

An enormous eye with a vertical pupil and tinged with incredibly beautiful colors instantly appeared on the battlefield.

This vertical eye's brilliance was far too illustrious, to the point where Han Ruoruo couldn't ignore it. The alarm in her heart paused her forward momentum momentarily, and a golden road immediately stretched out before her. If she hadn't stopped in her tracks, then that golden road would have shone directly upon her.

The three-colored radiance flickered, and the dazzling Golden Road sprawled horizontally in front of her eyes.

The Golden Road didn't touch Han Ruoruo at all... but it struck her Dazzling Golden Rope!

The Dazzling Golden Rope's forward movement ceased, and it grew soft and slack, as if it had lost all vitality. It couldn't complete its rescue mission for Chu Qingtian. Thus, Wang Yan had already ruled Chu Qingtian out of the battle at this point. If He Caitou hadn't shown mercy, this Berserk Lightning Panther would have been cooked.

Shrek's Seven Monsters chose to divide and conquer even when they were seven versus three against a Soul Emperor, a Soul Sage, and a Soul Douluo, and their plan succeeded.

Even Han Ruoruo was unable to save her two comrades in time. Even though Xu Sanshi had been kicked out, this exchange of one for two was worth it for Shrek's Seven Monsters.

Han Ruoruo paused and stared at the five of them who were still maintaining their complete formation, and didn't prevent Jiang Nannan from jumping back to rejoin them.

She nodded softly and said, "It's no wonder the academy granted you all the title of Shrek's Seven Monsters for life. We were not nearly as powerful as you guys when we were your age. However, you guys are still young. Let me teach you a lesson."

She made this statement very casually, and there wasn't a tinge of outrageousness or arrogance in it at all. It felt as if it was a simple statement of fact, but immense pressure began to rise in the Shrek's Seven Monsters' hearts at this moment.

Han Ruoruo raised both arms at the same time, and silver light burst forth from her eyes again. The Dazzling Golden Rope spun around her petite frame rapidly, and began to dance.

The light became increasingly blurry, and Huo Yuhao realized to his shock that his Spiritual Detection couldn't reach her anymore, it couldn't pierce those golden circles. Han Ruoruo's Dazzling Golden Rope was charged with spiritual undulations; this was an effect obtained by fusing spiritual power and soul power together.

He Caitou's dark golden cannon barrel sparkled, and golden lights spurted continually. However, he had lost Huo Yuhao's Spiritual Detection lock-on, and thus wasn't so confident in his shot's accuracy anymore.

He was a Class 7 soul engineer, but he was ultimately still a Soul Emperor. The heavy cannon on his shoulder was a Class 7 soul tool, but one more blast would consume too much of his soul power, possibly more than it had in the previous strike.

A pale silver light covered Han Ruoruo's body, and she stared at Huo Yuhao meaningfully before she vanished entirely, along with the mix of gold and silver lights.

Countless Dazzling Golden Ropes that were both gold and silver erupted in all directions when she disappeared, blanketing the entire battlefield in an instant.

Circles of the same colors rapidly appeared on the ground, and bore towards Shrek's Seven Monsters with blinding speed.

The Dazzling Golden True Body! Faced with the pressure of Shrek's Seven Monsters, Han Ruoruo had finally used her martial soul true body.

This was also a martial soul true body, but the feeling she gave the six of them was vastly different from before. What was different? There was no longer a single target!

Wu Ming's martial soul true body was charged with high-temperature Golden Crow Primordial Fire, but her original body was still there. However, Han Ruoruo's Dazzling Golden True Body was similar to Chu Qingtian's Lightning Transformation; she transformed into innumerable Dazzling Golden Ropes, how were they supposed to assault them?

Bei Bei was the first to suffer.

Bei Bei planted his right foot heavily onto the ground when he realized things were going wrong, then he activated his Thunderous Dragon Head toward the ground. Large patches of lightning spread across the ground as he attempted to impede the Dazzling Golden True Body's advance.

However, his attack was completely futile. The Dazzling Golden True Body didn't even pause for a moment amongst the flickering streaks of lightning, and it continued to surge forward. A gold and silver circle of light soundlessly appeared beneath Bei Bei's feet, and a gold and silver beam of light rose into the sky immediately afterwards, sending Bei Bei flying through the air.

All his soul power and his soul skills were sealed once he was struck. He was completely wrapped up by the Dazzling Golden Rope once he was tossed into the sky.

Han Ruoruo didn't just use her Dazzling Golden True Body. She was their senior sister, and the arrogance and pride in her heart was triggered when Shrek's Seven Monsters displayed their prowess. She had also used her eighth and most powerful soul skill: Golden Skysurge.

This was an incredibly powerful domain-like soul skill that could be used on a group of targets or a single target!

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Jiang Nannan almost instantly followed Bei Bei's footsteps, and was hurled into the air.

Xiao Xiao had already laid down her Threelives Soulcrush Cauldron and attempted to shake off Han Ruoruo's Dazzling Golden True Body. However, her actions were to no avail as well, and both her and her Threelives Soulcrush Cauldron were sent into the sky.

Han Ruoruo had erupted with her seventh and eighth soul skills at the same time. She was a powerful Soul Douluo after all, and Shrek's Seven Monsters didn't stand a chance if she purely used her strength to overpower them.

Huo Yuhao had felt trouble coming the moment she made her move. He still couldn't find out where she was, since Han Ruoruo's spiritual power was comparable to his, and her soul power so much stronger, in addition to the fact that she was using her martial soul true body. Huo Yuhao needed a cultivation of at least seven soul rings to suppress her with spiritual power; anything else was impossible.

He stretched his arms into a circle and hugged Wang Dong'er while his eyes lit up at the same time. Another pair of huge dark blue eyes sparkled along with his.

The Snow Lady's petite frame instantly enlarged, and the Snow Empress' virtual projection appeared behind Huo Yuhao's back. The Sea God's Lake's water around the Sea God's Island began to ripple torrentially immediately afterwards.

The air grew moist as enormous snowflakes drifted down from the sky. Huo Yuhao gradually masked his own figure among all those snowflakes.

The Snowy Dance of Ultimate Ice had finally descended upon the world once more!

This was the fusion between the Ice Empress' Domain of Perpetual Ice and the Snow Empress' Snowy Dance of the Brilliant Sun. Both were incredibly powerful soul skills.

The temperature across the entire battleground began to plummet. Wu Ming had already backed out of the battlefield, and was already back to normal, but her expression changed in an instant.

This was because she was a fire-type soul master, and her perception of this extreme chill was far more conspicuous. She could clearly feel how low the battlefield's temperature had dropped.

Bei Bei, Xiao Xiao, and Jiang Nannan had been thrown out of the circle after they were tossed into the air one after another. This was a practice battle after all, and Han Ruoruo definitely didn't want to hurt them.

Huo Yuhao and Wang Dong'er vanished amongst the tremendous patches of ice and frost, and even He Caitou disappeared as well. The ground was covered with gold and silver circles of light in the same instant.

Streak after streak of dual-colored light surged up from the ground and stirred the waltzing snowflakes in the sky in an attempt to find the three of them. However, just like how Huo Yuhao couldn't determine Han Ruoruo's location, Han Ruoruo couldn't find Huo Yuhao either within his Snowy Dance of Ultimate Ice.

Wu Ming's expression was a little sullen. She knew that she had already lost to Huo Yuhao in terms of their elements, the palm she took before this was based on this fact. Her Golden Crow Primordial Fire

was strong, but it was nowhere near as extreme as Huo Yuhao's ice and snow. Her element had been overpowered, and the formidable chill from that simple-looking strike had defeated her.

"Go, Ruoruo!" While Wu Ming's despondence was extremely ephemeral, her mentality was very strong, and she immediately began to cheer for Han Ruoruo.

The gold and silver circles started to transform on the ground. They gradually dissipated, and everything changed into horizontal patterns of light. These patterns began to ripple immediately afterwards, and they swept up into the sky like tidal waves. The turbulent ice and snow was stirred up even more vigorously, and the air was filled with dense, extremely powerful soul power undulations.

The ice and snow that were originally concentrated inside the Sparring Arena were whipped into pieces, and they gradually drifted into the air outside. Han Ruoruo had unleashed her sixth soul skill, Golden Wave. This was an area-of-effect control-type soul skill, and its main function was to dispel.

She naturally couldn't dispel Huo Yuhao's domain, but she could still dispel the ice and snow that Huo Yuhao had formed inside this domain with his soul power.

The situation immediately descended into an impasse.

It was alright if she couldn't find Huo Yuhao, as Han Ruoruo had absolute confidence that he would be the first to drop if this impasse was allowed to continue. He was still a Soul King after all, and their cultivations were ultimately still a world apart.

Furthermore, Han Ruoruo's Golden Wave meant that Huo Yuhao's snowflakes were also within the area of effect. This practice combat would be over the moment she discovered Huo Yuhao.

"We've lost, senior sister." Huo Yuhao didn't attempt to keep this up, and his voice resonated through the air.

It was almost like an instant reaction to opportunity. Han Ruoruo's Dazzling Golden True Body immediately pinpointed his location when his voice rang out, and her Golden Wave transformed back into the Golden Skysurge and barreled towards them.

However, a dark blue streak flickered once in midair, and a crack was forcefully slashed through her Golden Skysurge. Three snowflakes rapidly drifted down outside the Sparring Arena as they revealed their human forms: Huo Yuhao, Wang Dong'er, and He Caitou.

Huo Yuhao's face was a little pale, and it was apparent that this was caused by expending too much soul power. The ice and snow swiftly disappeared from the mountaintop, while the gold and silver colors receded, and Han Ruoruo stood all by herself in center of the Sparring Arena.

However, she didn't have the look of elation that she was supposed to have after victory; there was only astonishment.

"You... you can break through my Golden Skysurge?" Huo Yuhao's sword naturally wasn't able to break through, but this was only because there was a tremendous gap between their cultivations. Han Ruoruo was absolutely certain that her Golden Skysurge wouldn't have been able to withstand Huo Yuhao's dark blue sword radiance if they had the same cultivation. That sword had possessed both extreme chill and incredible sharpness.

Huo Yuhao forced a laugh and said, "I did no such thing. You're too powerful, senior sister."

Yes, Han Ruoruo was too powerful. She had almost defeated Shrek's Seven Monsters with a single strike.

Han Ruoruo, Wu Ming, and Chu Qingtian were still shaken by the Shrek's Seven Monsters' prowess. However, the seven of them seemed a little dull... they had been defeated, in the end.

This was what a gap in ability and cultivation meant, and perhaps also what a gap in battle experience meant. Han Ruoruo had been one versus six, but they had had no chance at all. Wu Ming was only knocked out because her element was countered, and she wasn't familiar with Huo Yuhao's abilities.

The Sparring Arena's temperature had dropped from all the ice and snow strewn across the ground. The teachers that came from elsewhere to watch were both stunned and slack-jawed. They came over to emphasize the importance of safety, and they inspected the grounds to ensure that they hadn't been overly damaged before they walked away.

Xu Sanshi grumbled, "Senior sister Han, you're too brutal. I didn't even get to use my abilities before I was thrown out of the fight."

Han Ruoruo snapped, "You didn't get to use your abilities? You managed to swap Ming'er away. What's up with you, Ming'er? You couldn't even last a little while longer?"

Wu Ming was even more despondent than Xu Sanshi was. "I couldn't take it, Ruoruo! I don't even know what soul skill Huo Yuhao used when he hit me with his palm, but my martial soul true body was instantly dispelled. If he hadn't withdrawn his soul power in time, I might have been severely wounded. His Ultimate Ice is powerful... his element completely overpowered mine."

Han Ruoruo's gaze changed a little when she turned towards Huo Yuhao once more. Han Ruoruo hadn't felt at all comfortable inside his Snowy Dance of Ultimate Ice either. She was fettered by the low temperature and extreme chill even under the effects of her Dazzling Golden True Body. The snowflakes that descended from the sky possessed formidable offensive strength at the same time, and she had consumed a lot of soul power. The stunning sword that sliced open her Golden Skysurge at the end also left an exceptionally strong impression.

"Stop complaining, everyone." Wang Yan came over with a smile on his face. "This practice combat was short, but it was spectacular. Bei Bei, Yuhao, you guys lost the fight, but you guys were still glorious in defeat. You guys have to know that Ruoruo is considered one of the strongest among the inner courtyard's students, and the gap in cultivation isn't something that can be plugged with numbers.

"This was a practice battle after all, so it's natural for everyone to feel a little restrained. You guys have already adjusted extremely well. It seems like the two years that the few of you have spent apart didn't diminish your chemistry and your tacit understandings. In fact, it was Han Ruoruo, Wu Ming, and Qingtian who were lacking rapport. Ruoruo, you underestimated your opponents from the very beginning, right?"

Han Ruoruo blushed a little when she met Wang Yan's intense gaze, and nodded slightly. She had indeed underestimated her adversaries; the gap in their cultivations was simply too great, and she possessed a martial soul true body while they didn't, which meant a world of difference. Otherwise, assault-type soul

masters would never make the first move in a group battle; it was always the control-type soul masters who unleashed their soul skills first. If she had had a better coordination or chemistry with Wu Ming, then Wu Ming wouldn't have landed herself in that awkward situation.

Wang Yan chuckled and said, "And you, Qingtian, you weren't able to display your full power, and your reactions were a little slow. If you had used your Lightning Transformation the moment Ming'er was swapped away by that Mysterious Underworld Displacement, she might have been able to escape the soul skills that came afterwards."

Chu Qingtian nodded as Wu Ming shot a fierce glare in his direction. It was clear that she wasn't very pleased with his performance.

Wang Yan turned towards Wu Ming and said, "Actually, you did a good job. A fight between soul masters means both sides must try their best to suppress each other by maximizing their respective strengths and fortes. However, you have to be clear about what's up with your opponents. Huo Yuhao's Ultimate Ice isn't a secret, and I know you wanted to fight against it in your heart. The fact that it can be described as an Ultimate element already proves his elemental advantage. However, I didn't expect Huo Yuhao to be able to break your martial soul true body. Still, your defeat isn't unfair at all. Even though you're a Soul Sage, it's not easy to defend yourself against six people barraging you at the same time. The only problem was with your mentality. You must have thought that the others wouldn't be able to do anything to you if you unleashed your martial soul true body, so breaking through their siege wouldn't be too difficult, and you could possibly turn the tables on them instead. If you had opted to break through their encirclement instead of facing them head-on, you might have had a different outcome."

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Wu Ming was initially astonished as she listened to Wang Yan's analysis, but this quickly transformed into admiration and respect. She had felt that it wasn't worth it when Han Ruoruo walked away with Wang Yan that day. Wang Yan was a teacher, but he only had six rings, and he was more than forty years old. It was hard to say whether he could become a Titled Douluo in his lifetime. In contrast, Han Ruoruo had already become a powerful Soul Douluo at the age of a little more than thirty, so she was bound to become a Titled Douluo in the future. There was an immense distance between their power and potential.

But she had to admit that Wang Yan's observation skills, his perception of people, and his ability to judge abilities were exceptional as she continued listening to his analysis. He was almost able to describe her exact mentality and thoughts.

Wang Yan turned towards Shrek's Seven Monsters after he was done with the three of them. "You guys did alright just now, and your teamwork was a lot better in comparison. However, there were many problems as well. Bei Bei, Sanshi, have you guys tried your best?"

Bei Bei exchanged a look with Xu Sanshi. Wang Yan hadn't given them pointers in a long time, and he hit the right note in his first statement.

Wu Ming's eyes widened, and she exclaimed, "Ah, you guys dared to hold back in a practice battle against us?"

Bei Bei pulled a long face and replied, “How can we hold anything back, teacher Wang? Aren’t you clear about our abilities?”

Wang Yan smiled and said, “You are also clear about whether you held back or not. Let’s not talk about the fact that your martial souls can mutate, the things you two did on the battlefield were far from the level that your abilities can normally achieve. The two of you have the most experience, and have the highest cultivation amongst the seven of you. Your element might not be as strong as Yuhao’s, but the chemistry between the two of you is comparable to that between Yuhao and Wang Dong’er. Sanshi used the Mysterious Underworld Displacement during the previous battle, but what about you, Bei Bei? You were treading water from beginning to end. If I’m not wrong, Sanshi had the ability to break free when he was entangled. Even though your cultivation is a world apart from Ruoruo’s, you shouldn’t have lost so easily. I’m fairly certain that you have other moves you didn’t use.”

“Uh...”

Xu Sanshi and Bei Bei were chided until they could only exchange foolish looks with one another. They really had to respect and admire Wang Yan!

Wang Yan smiled and said, “Let me guess what you guys were thinking. I believe you guys wanted to see how everyone has improved, and how their chemistry is like. Not giving your all is also reasonable, as this is a practice combat, after all. I can understand that there are some abilities that are difficult to control once you guys use them, right?”

“You’re way too perceptive, teacher Wang,” Xu Sanshi spoke sincerely.

Wang Yan laughed and replied, “I can only see clearer than most. I’m not sure why the two of you decided to tread water, but you guys didn’t put in as much effort as Yuhao did in terms of cooperating with the team.

“It’s your turn, Xiao Xiao. Your performance wasn’t good except for the moment when you blocked Wu Ming’s attack by displaying impressive controlling capabilities. Your cooperation with the rest was the most insufficient of the entire team. It’s clear that you felt like there was nothing much to do during the later parts of the battle, and you hadn’t completely integrated into the group, so you didn’t unleash your abilities properly. Therefore, the seven of you practicing together is the right thing to do.”

“Yes, teacher Wang.” Xiao Xiao responded with a red tinge in her cheeks. She had toiled in her cultivation over the years, and she had learned so much from Elder Xuan. But during last season’s big competition, her abilities weren’t strong enough and so she didn’t have much chemistry or teamwork with her team in the first place. And over the past few years, she had been focusing on increasing her own strength. Furthermore, Huo Yuhao was their main control-type soul master, and he wasn’t familiar with her abilities either, so Xiao Xiao was a lot more ineffective with Huo Yuhao at the helm.

Wang Yan turned towards He Caitou with a faint smile. “Caitou, both you and Nannan have given me the most pleasant of surprises. It’s clear that you have achieved great success with soul tools, and I am certain that you have other even more powerful abilities, but you didn’t channel all your energy for safety reasons.”

Han Ruoruo chimed in and said, “Yes, he made me feel very threatened. Otherwise, I wouldn’t have used Golden Skysurge directly after using my Dazzling Golden True Body.”

He Caitou smiled sheepishly, but didn't say anything.

Wang Yan then turned towards Jiang Nannan. "Nannan, your abilities are becoming a lot more mature. Even though you're not a Soul Emperor yet, you are no longer just an agility-type soul master on the battlefield, you are also accomplishing certain controlling functions and capabilities. The person who had the best performance was actually you, and not Yuhao. The reason is because everyone has a different role in a team, and you fulfilled your role exceptionally well."

Jiang Nannan flashed a faint smile, and her enchanting beauty made Xu Sanshi exclaim out loud...

Wang Yan finally looked at Huo Yuhao and Wang Dong'er, but he heaved a faint sigh instead of anything else.

Huo Yuhao said, "You can speak easy, teacher Wang. I can take it. I know my performance wasn't good just now."

Wang Yan shook his head and smiled. "I'm not sighing because your performance wasn't good, I'm sighing because I'm full of awe and admiration.

"Your abilities are just too incredible. I never thought that you would improve to such a level after five years. Even though your performance did have its blemishes, it can be considered quite excellent on the whole. There are a few issues you have to pay attention to. If I'm not wrong, your Domain will also affect your teammates, and the most you can do is prevent them from being injured inside, but it will greatly restrict them and their ability to use their own skills. Otherwise, you wouldn't have used that Domain so late in the battle, correct?"

Huo Yuhao nodded. Niu Tian told him back then that his Domain was good, but it had an all-around impact, and that extreme chill would affect everything within the domain. He could protect the people inside, but the people under his protection would be restricted to some extent, and they wouldn't be able to exercise their own abilities.

Wang Yan continued, "I've considered that you guys haven't worked together for a long time, and everyone isn't that familiar with each other's soul skills yet, so your performance can still be considered good. This was especially true when you attempted to suppress Ruoruo in the beginning, and you proved the advantage of having spiritual control. You were also holding back, because I vaguely remember that you have a third eye..."

Wang Yan turned to Wang Dong'er afterwards and said, "Dong'er, I want to remind you that you are ranked number three in terms of cultivation amongst the entire team. You're a Soul Emperor, and even though you have the advantage of a martial soul fusion with Huo Yuhao, you're not his appendage. During the practice combat, you didn't really use your own abilities at all besides providing support for Huo Yuhao. You also have twin martial souls, and I'm absolutely certain that your six soul skills are not useless. Furthermore, you still have your soul bones, and their attached abilities. You should have been able to accomplish much more. Perhaps you wish to assist Yuhao, but please don't attach yourself to him."

Huo Yuhao and Wang Dong'er smiled at each other as they listened to Wang Yan's comments. Wang Dong'er giggled and said, "You've finally said something wrong, teacher Wang. That is hard to come by indeed."

“Eh?” Wang Yan was slightly taken aback, but he quickly understood what was going on. There was a look of revelation on his face as he said, “I understand now. You guys were doing all that on purpose? Is Wang Dong’er supposed to come out only for killer moves and final blows?”

Wang Dong’er giggled once more, but didn’t say anything else.

Han Ruoruo, Wu Ming, and Chu Qingtian felt even more incredulous as they listened to Wang Yan’s analysis. These Shrek’s Seven Monsters had already shaken them up during the previous sparring session... and yet, they hadn’t given everything they had. What level would they reach if they were allowed to exercise all their abilities properly?

Wang Yan said, “Alright, you guys can continue to practice. I trust that you guys can do better. Ruoruo, Wu Ming, Qingtian, let’s give the place over to them. We’ve been here for quite a while.”

“Okay.” Han Ruoruo nodded agreement. Wu Ming and Chu Qingtian didn’t object either, and they bid their farewells to Shrek’s Seven Monsters before they departed the Sparring Arena.

They hadn’t walked too far when Han Ruoruo whispered to Wang Yan, “You said they were all holding back. If they had better teamwork and could exercise all their abilities properly, would they be able to defeat me?”

Wang Yan laughed and stole a glimpse at her. “It’s not like you to lack self-confidence! They will probably need another five years to defeat you. At the very least, most of them have to have their martial soul true bodies before they can accomplish that feat. Defeating you is not possible at the moment. I did point out that they were holding back, but they were also holding back because you were simply too powerful, and you suppressed them to the point where they couldn’t really exercise their strengths. The gap between your cultivations is simply too great.

“Everything I said before was mainly to give them more confidence.”

Wu Ming slid in from the side and said, “Teacher Wang, why didn’t you ask Huo Yuhao about that palm of his? I still don’t understand it even now.”

Wang Yan smiled and replied, “That palm is extremely sophisticated. When he reached out with that palm, I could feel that even time itself seemed freeze. He was even able to dispel your martial soul true body... what level of power is that? That means he must be heavily restricted by something. If I’m not wrong, distance is one of the things restricting him, and that palm of his can only take effect within a certain distance. You have to flex your own strengths if you wish to fight against him, and you will be able to use your martial soul true body to the best of its ability if you use your Golden Crow Primordial Fire at long range. With Huo Yuhao’s current cultivation, I don’t think he can beat you yet if it’s one-on-one.”

Han Ruoruo thought of something and said, “One-on-one? What if it’s two-versus-one? If Wang Dong’er is added to the mix...”

Wang Yan shook his head and said, “That, I don’t know. All I can tell you is that during the last Continental Advanced Soul Master Academy Soul Dueling Tournament, one of them only had three rings, while the other was only had two, and they still managed to unleash four martial soul fusion skills during their final battle.”

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“What? Four?!” Han Ruoruo and the others exclaimed at almost the same time.

Wang Yan nodded and said, “Four, indeed. They both have twin martial souls, and my surprise and awe back then was even stronger than yours is now. According to my knowledge, they might be the first pair of soul masters who both have twin martial souls and martial soul fusion skills, and that’s probably how the miraculous four fusion skills came about. The skill that blocked Ruoruo’s path forward was one of their four martial soul fusion skills, called The Golden Road Amidst Withering Resplendence. Their three other martial soul fusion skills are equally powerful... oh, Wu Ming, didn’t you say that they transformed into Wang Dong’er, who was bathed in golden light, during the Sea God’s Fate? That’s also one of their fusion skills.”

Han Ruoruo heaved a faint sigh after listening to Wang Yan’s explanation and she said, “I’m finally convinced.”

Wang Yan smiled and smoothly clasped her hands within his. “You don’t have to think badly of yourself. They have a very long road ahead of them to reach your level. Furthermore, it’s easy to envy someone exceptional, and this may even affect them in the end. I just hope that all will be well during the next competition.”

Han Ruoruo reacted in shock. “Will they even have a problem during the next competition with their current standards? I’ve interacted with Xiao Hongchen and Meng Hongchen before. Even though I don’t know what level they can reach with their soul tools, and their soul master abilities are not bad, they are far inferior in terms of fighting strength.”

Wang Yan’s eyes were overcome with a look of solemnity as he lowered his voice and said, “This season is different from the previous one. Some things might be changed. The academy is waiting for more accurate information.”

Wang Yan and the others departed, while Shrek’s Seven Monsters began their post-mortem and discussed the salient points and shortcomings from the practice battle as they displayed their various soul skills to each other.

They didn’t spar against one another anymore, and everyone just respectively demonstrated their soul skills and improved fighting styles over the past two years so that everyone knew and could see them clearly. Afterwards, they spent another two hours rehearsing and working on their teamwork and cooperation.

With Huo Yuhao’s Spiritual Detection Sharing, teamwork and command had never really been a problem. They worked all the way to lunchtime before they stopped, and it was clear that everyone was now much more familiar with one another than before.

Bei Bei immediately made the decision that everyone would proceed to the Sparring Arena to practice in the morning from today onwards, and practice their own respective cultivations in the afternoon and at night.

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That night, Huo Yuhao and Wang Dong'er received news about their registration to participate in the hunting party heading towards the Great Star Dou Forest. The Sea God's Pavilion allowed their participation in the end, but two more people were added to lead the group in addition to Zhang Lexuan. One was Han Ruoruo, who had just crossed paths with Huo Yuhao, and the other was the Martial Soul Department's vice-Dean, Cai Mei'er.

Cai Mei'er naturally became the operation's main commander.

Huo Yuhao and Wang Dong'er immediately received the name list for this operation after they asked for it.

Cai Mei'er, Zhang Lexuan, and Han Ruoruo were heading the operation. They didn't require soul rings, and their main responsibility was to protect the other inner courtyard students. One was a Titled Douluo, and the two others were Soul Douluos. They were leading a team of advanced students on a hunting expedition; perhaps only Shrek Academy could make this such a smooth operation.

There were two guys on the name list that required new soul rings that Huo Yuhao didn't recognize, and Wang Qiu'er was also on the list. There were four members from the inner courtyard who needed soul rings, and in addition to Wang Dong'er who was just tagging along, the entire group was comprised of eight people.

Their departure time was the morning the day after the next.

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On the second day, Shrek's Seven Monsters continued to rehearse and practice their formation and their teamwork. Huo Yuhao and Wang Dong'er left the Sea God's Pavilion in the morning on the third day, and they were early as they waited outside the academy's main gate.

It didn't take long before the students from the inner courtyard who were participating in this expedition gathered.

Wang Qiu'er was still dressed like she had always been: a long veil covered her extraordinary beauty, and her blue wave-like hair was tied into a ponytail behind her head. She wore a pale green warrior's robe that formed an amusing color combination with her hair; there was a bit too much contrast between the colors.

Wang Dong'er was clad in a white warrior robe, while her long hair was combed into a relatively more complicated scorpion braid while she wore a similar veil over her face.

The two girls' gazes met when they first saw each other, and it immediately felt as if sparks were going to erupt from the collision. They exchanged one look before they turned back around.

Huo Yuhao felt a little strange inside. They clearly looked exactly like each other, and they should thus logically be a lot closer and more intimate with each other. He didn't know why, but Wang Dong'er seemed to marginalize Wang Qiu'er. While this could be explained by the fact that Wang Qiu'er looked more like the Goddess of Light, it was also apparent that Wang Qiu'er wasn't being friendly towards Wang Dong'er either, as her eyes were exceptionally cold.

Cai Mei'er was the last to arrive, wearing a simple grey shirt. She had passed nine decades of life long ago, but she looked like she was only a little more than fifty on the outside, managing to maintain her appearance.

Huo Yuhao had the least interaction with this vice-Dean. All he knew was that she seemed to have some problems with Dean Xian, but he wasn't sure about the details.

Cai Mei'er clapped her hands when everyone gathered, and everyone turned to look at her.

Cai Mei'er smiled and said, "Everyone here is from the inner courtyard, and it's not the first time we've entered the Great Star Dou Forest. We have new participants in our expedition, so we should introduce ourselves to each other. Take turns to brief everyone about your name, your martial soul, your cultivation level, and whatnot so that we can cooperate better in the Great Star Dou Forest."

She nodded in Zhang Lexuan's direction as she finished speaking. Zhang Lexuan responded immediately, going first. "My name is Zhang Lexuan, and I'm an assistant teacher from the inner courtyard and a student at the same time. My martial soul is the Moon, and I'm an assault-type soul master. I'm responsible for leading the team, and I don't require any soul rings. My soul power is at Rank 86."

Everyone began to stir when they heard her say "Rank 86". This included Huo Yuhao and Wang Dong'er.

Han Ruoruo continued immediately after her and said, "Han Ruoruo, assistant teacher and student of the inner courtyard. My martial soul is the Dazzling Golden Rope, and I'm a control-type soul master. I'm the main control soul master for this operation, and I don't require any soul rings. My soul power is Rank 82."

After they completed their introductions, Cai Mei'er interrupted them and said, "I'm just tagging along in this operation. Lexuan and Ruoruo will be doing the commanding and whatnot. They have ample experience, so everyone has to listen to them, and nobody is allowed to do anything on their own. This is all for your personal safety, and it's also for the team's safety. Our expedition's destination will be the border of the Greater Star Dou Forest's Hybrid Region crossing over into the Core Region. We can run into very powerful soul beasts at any time in that area. All right, continue. Your turn, Yuhao."

Huo Yuhao hurriedly nodded when he heard Cai Mei'er point him out. "My name is Huo Yuhao, and I'm a student from the inner courtyard. I'm both control-type and assault-type, and I have twin martial souls: Spirit Eyes and the Ice Jade Empress Scorpion. My soul power is Rank 52, and I need a fifth soul ring for my spiritual-type martial soul, the Spirit Eyes."

Wang Dong'er continued beside him. "Wang Dong'er, student from the inner courtyard. I'm an assault-type soul master, and my martial soul is the Radiant Butterfly Goddess. I'm a Rank 61 Soul Emperor, and I don't need a soul ring. I can unleash martial soul fusion skills with Huo Yuhao, and I'm here to accompany him on this expedition."

Their introductions were extremely brief, but they didn't feel ordinary at all to the other students. The other three students in this operation who had participated in the Sea God's Fate had personally witnessed Huo Yuhao and Wang Dong'er's incredible prowess. They were two against five, and everyone was around the same level, and all seven were students from the inner courtyard. Yet, Huo Yuhao and Wang Dong'er had won a dominating victory.

However, they were a little confused about Huo Yuhao's introduction. He needed a fifth soul ring at Rank 52? What circumstance was that? Could it be that he was adding soul rings to both of his martial souls at the same time? Twin martial souls shouldn't be cultivated like that. This was Shrek Academy, and there were so many veteran teachers around here. How could they let him make this mistake?

Another male student said, "My name is Li Yongyue, a student from the inner courtyard. I'm an agility-type Soul King at Rank 60, and I need my sixth soul ring. My martial soul is the Moonblade... do you remember me, eldest senior sister? When you unleash your martial soul, I will be naturally amplified." He was probably around twenty-six to twenty-seven years of age, but the admiration he displayed towards Zhang Lexuan represented her status in the inner courtyard as everyone's eldest senior sister.

Zhang Lexuan nodded in his direction with a faint smile on her face, but she didn't say anything and gestured to the other male student to introduce himself.

"My name is Mo Xuan, and I'm a long-range all-around auxiliary-type Soul King at Rank 60, and I need a sixth soul ring. My martial soul is the Halo. My close-combat abilities are weak, so you have to help me out, everyone! Thanks!"

Li Yongyue's looks were average, and he was the kind that was hard to spot in a throng of people. Mo Xuan seemed a little more shy; he was probably at least twenty-five years old, but his face would blush a little as he spoke.

A long-range all-around auxiliary-type soul master? This was the first time Huo Yuhao had heard of such a description, and he couldn't help but throw a few more glances in his direction.

Cai Mei'er helped alleviate everyone's doubts. "You guys probably haven't seen Mo Xuan before. He's a unique talent that's being specially nurtured by the inner courtyard. His fighting strength is weak, so Lexuan, you have to pay special attention to protect him. Mo Xuan's auxiliary abilities cannot be considered outstanding during single and group battles, but he's the first and only long-range all-around auxiliary-type soul master in the academy's most recent thousand years of history. His auxiliary prowess on the battlefield isn't something that normal auxiliary-type soul masters can compare to. You guys will experience it once we're inside the forest."

Everyone except Wang Qiu'er had completed their introductions, so their eyes all turned towards her.

Wang Qiu'er's voice was a little cold as she said indifferently, "My name is Wang Qiu'er. Assault-type. My martial soul is the Golden Dragon. I'm Rank 60, and I need a sixth soul ring."

Her speech was the simplest amongst everyone's introductions, and her eyes were staring into the sky as she spoke. She gave everyone a feeling of arrogance and aloofness.

Wang Dong'er pouted with displeasure as she saw that look. Fortunately, she was wearing a veil over her face, so nobody could see her reaction.

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Zhang Lexuan said, "Alright, everyone has finished their introductions, so let me allocate our formation once we enter the Great Star Dou Forest. I will be scouting the path ahead, and Li Yongyue and Wang Qiu'er are responsible for the left and right flanks respectively. Ruoruo will be positioned in the center towards the front right behind me, and she'll be the main control-type soul master. Mo Xuan will be

positioned behind Han Ruoruo, which means you'll be near the center – do pay attention to cooperate with everyone's movements. Huo Yuhao, you're the secondary control for flexibility, and you will be behind Mo Xuan. You're responsible for providing support for whoever needs help. Wang Dong'er, you'll be all the way at the back, and you're responsible for sweeping. Dean Cai will be following behind the group, and she won't make a move other than as a last resort – we're all students from the inner courtyard, and it will be extremely humiliating if we need a teacher's help to obtain our own soul rings, so I hope that doesn't happen. Alright, let's proceed if nobody has any more questions or objections."

Nobody had anything to dispute about her arrangement. There was no doubt that the central and anchoring positions were relatively safer – there was no need to mention the center, and Cai Mei'er was all the way at the back.

There was a deeper meaning to arranging Wang Qiu'er and Li Yongyue on the two flanks. Wang Qiu'er's martial soul was the Golden Dragon, and she stirred up quite some disturbance when she successfully enrolled in the inner courtyard. She was said to have impressive fighting strength, as the Golden Dragon was the Ancestor of Strength, and thus assigning her to one flank was also a test. Li Yongyue's strength would also be greatly boosted with Zhang Lexuan around, so assigning him to guard the other flank was the optimal choice. Huo Yuhao and Wang Dong'er's positions, along with Mo Xuan's, were considered protected. The academy still had some bias after all – the truth was, Cai Mei'er wouldn't have been with them in this operation if Huo Yuhao hadn't registered for it.

Everyone belonged to the inner courtyard. Even if they weren't that familiar with each other, they would definitely not hold each other back. They got in line with Zhang Lexuan's formation once they left Shrek City, and went straight for the Great Star Dou Forest.

Nobody deliberately attempted to display his or her speed on the way, and the formation was maintained impeccably under Zhang Lexuan's deliberate control.

Just as Cai Mei'er had said, this wasn't the first time these students were going inside the Great Star Dou Forest. Everyone was extremely familiar with this place, and nobody really interacted with each other along the way. Everyone just hurried onward.

Wang Dong'er glanced at Wang Qiu'er beside her from time to time, and even Huo Yuhao couldn't help but throw a few glances in her direction.

Wang Qiu'er looked very quiet, but one could see from the side that her eyes were exceedingly cold and plain, as if she were wearing an outer layer over herself at all times. She could definitely feel Wang Dong'er's stares, but she never once looked back to return her gaze.

She didn't release her martial soul when they travelled, she just simply ran along. However, she bounced up with bewildering speed every time she touched the ground with her feet, and one could tell upon closer inspection that there would be a groove in the ground after every step she took, while the ground around her footprint seemed to have cracked. She was dashing forward with pure strength, yet she looked like she was floating. She lived up to her name as the Ancestor of Strength and the owner of the Golden Dragon martial soul.

Shrek City was quite close to the Great Star Dou Forest. They didn't unleash their full speed, but still reached the forest before midday.

“Let’s take a break and grab something to eat, everyone. Adjust yourselves to your optimum condition and states – we will proceed into the forest after one hour.” Zhang Lexuan’s instructions were short and concise.

They were near the Great Star Dou Forest’s Peripheral Region. They would be inside the forest once they passed the danger signs that dotted the road.

Huo Yuhao felt a sense of nostalgia as he stared at a danger sign hanging from a tree not far from him. He could clearly remember what it was like during his first trip here, as that expedition had changed his destiny – he met the Skydream Iceworm, Electrolux, his senior brother Bei Bei and Xiao Ya.

Following the passage of time, Electrolux was gone, and there was no news about teacher Xiao Ya, while he had grown up as well.

Everyone came by the roadside. Their cultivations meant they were far from fatigued, but slowing down and relaxing still felt good anyway. Zhang Lexuan said to Huo Yuhao with a smile on her face, “I hear from Bei Bei that your culinary skills are exceptional, Yuhao. I remember you selling grilled fish outside the academy a long time ago. What do you think about showing us your skills?”

A thought came to Huo Yuhao’s mind as he said, “There’s a small river nearby, eldest senior sister.” This place was close to the small stream where he had first met Bei Bei and Tang Ya.

Zhang Lexuan smiled and said, “I know. I’m not sure how many days we’ll be spending in there once we head in, and the living conditions are going to be harsh inside – we won’t get good food, and we’ll have to sleep in the open. Everyone should enjoy a good meal before we enter. How about this – Li Yongyue will follow me to catch some fish, and Yuhao will be responsible for preparing and cooking them. Are you two okay with that?” She was a lot more familiar with the landscape of the Great Star Dou Forest’s Peripheral Region than Huo Yuhao was.

“Yes.” The two of them acknowledged at once.

Zhang Lexuan stood up and said, “The others will help Yuhao prepare the firewood needed for the grilled fish. We will get to enjoy our food earlier if we work together.”

Cai Mei’er didn’t hide herself as she followed behind the students. She came forward at this moment, and a faint smile appeared on her face as she watched the students bustle around. She thought to herself, these youngsters are so full of life and energy! It’s nice to be out here to walk around.

They were all high-level soul masters, so how easy was it for them to collect firewood and catch fish?

It didn’t take long before Zhang Lexuan and Li Yongyue returned with more than ten huge fish skewered on vines. It was clear that these two didn’t really know how to cook, and Huo Yuhao immediately returned to the riverside with the fish that they had brought back.

The first step to grilling fish was to process the fish properly, and then to grill it directly – would that actually work?

Zhang Lexuan followed Huo Yuhao back to the riverside with a tinge of curiosity as she watched him take the fishes from the vines. He washed them again inside the crystal-clear river as he cut them open, took out their organs, peeled off the scales, and extracted the tendons.

Extracting fish tendons was a special technique, as most people who steamed fish didn't do that, so the fish they made would have a strong fishy smell. It wasn't hard to remove the tendons – one would use a sharp blade to cut the fish below the gills before cutting the fish near the tail, and then one would look carefully look for a small white dot on the wound's cross-section before using the back of the blade to tap lightly on the fish's body. If appropriate strength was applied, it wouldn't take too many hits before a small white tip that looked like the tip of a needle would emerge, and then one would pinch it and pluck it out, and the tendons on that side would be extracted.

Every fish had two long tendons, and one would have to follow all these steps to consider even simple preparations complete.

Both Zhang Lexuan and Wang Dong'er were watching by the side. They wanted to help, but they were clumsy and confused when they actually tried. Their formidable cultivations were useless at times like these, and they could only sit by and watch.

Huo Yuhao picked the things he needed from his surroundings. He found some spices and herbs that he was relatively familiar with and picked a pile before he returned to camp. He placed the washed fishes and the herbs onto some large clean leaves, and Chef Huo finally got to work.

Perhaps it was because his life had been tough and difficult as a kid, but he always carried his cooking tools with him; bowls, ladles, tubs, all sorts of seasonings – he had everything. When he took out all these things from his Starlight Sapphire storage ring, the other students stared unblinkingly.

Han Ruoruo couldn't help but laugh as she said, "Are you preparing to be a chef in the future, Yuhao? This is the first time I've seen someone place cooking tools inside a top-tier storage item such as the Starlight Sapphire."

Huo Yuhao chortled and said, "I used to be very poor, and it wasn't easy for me to fill my stomach. It's become a habit for me to bring these things when I come out, and even non-soul masters won't go hungry."

These simple sentences embodied his childhood experiences. Everybody else was relatively well off, so everyone grew silent for a moment after listening to his words. Even Wang Qiu'er glanced at him a few times.

Huo Yuhao was explaining with his mouth, but his hands didn't stop. He laid out two piles with the firewood that everyone had brought back before he lit one pile and planted four thick branches in the ground and hung a large wok over the top. The wok contained clear water that had previously been collected from the small stream.

He finished setting up the wok on one side, and the grill that he always used, which was supported on both sides, was set up on the other side. He was even more familiar with this thing.

He applied and stuffed all kinds of seasoning and spices into the fishes' stomachs. He opened a hole on both sides of the fishes' bodies before he skewered them with a clean wooden stick and began to grill them.

He began to slather oil on both sides of the fish. This would give the fish a denser taste, and they wouldn't burn so easily.

The fragrant smell of grilled fish wafted over in no time. Everyone retrieved their rations and were sitting around, but they stared at the dry rations in their hands while they smelled the aroma, and suddenly everyone didn't feel like eating their rations anymore. Only Wang Qiu'er was sitting to one side as she nibbled quietly on her rations. She didn't even look at Huo Yuhao.

Zhang Lexuan was also sitting nearby as she watched Huo Yuhao. Her eyes rotated to the other students, and a subtle smile appeared on her face. She was the team leader, and her task was not only to command and protect her teammates – more importantly, she had to break the ice between this impromptu group and to glue them together, so that everyone would feel closer to each other, and they would feel more like a team. This was the only way she could enhance their chemistry in the fights that were to come, and this was the only way to make them feel more intimate. Her choice to ask Huo Yuhao to grill fish was partially because of this, as a nice meal would easily pull everyone closer together.

He was closely monitoring the grilling process with his spiritual power, and the first grilled fish was finished in no time. There was no question that seniors had priority, so Huo Yuhao took this first grilled fish to Cai Mei'er.

"Thank you." Cai Mei'er took the fish with a smile on her face as she took a huge bite. The yellowish-golden fish skin was crispy and slightly salty, and there was also a tinge of spiciness. The fish was tender and juicy, and just one bite left a delicious taste behind.

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Dean Cai's face was overcome with astonishment, and she wasn't stingy with her praise. "Yuhao, you have the standards to become a professional chef! It's no wonder I remember your business flourishing when you used to sell grilled fish outside the academy's main gate. This is the best grilled fish I've ever eaten."

Huo Yuhao chuckled, but he didn't continue grilling his fish, and instead walked over to the wok over the other fire. He put some wild vegetables in before he added another can of seasoning. The water was boiling by this time, and his seasonings were only just added when another fragrance permeated the air, and the soup turned a light red color.

He returned to the grill to continue his grilling. Zhang Lexuan and Li Yongyue had returned with enormous fish; every single one weighed more than a kilogram, while the biggest ones were around two to two and a half kilograms. There were only a little more than ten fishes, but they were enough to feed everyone here.

The fish were grilled one after another, and Huo Yuhao's allocation was simple – he went according to age, and the eldest came first.

Zhang Lexuan was naturally the second one in line after Cai Mei'er. Even though Zhang Lexuan jokingly remarked on the fact that she was the second oldest, she was still immensely attracted by the grilled fish's aroma.

Han Ruoruo, Li Yongyue, and Mo Xuan were next.

Wang Dong'er was almost drooling as she stood beside Huo Yuhao. She watched as the seventh fish was almost ready, and a threatening look flowed from her eyes as she stared at him. Her rosy lips curled upward, as if she were saying, "This one must be mine."

Huo Yuhao whispered, "Others before self. You have to wait for a while longer, and I will pick a large one for you."

Wang Dong'er grimaced when she heard him say "others before self", but she didn't stop Huo Yuhao as he walked towards Wang Qiu'er.

Wang Qiu'er was seated furthest away from the bonfire, and she didn't interact with the others either. She was just quietly munching on her dried rations, and she only lifted her head subconsciously when Huo Yuhao arrived in front of her.

"This is for you." Huo Yuhao handed her the fish in his hands. The grilled fish skin was glowing as an alluring aroma wafted through the air.

"For me? Aren't you afraid of your little girlfriend becoming upset?" Wang Qiu'er didn't take the fish, but questioned him as she stared into his eyes.

Their gazes met, and for some reason, Huo Yuhao felt a delicate dizziness in his mind when he stared into those powdery-blue eyes, even though these abstruse eyes were absolutely different from Wang Dong'er's eyes. The moment was fleeting, but it was enough to surprise him.

Wang Qiu'er took the grilled fish that he handed over as she lowered her head and said, "Thank you."

"Have we met before?" Huo Yuhao asked curiously.

Wang Qiu'er answered matter-of-factly, "I think this is our third meeting. If you don't want your little girlfriend to think you're flirting with me, you should go back." She took a bite of the grilled fish in her hands as she spoke. She was momentarily stunned when the delicious flavor entered her mouth, and a peculiar light flickered across her eyes.

Wang Dong'er was still hungry, so Huo Yuhao didn't dally – however, he was starting to believe Wang Dong'er's judgment that Wang Qiu'er wasn't simple at all, and she definitely had to have some secret. He involuntarily developed an increased sense of wariness as these thoughts ran through his head.

He returned to the campfire and picked a bigger fish for Wang Dong'er. She was already waiting eagerly, and soon the grilled fish was finally done.

"Here you go. Careful, it's hot." Huo Yuhao passed the grilled fish to Wang Dong'er. A soothing smile unwittingly appeared on his face as he watched her excitement.

Wang Dong'er couldn't be bothered with her image anymore as she sat right there and began to eat. She was almost burned, but she just kept going on about how tasty the grilled fish was.

Huo Yuhao chuckled softly. "This fish must be the most delicious one."

Wang Dong'er continued nibbling away at her fish as she asked a little fuzzily, "Why?"

Huo Yuhao laughed and said, “There’s an added spice in this one – a kind that the other fishes don’t have.”

Wang Dong’er was surprised, and said, “You actually hid something from the others? Aren’t you afraid of them calling you stingy?”

Huo Yuhao shook his head. “No, I’m not. This spice can only be used when grilling for you, because it’s called fondness.”

Wang Dong’er was slightly taken aback, but she quickly recovered as her cheeks immediately turned rosy. She whispered, “Is it just fondness?”

Huo Yuhao fiddled with the next grilled fish in his hands as he smiled and said, “Love comprises a lot of fondness. The spices next time will taste even richer.”

Wang Dong’er didn’t pursue the matter further as she chomped on the grilled fish in her hands, before she flashed a sweet smile at Huo Yuhao. She had already removed her veil at this point, and her enchanting beauty dazed Huo Yuhao to the point where he forgot to flip the grilled fish he was working on, and the fish he made for himself was a little burnt.

“Ah, it’s burnt. The taste will be a lot denser, even if that wasn’t what I wanted.”

The grilled fish was rich and fragrant, while the wild vegetable soup was sweet and refreshing. This meal couldn’t be considered nutritious or luxuriant, but it had appeal of the mountains and the wilderness, and with that, in addition to the delicious flavor, everyone was happy with it. Some people even fought a little over the last few pieces, and their method naturally came down to rock-paper-scissors. Everyone became a lot closer than before from all this interaction, and only Wang Qiu’er remained quiet and isolated.

In the end, one hour of rest became two hours before they finished up. After the delectable meal, everyone began to meditate while Dean Cai protected them so that they could be at their peak conditions.

Huo Yuhao would feel a sense of detachment, as if he were separated from the world, every time he entered the lush Great Star Dou Forest. The truth was that the Great Star Dou Forest was like an independent nation – the country of soul beasts.

Everyone was a high-level soul master, and everyone pushed forward at full speed after entering the Peripheral Region under Zhang Lexuan’s leadership as they ventured toward the deeper regions.

This time was vastly different from the times Huo Yuhao had entered the forest. Zhang Lexuan was leading the group, and she had no intention of scouting carefully; they just proceeded forward at full speed. Her body glowed with brilliant white light, and the trees and logs on the ground opened up wherever she walked, while her body emanated a powerful aura. The lower-tier soul beasts didn’t dare to come near, and their speed was at least three times faster than when Huo Yuhao and the others were last here.

This was the meaning of strength; they relied on pure power to force their way forward, while they would rest for fifteen minutes after travelling for two hours. They could tell they were out of the

Peripheral Region by judging the strength of the soul beasts around them when the sky gradually turned dark; they were slowly crossing into the Hybrid Region.

“Maintain the formation, everyone. Pay attention, main control and secondary control.” Zhang Lexuan slowed down conspicuously. The soul beasts around them would be mostly thousand year soul beasts once they entered the Hybrid Region, and there would probably also be ten thousand year soul beasts, which were presences that were enough to threaten everyone. Ten thousand year soul beasts were also precisely what everyone had come here for.

Huo Yuhao’s eyes lit up as he gripped Wang Dong’er’s hand subconsciously. The Haodong power circulated between them as golden light flowed from his eyes.

His Spiritual Detection was passed to everyone on the team, and it extended outward with astounding speed, covering a radius of six hundred meters around them in the blink of an eye.

All the plants and trees, the landscape, and various other parameters quickly surfaced in everyone’s minds.

Huo Yuhao had no problem assisting seven people at the same time via Spiritual Detection with his current spiritual power, and his detection distance far exceeded his past limits.

However, other than Wang Dong, everyone was clearly not used to his Spiritual Detection. They couldn’t help but pause in their tracks when Huo Yuhao activated his soul skill, to the point where Huo Yuhao almost slammed into Mo Xuan, who was walking in front of him.

Everyone tossed their heads backward, and Huo Yuhao immediately became the center of attention. This was especially so for Zhang Lexuan, who was right at the front. Her eyes were filled with astonishment.

It was needless to say what the effect of such immense scouting power would be like for the team. Zhang Lexuan was team leader, and also an assault-type soul master, and she instantly felt as if the burden on her shoulders was greatly lifted.

“How’s the consumption, Yuhao?” Zhang Lexuan asked immediately.

Huo Yuhao answered without hesitation, “I can recover as we travel. I can maintain this for a very long time as long as I don’t expand the area of effect.”

Zhang Lexuan asked in surprise, “You can expand the area of effect? What’s the limit?”

Huo Yuhao immediately gave her the numerical details. “I can reach an area of around one thousand five hundred meters in diameter, while my vertical detection limit can reach around three thousand meters. I can increase the precision and clarity by a hundred percent. However, I will consume a lot more soul power if I do that, so I can’t keep it up for a long period of time.”

Everyone could be heard drawing cold breaths. This soul skill didn’t come with any offensive or defensive capabilities, but it was exceptionally useful for detection and exploration. Having this skill was equivalent to being able to predict dangers, and thus could be considered a super soul skill in the Great Star Dou Forest that was filled with perils.

Zhang Lexuan said decisively, "Maintaining this area of effect is enough. From now onwards, Huo Yuhao will be the main control and Ruoruo will be switched to secondary control. Any objections?"

Han Ruoruo had known her and coordinated with her for many years, and she answered without hesitation. "No problem."

Huo Yuhao paused momentarily, but answered, "I'm okay with that."

Nobody had any disputes about him taking over that role because all but fools could sense his Spiritual Detection's usefulness

With Spiritual Detection activated, Zhang Lexuan picked up the pace once more, and they went straight for the inner circle.

However, once they entered the Hybrid Region, not all the soul beasts in the area would be terrified by her aura.

They didn't travel for long before everyone received an alarm signal in their minds. Zhang Lexuan immediately halted, and she followed the Spiritual Detection's guidance and gazed toward a certain direction.

There was a soul beast crouching on a thick branch about two hundred meters away from them.

[Chapter 228.1: Jade Ocean Spirit Ape](#)

This soul beast was green all over, and was hard to see it in the green jungle if one didn't look closely. Furthermore, it was covered by the trees and branches in the two hundred meters between them. However, Huo Yuhao's Spiritual Detection could clearly lock onto its position.

Huo Yuhao didn't lock onto all the soul beasts around him after he activated it. However, his Spiritual Detection could reach a heightened level of precision even at a distance, and he could tell if it was hostile towards them from the soul beast's blood essence, soul power, and spiritual power.

They had come across quite a few soul beasts before this, but most of them kept their distance and avoided the group. Some displayed hostility, but they were just trying to intimidate the group, and didn't come near at all. The soul beast before them was different. Once it discovered Huo Yuhao's group, it didn't evade at all, and swiftly came nearer instead. There was a strong aura of hostility and murderous intent around it.

There were several typical circumstances with soul beasts like these. First, they could be meeting a belligerent and aggressive soul beast that would attack no matter who its adversaries were. Second, they could encounter a hungry or starving soul beast that had a particular preference for humans. Humans were considered as delicious as meals could get, and these soul beasts would definitely not let go of an opportunity like this. Soul masters were nutritious and extremely beneficial for soul beasts!. A soul master's tendons, flesh, blood, and veins were perennially nourished by soul power, and the nutrition contained within them was far superior to normal soul beasts. The higher level these soul beasts were, the more interested they would be in high-level soul masters. There were some soul beasts that could directly absorb a soul master's soul power to boost themselves!

The last situation was territory. Some relatively stronger soul beasts would mark out their own territories due to their predatory and dietary needs, and these territories were not restricted to soul beasts! Humans would definitely be assaulted if they trespassed. After all, soul beasts that could mark their own territories were stronger than most of their kind.

The soul beast in front of them belonged to the third situation, as they hadn't encountered any other soul beasts in the minutes before they had discovered this one.

"That looks like a Jade Ocean Spirit Ape, and it's probably above ten thousand years in cultivation." Huo Yuhao was the owner of the Spiritual Detection, and thus immediately reported this soul beast's strength.

The Jade Ocean Spirit Ape was an ape-type soul beast, and it fed upon the venomous Spiritjade Fruits. It was a wood-type soul beast, could control plants within a small radius, and was adept with poisonous attacks. It was a soul beast that was hard to deal with.

"Does anybody need this?" Zhang Lexuan asked immediately. Everyone wanted ten thousand year soul rings, while the Jade Ocean Spirit Ape was a comparatively rare soul beast.

Mo Xuan hesitated momentarily before he said, "I'll take it, eldest senior sister. I hope this Jade Ocean Spirit Ape is a little stronger... It would be best if it was twenty thousand years."

Six-ringed Soul Emperors normally found it challenging to absorb twenty-thousand year soul rings, but students from Shrek Academy's inner courtyard were definitely not normal. They feasted on nutritious and sumptuous meals provided by the canteen every single day, and their bodies were tough and resilient to an extent that normal soul masters couldn't possibly compare with.

Zhang Lexuan smiled and said, "I guess we're lucky that we found something we need so quickly."

"It's coming!" Huo Yuhao instantly reminded her.

Zhang Lexuan immediately said, "Yuhao, Wang Dong'er, and Wang Qiu'er, you guys are up. Capture it alive, Ruoruo and I will back you up."

All three of them were slightly taken aback by Zhang Lexuan's command. Ten-thousand year soul beasts were a piece of cake for their eight-ringed eldest senior sister, and everyone had assumed she was going to take point.

Cai Mei'er's aura was not far behind everyone, and she subtly nodded her head. Zhang Lexuan could tell that Wang Qiu'er hadn't really gelled with the team, and Zhang Lexuan wanted her to be included as quickly as possible. There were already rumors going around in the academy about Wang Dong'er and Wang Qiu'er, the two people who shared almost the same name and who looked almost identical. Nobody would know how they were related to each other if they didn't tell.

The green shadow was bouncing forward rapidly. It jumped directly from tree to tree, and its green radiance grew stronger with every jump. It covered the two hundred meters between them in no time.

Everyone could clearly see what this ten thousand year soul beast looked like when it got close. The Jade Ocean Spirit Ape was about one and a half meters tall, and it had an extremely lean and muscular body. Its entire body was covered by green fur, and one could feel that its relatively small frame was filled with

strength and power. Its eyes were dark green and ferocious, and two enormous fangs protruded from its lips. The ape's abdominal area swelled continuously as the green light on its body became stronger.

Huo Yuhao pulled Wang Dong'er along and left the formation after Zhang Lexuan's command. Wang Qiu'er followed behind, still maintaining that quiet look.

Huo Yuhao still shared his Spiritual Detection with her no matter what she was like.

He had encountered many ten-thousand year soul beasts before, so he naturally wasn't nervous at all. A dash of orange-gold light flew from his body, and the tiny Snow Lady was already in midair.

Wang Qiu'er was momentarily stunned when she saw the little Snow Lady, and her footsteps became even slower than before. She was even more out of rhythm with the pair in front of her.

Huo Yuhao had already made his move. A purple-gold light immediately erupted from his eyes and flickered once before the Jade Ocean Spirit Ape that was still bounding forward howled agonizingly, and large swathes of green fog started to pour from its body.

"Watch out, that's its Spiritjade Poison Fog!" Zhang Lexuan reminded everyone.

Huo Yuhao naturally knew that this was Spiritjade Poison Fog, and he had already prepared to react. His Spiritual Shock had been fired off precisely. Otherwise, that poisonous fog wouldn't have been coming toward them from a distance, it would have instead spurted directly on top of them!

The ape's soul skill was interrupted, and it broke the branch it was hopping on and plummeted from the trees. However, ten-thousand year soul beasts were not that easy to handle, and it recovered a little even as it fell to the ground. It roared into the sky, and opened its mouth once more as another stream of green fog fired out, blowing the denser poison fog from before towards the Shrek students.

However, a dark blue light resembling a sprawling arch now struck out with lightning speed. The green fog immediately turned into ice and dissipated wherever this light touched, frozen in that very moment, and every piece fluttered to the ground.

The fog itself was made from very tiny particles, and it contained smoke, mist, and water vapor. No matter how strong the Spirit Ape's poison element was, the venomous air that its body generated would naturally carry some water particles \and this meant the fog was ultimately more like mist.

The tiny Snow Lady's tiny hand pointed forward; that was the Ultimate Ice Light Beam, and all the water that this light touched instantly became ice crystals. The venomous fog broke apart by itself, and was dispelled by the extreme chill.

The ape evaded the beam of light in a flash, but its ferocious eyes became a little doubtful and unsettled. The temperature around it was starting to plummet, while its poisonous fog was dispelled in an instant. This made the soul beast, which had a certain level of intelligence, a little afraid.

Describing the process was slow, but everything happened in a single instant. Huo Yuhao and Wang Dong'er darted forward the moment the Snow Lady fired the beam, and the two of them surged into the sky. The golden light in Huo Yuhao's eyes flickered once more as his fourth soul ring sparkled, and a pale golden whirlpool instantly appeared above the Spirit Ape's head.

This ten-thousand year soul beast's spiritual cultivation wasn't weak, but it was far inferior to Huo Yuhao. Spiritual Confusion immediately took effect on the Spirit Ape, and the dazed and confused soul beast immediately used the same attack.

Huo Yuhao was holding onto Wang Dong'er with his right hand, but he released her hand as they raced forward. Wang Dong'er telepathically understood his intentions as she grabbed his arm and shifted behind his back before she grabbed his shoulders. The Radiant Butterfly Goddess' wings extended outward, and the brilliant Light of the Butterfly Goddess burst toward the Jade Ocean Spirit Ape.

This was only Wang Dong'er's second soul skill, but it was both completely charged with the power of light and amplified by her Golden Light Left Arm Bone at the same time.

The Spirit Ape was still struck by Huo Yuhao's Spiritual Confusion, so it couldn't even evade those golden spheres. It was battered until it began to chitter, and streak after streak of fire ignited on the ground. All the venomous particles that had drifted to the ground before were cleansed by the light.

However, the Jade Ocean Spirit Ape had to be relatively formidable for it to reign supreme in its territory inside the Hybrid Region. Its green fur radiated with pale colors as most of the attacks that hammered into its body were dispelled. It was continually forced backward from the onslaught, but it hadn't really been wounded yet.

"Eeeee..." the Spirit Ape howled furiously as the green light on its body immediately became stronger. Huo Yuhao and Wang Dong'er were ten meters away from it at this point, and Wang Dong'er's wings spread apart and beat heavily as she lifted Huo Yuhao back into the sky.

The dense vegetation on the ground began to radiate with powerful green light, with the Spirit Ape at the center. Green light waves that resembled sharp swords moved outward and shot more than five meters high. They covered almost thirty meters in diameter around the Ape.

Wang Qiu'er was originally following behind Huo Yuhao and Wang Dong'er. She paused in her tracks when the ape suddenly exploded with light, then took a small step forward with her left leg to plant herself stably before punching out with her right fist.

Her right fist became completely golden when she punched forward, and a deep dragon roar could be heard that caused all the trees around her to tremble.

The green waves that were pushing forward split open in two as they hit the golden luster, and not a single one struck Wang Qiu'er.

Right when she punched out, the Jade Ocean Spirit Ape in the distance suddenly quivered vigorously. It had finally recovered from Huo Yuhao's Spiritual Confusion, and it turned to flee without hesitation.

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The dense vegetation that had previously burst with surging green light all wilted, as if their vitality had been sucked away.

Right when the Jade Ocean Spirit Ape was turning to run, a golden patch of light suddenly glowed on the ground in front of it. The golden radiance wasn't that brilliant, but it was filled with the gentle power of light. There was another golden hexagram on the ground, but it wasn't very conspicuous, as it was

covered by all the vegetation. However, it was quite large, with a diameter of around three meters, so it extended horizontally across quite a large area.

The Spirit Ape was escaping in a panic. Even though it saw the golden hexagram, it didn't feel any threat from it, so it leapt forward in an attempt to jump right over it.

However, just as it was in midair, the hexagram was triggered. A similar golden pillar surged into the sky and completely enveloped the Jade Ocean Spirit Ape.

The Spirit Ape was propelled at least three meters into the air by this pillar of light. The intense golden light fixed it in place in the air and completely immobilized it, while scorching golden flames incinerated its body. The ape howled painfully and desperately as it struggled as hard as it could, and layer after layer of green soul power undulations flowed from its body.

Wang Dong'er's black fourth soul ring was glowing; this was her fourth soul skill, Hexagram Array.

The Hexagram Array was remarkably powerful. Anything that it struck would immediately be trapped by the power of light contained within, and would have to withstand intense searing fire from the pillar of light. The only way to resist the fire was to continually release soul power, as one couldn't use any soul skills at all once struck by the Hexagram Array; all one could do was release soul power to fight against it. This would naturally consume a lot of soul power, and the duration was closely related to the target's cultivation. However, if the target's cultivation was within two ranks, the shortest duration of the trap would still be at least three seconds.

This was a powerful offensive soul skill and a formidable controlling soul skill at the same time. It trapped and hurt the opponent, and it greatly consumed the opponent's soul power! Truly a forceful and well-rounded soul skill.

Of course, this soul skill naturally had its weaknesses amidst all of its strengths. There could only be one active Hexagram Array at any one point in time, and the array had a one second delay to take effect after it had been unleashed. The target also had to cross over it for it to take effect. The limitations rendered this powerful soul skill not so excessively terrifying.

The Jade Ocean Spirit Ape obviously didn't know that the seemingly unthreatening Hexagram Array would be this potent, or that it would have to fight for dear life inside Wang Dong's fourth soul skill.

Huo Yuhao and Wang Dong'er had already descended again from the sky, and he had already swapped positions with Wang Dong'er in midair.

Wang Dong'er's bluish-golden wings became completely golden, and plunged from the sky like two giant scythes. Her wings crossed one another continuously as they slashed the immobilized Spirit Ape, and it was hurled into the sky once more as it howled in excruciating pain.

The original Hexagram Array instantly vanished, and another Hexagram Array glowed in the spot where the Spirit Ape would land after it was hurtled away.

The one second that the Hexagram Array required had already passed when the Spirit Ape crashed heavily to the ground. It was thrown into the air once more, and torched by the fire of light yet again.

Wang Dong'er had rarely launched attacks ever since she reunited with Huo Yuhao, but that didn't mean she wasn't powerful enough. It simply meant she gave Huo Yuhao more chances to perform. She was willing to be the woman behind his limelight, while the reason why she took the initiative this time was to put on a display for a certain someone.

The two Hexagram Arrays that came one after another, in addition to the mighty slashing wing-blades boosted by her Golden Light Left Arm Bone, severely wounded the Jade Ocean Spirit Ape. The green light that the ape released while it was being scorched within the Hexagram Array was a lot dimmer than before, and two huge gashes crossed both of its shoulders.

Wang Dong'er exclaimed as she extended her wings, and she bounced off Huo Yuhao's palms, which were stretched out to give her a boost. She flew about six or seven meters into the sky, and searing bluish-golden flames lit up on her. In the next moment, her fifth soul ring began to glow and she phased into an elegant and graceful bluish-golden butterfly for a single instant. The area for several hundred meters all around her was painted with bluish-gold hues when she unleashed her attack, as if there were countless bluish-gold butterflies flickering in the sky. Wang Dong'er had already finished her soul skill even as everyone saw a blinding flash.

This was clearly a shock-type offensive soul skill, but Wang Dong'er was simply too fast. The bluish-gold light only seemed to flash once, and she was behind the Spirit Ape in the next moment.

The Hexagram Array's light was instantly withdrawn as the Jade Ocean Spirit Ape plummeted from the sky. It was still trembling vigorously, and everyone could clearly see that it had multiple bluish-golden light patterns plastered all over its body... or, one could describe them as wounds.

"Quickly, Mo Xuan!" Zhang Lexuan shouted.

Mo Xuan wouldn't let an opportunity like this slip away. He darted out with a flash, and arrived before the Jade Ocean Spirit Ape as Zhang Lexuan followed behind him and gave it a final blow.

The Spirit Ape's life force was reaching its end, and it felt as if the power of light was forcibly maintaining its last breath.

Butterfly Goddess' Meteor, Wang Dong'er's fearsome fifth soul skill. Its offensive power was so strong that even Cai Mei'er, who was watching the battle from the side, reacted in shock. The air was filled with the smell of sunshine that was created after everything was incinerated by the fiery light.

A black soul ring rose from the Jade Ocean Spirit Ape's body, and Mo Xuan immediately sat down cross-legged beside it without hesitation. He began to absorb the soul ring with the guidance of his soul power.

Everyone naturally surrounded him for protection.

Zhang Lexuan turned to look at Huo Yuhao and Wang Dong'er, and then at Wang Qiu'er, who had done nothing at all except punching out with that one fist. She frowned delicately and said, "I'll have to criticize you first, Yuhao. You're the main control-type soul master... how did you lead your companions? Why didn't Wang Qiu'er truly participate in the battle from beginning to end? While it's true that you and Wang Dong'er were enough to defeat this Jade Ocean Spirit Ape, wouldn't Qiu'er's participation have made it a lot easier, and you would have expended a lot less soul power?"

Wang Dong'er didn't even wait for Huo Yuhao to respond. She exclaimed unhappily, "We don't know what she can do, and neither do we know what soul skills she possesses or how powerful she is. What if she drags us down when we delegate something to her and ask her to cooperate? Furthermore, we are also concerned about her safety!"

Zhang Lexuan's expression grew dark. "Do you know what being on a team means, Wang Dong'er? If everyone on the team shares your opinion, then the team will crumble sooner or later. You're also from the inner courtyard, and you're Elder Mu's disciple, don't you understand simple reason? Our fight has only just begun, and what we need right now is mutual cooperation and understanding. I don't care about what problems you have with Wang Qiu'er, but you can't act on them on this expedition, as everyone's safety is concerned! From now on, you will temporarily stop your coordination with Huo Yuhao. You will stand guard at the back."

Light flashed across Wang Dong'er's eyes, and she wanted to continue arguing, but Huo Yuhao held her back. Huo Yuhao muttered softly, "Eldest senior sister is right. We are a team, and we are one body. It's my fault, eldest senior sister."

Wang Dong'er also calmed down at this moment. She knew that Zhang Lexuan was right, but she said nothing more even though she still felt a little aggrieved and unconvinced.

Zhang Lexuan's eyes turned towards Wang Qiu'er, and her voice was clearly harsher. "What about you, Wang Qiu'er? What did you do? Why didn't you take the initiative to cooperate? It's understandable why you fell behind in the beginning, but you could have caught up when Wang Dong'er released the first Hexagram Array. Why did you stop? The three of you are working together, do you even have a single inkling of cooperation? You were cowering at the back as you watched your comrades fight. Are you even worthy of becoming part of Shrek Academy's inner courtyard?"

Wang Qiu'er shot her a glare and said coldly, "You are not qualified to decide whether I'm part of the inner courtyard or not. Why do I have to fight if the two of them are enough? It would even have been enough if I had been by myself. Furthermore, I have never cowered in the face of an adversary. If you don't believe that, we can switch positions, and I'll take point."

Eldest senior sister's awe-inspiring aura had been challenged, and the other inner courtyard students were stunned as they looked on, slack-jawed. They had never ever seen anyone talk back to Zhang Lexuan like that.

Zhang Lexuan smiled plainly and said, "I'm sorry, but I am actually qualified to decide whether you're part of Shrek Academy's inner courtyard. I'm part of Shrek Academy's Sea God's Pavilion, and I have the right to ask to the academy to expel any member from the inner courtyard. What you have done violates school rules, so nobody will protect you. If you are unconvinced about my ability, you can challenge me after the expedition. But I am the team leader for now, and I will give you one last chance. Answer me: are you willing to follow my orders and cooperate with the team?"

Wang Qiu'er's eyes turned cold as she listened to Zhang Lexuan, as if she were about to explode. Everyone else was looking at her. Nobody expected that Wang Qiu'er, who was still new, would dare to antagonize their eldest senior sister, who was the team leader. This was the Great Star Dou Forest's inner region, and Zhang Lexuan's actions were indisputable. She had to ensure that the team had only

one voice, and that everyone would listen to her commands and her delegations. That was the only way for her to ensure everyone's safety.

The light in Wang Qiu'er's eyes receded, and she answered plainly, "Alright, as you wish. I will listen to your orders."

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Zhang Lexuan didn't look proud at all, and she muttered solemnly, "You've made the right choice. The reason is because this doesn't just concern your own safety. The entire team's safety is at stake. I hope you won't do anything foolish in our subsequent ventures. From now on, you will be cooperating with Huo Yuhao."

She returned to the formation after speaking these words, and the initial tension and instability was instantly resolved by her timely handling of the situation. She had temporarily severed Huo Yuhao and Wang Dong'er's partnership and paired Huo Yuhao with Wang Qiu'er. This move had a deeper meaning, and she wanted to break the ice and the barriers between the two of them through battle and helping each other out. They had just entered the Hybrid Region, and were still far from actual danger. It was better to resolve these issues right now than when the real problems came around, and she targeted both parties at the same time so nobody would feel aggrieved or wronged.

Wang Dong'er took a few steps back reluctantly. She followed behind Huo Yuhao, but was still quite near. Wang Qiu'er was perhaps deliberately trying to upset her as she walked up to Wang Dong'er's original spot. She was standing extremely close to Huo Yuhao, except she wasn't holding hands with him.

Wang Dong'er nudged Huo Yuhao from behind, and Huo Yuhao hurriedly waved his hands behind her and clasped her hands once to tell her to relax and not to worry.

Wang Dong'er was still a little reluctant, but she had to get used to it, as she couldn't just ignore Zhang Lexuan's orders.

Wang Qiu'er was still quiet like she had always been. She was just standing there and staring into the distance, and her large blue eyes looked a little empty. Nobody knew what she was thinking about.

Huo Yuhao was also contemplating something... he was thinking about Wang Qiu'er's punch from before.

He had been engaged in battle, but he was still observing and monitoring the entire battlefield through his Spiritual Detection. Wang Qiu'er's punch had looked as simple as a punch could be, but the power that had erupted in that moment had astonished Huo Yuhao.

There was a hint of unrivaled power and prestige within that punch. It was accompanied by that deep dragon's roar, which had momentarily dazed Huo Yuhao while he was monitoring the battlefield.

Furthermore, Wang Qiu'er's punch was only intended to protect herself, and she didn't attack the Jade Ocean Spirit Ape directly. The truth was that her punch had quite an effect, as Huo Yuhao could clearly feel the intense fear that rose from the ape, and the ape fled into the trap that he and Wang Dong'er had set up immediately afterwards.

Pure strength could actually reach a level such as this. Furthermore, Wang Qiu'er's spiritual power had to be quite formidable as well. At least, her ability to fuse spiritual power and soul power was definitely equal to his own, if not better.

This was the judgment that Huo Yuhao had made about her in this short period of time. However, Wang Qiu'er only made that one attack, and he didn't have enough information to make even more deductions. He was becoming increasingly interested in this Golden Dragon martial soul.

This Jade Ocean Spirit Ape was only around fifteen thousand years old, so Mo Xuan didn't have too much difficulty absorbing it. An hour passed before he finally finished absorbing his sixth soul ring, and he leapt to his feet happily.

"Thank you." Mo Xuan walked to Huo Yuhao, Wang Dong'er, and Wang Qiu'er and thanked them with a grateful look.

Wang Dong'er and Wang Qiu'er remained silent as Huo Yuhao replied, "You're welcome. We're a team anyway, it's good that it was suitable for you."

Mo Xuan glanced at him and then at the masked beauties beside him. His face suddenly had an added drop of amusement as he said, "Good luck, brother."

Huo Yuhao could obviously see the teasing and mocking expression in his eyes, and he suddenly felt a little embarrassed.

At this point, Zhang Lexuan called everyone up to keep moving.

Everyone became more vigilant after their encounter with the Jade Ocean Spirit Ape. However, they didn't feel much pressure with Huo Yuhao's Spiritual Detection.

They fought back or chased away several unsuitable soul beasts as they moved forward, and ventured deeper and deeper into the Hybrid Region.

Huo Yuhao could tell from the distance they had traveled that the area they were in had surpassed his previous expeditions into the Great Star Dou Forest. He felt both nervous and excited at the same time, as every soul master wanted to see the Great Star Dou Forest's mysterious Slaughter Grounds!

Moving inward from the Hybrid Region would take them into the Core Region, and the Slaughter Grounds were at the center of the Core Region. They were travelling closer and closer to that area.

The forest's Peripheral Region and Hybrid Regions had the largest surface area of the four main regions. The Core Region was comparatively smaller, but the soul beasts residing within the Core Region naturally had incredibly frightening abilities. How could any soul beast enter and live within the Core Region without some ability?

The Great Star Dou Forest's layout, where the inner regions were more dangerous while the weaker soul beasts resided in the outer regions, was logical. Huo Yuhao could feel the life energy in the air becoming increasingly dense as they moved further in, something beneficial for any living being. He could only imagine that the Slaughter Grounds at the Core Region's center was probably a paradise, and it was probably the best place for soul beasts to cultivate.

The sky had gone dark by now, and it was night time. Roars and howls could be heard from time to time, along with a cacophony of bird calls and insect chirps in the area all around them.

Zhang Lexuan paused and took a look at the sky through the canopy. She lowered her voice and said, "We should be inside the Core Region's central areas. It's not good to move during the night, so we shall rest here today. Huo Yuhao, can you expand your detection area so that we can find a suitable place to make camp?"

"Alright." Huo Yuhao raised his spiritual power and swiftly expanded his Spiritual Detection. The radius reached a thousand meters in an instant, but he stopped at this distance, as expanding it further would require his Eye of Destiny.

Zhang Lexuan pointed in one direction after a moment, and led everyone there.

It was a place that was relatively higher than the area around it, with dense vegetation and tall trees surrounding it.

Li Yongyue released his martial soul. A moonblade shaped like a beautiful crescent and flickering with a chilly light appeared, and it swept around as it unleashed several blade rays that cleared away all the undergrowth around this area.

Just like Zhang Lexuan had said during their picnic before this, they would have to take shelter in the open air as they travelled into the Great Star Dou Forest's inner regions. This place would be their camp tonight. Sleeping in tents was an impossibility, as they had to be ready for any changes or unforeseen circumstances.

Zhang Lexuan glanced around and surveyed her surroundings via Huo Yuhao's Spiritual Detection before she lowered her voice and said, "There are many soul beasts in the area. However, I could sense during our journey here that there are hardly any powerful soul beasts that have claimed this area as part of their territory. Thanks to Huo Yuhao's Spiritual Detection, our progress today has been swift, and we have reached such a deep position after just eight hours. We will encounter a lot more trouble from tomorrow onwards, and our forward movement will be much slower. We will have sentries tonight, and everyone will rotate shifts. Those who are resting will meditate where they are. I'll take first watch, and Ruoruo will go next. Everyone will keep watch for two hours. Huo Yuhao and Wang Qiu'er will take the third shift. Wang Dong'er, Li Yongyue, and Mo Xuan are not suitable for keeping watch, so the three of you will relax and rest."

Even though Wang Dong'er didn't feel comfortable about not keeping watch with Huo Yuhao throughout the night, she didn't raise any objections. Her abilities were not suitable for keeping a stealthy watch during the night. The Radiant Butterfly Goddess was too brilliant, too obvious, and she would easily attract soul beasts in the area. She would probably bring great trouble to everyone if she attracted a lot of soul beasts to where their camp was located.

Wang Qiu'er glanced at Huo Yuhao, and realized that Huo Yuhao was also staring at her as their gazes met. Wang Qiu'er snapped her head away, and Huo Yuhao was slightly taken aback as he realized that Wang Qiu'er's eyes were a little different from before... they seemed a little more amiable than they were during the day.

They absolutely couldn't start a fire inside the Great Star Dou Forest. Soul beasts were not like typical wild beasts, and there were many soul beasts that had a strong preference for flames and fire. Therefore, enjoying a meal along the way was as normal as it could get.

Everybody was feeling fortunate about having had a nice meal at lunchtime. Even though they were quite exhausted from their journey, everyone at least had sufficient psychological comfort and satisfaction.

They munched on some simple dry rations and drank a few mouthfuls from their water bottles before everyone sat down in their respective spots and began to cultivate.

Huo Yuhao and Wang Dong'er were different from the rest. They sat facing each other with their palms raised and in contact as they began to circulate their Haodong power.

They were deliberately suppressing it, but their bodies were still shining with pale light. This couldn't be helped, as soul power circulation during cultivation would always release light to a certain extent.

Zhang Lexuan was still standing there as she gazed into the horizon. She no longer had Huo Yuhao's Spiritual Detection to support her, so she could only rely on her own abilities to stand guard for now.

Wang Qiu'er sat in a spot not far from Huo Yuhao and Wang Dong'er, and her alluring eyes showed thoughtfulness as she watched them with their palms together.

Everyone was part of the inner courtyard, and they were all extremely qualified and outstanding. They quickly entered meditation even though they were in a perilous area, and not a single one of them couldn't adapt.

They swiftly recovered their soul power, and their fatigue was also eased in the process. They would probably need about two hours to return to their peak condition, but they took a longer time to rest to recover from physical fatigue and mental exhaustion, so that everyone would be in an even better state.

Two hours quickly passed. Han Ruoruo rose when the time was up and took over Zhang Lexuan's shift.

Zhang Lexuan's arrangements left no room for dispute, and everyone had no choice but to obey. The whole night would be about ten hours long: she took the first two hours, Han Ruoruo took the next two, while Huo Yuhao and Wang Qiu'er would stand guard for the next two hours. The last four hours would definitely still fall to her and Han Ruoruo, which was equivalent to the two team leaders bearing most of the responsibility to stand guard for the night.

The forest appeared tranquil and undisturbed. It was as if they were blessed by the heavens, and four hours passed without encountering any soul beasts passing by.

Huo Yuhao woke up when his time came. He withdrew his hands that were still pressed against Wang Dong'er's hands, and Wang Dong'er opened her eyes at the same time, before sticking out her tongue. She glanced at Wang Qiu'er not far from their position as she gestured at Huo Yuhao to be careful.

Huo Yuhao gave her a thumbs-up to show that he had no problems, and then he stood up and walked over to Wang Qiu'er.

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Han Ruoruo smiled and whispered, "It's up to the two of you now. Do warn everyone in time if you discover anything."

"Alright. Hurry and rest, senior sister," Huo Yuhao answered politely, while Wang Qiu'er didn't respond at all.

The two of them stood shoulder to shoulder, and Wang Qiu'er was still as cold as she had always been. However, she actually removed her veil at this moment for some reason.

The forest night wasn't an absolute darkness where one couldn't see anything at all. Moonlight cascaded through the canopy and showered onto the forest through the shadows of the trees, and there were some tiny insects around that gave off light as well. The light was weak, but they could still see.

Huo Yuhao looked at her profile when he turned towards Wang Qiu'er... it was just so familiar and beautiful. If he hadn't known better, he wouldn't have been able to tell whether the person beside him was Wang Qiu'er or Wang Dong'er.

She's so pretty!, Huo Yuhao exclaimed in admiration inside, before he hurriedly turned back around and activated his Spiritual Detection before he shared it with her.

Wang Qiu'er glanced in his direction and muttered, "Your soul skill is good."

She had a charming voice, but it still sounded a little cold and forced no matter how one heard it.

Huo Yuhao retrieved some dry rations and asked, "Do you want some?" The rations he took out were meat sandwiches he had prepared earlier. Baked bread was food that didn't spoil easily, and there was some meat packed inside. It was a little dry, but it still tasted alright.

Huo Yuhao was just being courteous and polite, but he didn't think that Wang Qiu'er would ask, "Did you make that yourself?"

Huo Yuhao nodded and replied, "Dong'er is a little picky with her food. I made some braised meat before this, and the baked bread was taken from the canteen. It tastes alright."

Wang Qiu'er glanced at him and said, "You're really good to her."

Huo Yuhao smiled and gestured towards her with the meat sandwich in his hands.

Wang Qiu'er took two pieces from him. Huo Yuhao realized to his surprise that her hands were covered with a faint golden aura. That layer was dark golden in color, and it was surprisingly inconspicuous in the darkness of the night. She passed the sandwiches back in the next moment.

"Hand me another two," Wang Qiu'er said plainly

Huo Yuhao took the two sandwiches back suspiciously, but he had a revelation once he held them in his hands. The two sandwiches were now warm, and they carried delicate wafts of cooking meat.

Her soul power can even be used for grilling? Huo Yuhao hurriedly passed her another two sandwiches, while he took a bite from the one already in his hands.

The sandwich tasted different when it was warm – the braised meat became a lot more tender, while the tendons in the meat were half-melted. The fresh and salty juice that diffused into the bread had been warmed up, and the sandwich truly tasted a lot better than it did when it was cold.

Wang Qiu'er did the same thing and heated up her own sandwich before she started nibbling away.

"I didn't expect you to have an ability like this! @We don't have to eat cold rations anymore!" Huo Yuhao said with a smile on his face.

Wang Qiu'er seemed to have recovered her coldness as she said, "Just this once. Consider this a gesture of appreciation for your grilled fish and soup in the afternoon."

Huo Yuhao wasn't upset at all. He chuckled and said, "Do you really have to reject everyone and close yourself off like that? We're teammates now."

Wang Qiu'er snapped her head around and stared into his eyes as she asked, "Do you guys really treat me like your teammates? Then why do I feel a sense of hostility from her?"

Huo Yuhao was rendered speechless by her question. The truth was that he could also feel the hostility that Wang Dong'er harbored against Wang Qiu'er. He forced a laugh and said, "The truth is that I don't understand it, either. The two of you look too similar, and Dong'er insists that she doesn't have a twin sister. Perhaps that's why she's suspicious of you."

"I trust that time will serve to prove everything." There was a look of profoundness in his eyes when he uttered this last sentence.

Wang Qiu'er turned back around and continued eating the sandwich in her hands. She said coldly, "I have never had to prove anything to anyone."

Huo Yuhao had already finished the food in his hands by now. He retrieved his water bag and took a few gulps as he smiled and said, "That's not a good attitude. First, we live in the same world, and you can't possibly reject and forsake everything in the world. You can't decide how people look at you. Since that's the case, why don't you try to fit in? Will being so reticent and aloof bring you happiness?"

"Fit in? Do you really think I can fit in? Ever since I left... I left home, everyone outside has been attracted by my looks. Do you know how many people come forward to flirt with me in a single day? I've even met some people who would do anything to get to me. I do want to fit in, but the process of fitting in will have to rely on my fists. That is the reason I wear the veil, and it has alleviated much of my troubles."

Huo Yuhao said exasperatedly, "That's because you're too good-looking. Perhaps this is the negative effect of being so blessed with beauty by the heavens. However, I can guarantee that you won't run into such problems within Shrek Academy."

Wang Qiu'er muttered disdainfully, "You can only speak for yourself." She suddenly tossed the baked bread in her hands as she said, "It's disgusting. I'm not eating that anymore."

Huo Yuhao was momentarily stunned, before his eyes suddenly became ice-cold in the next moment. Wang Qiu'er felt a slight chill, and turned around subconsciously to look at him. She met Huo Yuhao's eyes, and his eyes flickered with chilly light as she felt a tidal wave of animosity.

However, this hostility didn't continue, and the coldness receded. Huo Yuhao walked over to where she threw the baked bread as he bent down and picked it up. "Do you want to fight?" Wang Qiu'er raised her chin and stared at Huo Yuhao provocatively.

Huo Yuhao shot a cold look at her. "I would have if we were elsewhere. Have your family never taught you to treasure your food? Do you know that a small piece of baked bread like this can save a life?"

Wang Qiu'er twitched her lips contemptuously.

Huo Yuhao continued, "Have you ever felt hunger?"

Wang Qiu'er answered coldly, "Powerful people will never feel hungry."

Huo Yuhao laughed scornfully and said, "Powerful people? Have you been a powerful individual since the moment you were born? The only powerful people were your parents back then. You've never tasted hunger, so you naturally have no idea how precious food is."

The truth was that he didn't laugh because he despised Wang Qiu'er, he just couldn't control himself. He was infuriated when Wang Qiu'er tossed the baked bread onto the ground, as he hated people that didn't respect and appreciate food the most. Furthermore, it was something he had made himself, so she was throwing away his hard work.

However, when he picked up the baked bread from the ground, he couldn't help but laugh. Only one bite was taken, but the teeth marks were still there, while all the braised meat was gone. Not even a single bit was left. This girl is really picky with her food! She was just calling the baked bread disgusting.

Wang Qiu'er puffed up her firm chest that was more developed than Wang Dong'er's and said, "How do you know I wasn't a powerful being when I was born? It's just a wretched piece of baked bread."

Huo Yuhao turned his head around. He didn't want to see the coldness and disdain on her face as he gazed into the darkness and said, "Yes, it's just a piece of baked bread. However, a piece of baked bread like this means the opportunity to continue surviving to me."

He held onto the baked bread that was just thrown onto the ground as he spoke, and he actually bit down on the bread that Wang Qiu'er had just eaten from and began to chew.

Wang Qiu'er was still upset, and she was still wearing that look of contempt, but she was dazed when she saw his actions.

He's... he's eating the baked bread that I've just eaten from. That was the only thought running through her head.

And Huo Yuhao? Huo Yuhao's mind was only filled with precious memories.

"I was only five years old back then, and I was still a skinny little kid. My mother and I had to live under someone else's roof, and my mother would feed me everyday with her meager salary. My mother still had to wash clothes outside even in the bitter chill of winter, and her hands were covered by wounds and scars.

"My mother loved me so much. She always told me that I was the only thing that mattered in her life. I still remember that day... the sky had turned dark, and my mother came running in elatedly from

outside. It was hard to see her smile through all the excruciating toil of her daily life, but she was just so happy that day.

“Do you know why?”

He turned back around and stared into Wang Qiu'er's eyes. At this moment, tears had already welled up in his eyes.

He took another bite from the piece of baked bread. He munched and chewed vigorously, and his tears trickled down his cheeks uncontrollably.

“Why?” The cold expression on Wang Qiu'er's face had vanished, she was at a loss.

Huo Yuhao continued chewing on the baked bread as he said with a quivering voice, “The reason was because my mother was working in the kitchen that day, and the chef in the kitchen had given her a piece of baked bread that was fresh from the wok after she had finished. It was still hot and fragrant, and my mother thought about me. I wouldn't have to eat that cornbread anymore, and I could finally have some bread made from white flour! That was the reason she was so happy and excited!

“She didn't want the baked bread to go cold, so she stuffed and hugged the steaming bread in her chest. When she took out the baked bread and handed it to me, her chest had turned red from all that heat. I was still young. I still didn't know anything back then. All I knew was to nibble on that warm baked bread.”

At this point, Huo Yuhao was sobbing and sniffing.

He normally wouldn't reveal his emotions so easily in front of outsiders. However, he began to reminisce about his childhood when Wang Qiu'er heated up the baked bread for him. His mind was filled with images of his mother's satisfied smile, but his heart was filled with suffocating pain.

Mom, mom! If only you were still alive. I have the ability to take care of you now, and I have the ability to protect you now!

Everyone else was still meditating. Huo Yuhao was squatting down as he forcibly suppressed his sobbing sounds in the quiet night as he released the dejection and grief in his heart.

Wang Qiu'er was still standing beside him, but she was completely rooted to the ground at this moment. She had never expected a single piece of baked bread could have a story like that.

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Huo Yuhao was choking a little on the baked bread because of his tears, and his sobbing instantly stopped, and became some unnatural sounds.

Wang Qiu'er recovered and hurriedly squatted down beside him as she patted his back gently to help him get his breath back.

It took some effort, but this mouthful finally went down. Huo Yuhao wiped the tears from his face as he lowered his head and said, “Thank you.”

Wang Qiu'er reached out and snatched the remaining half from his hands. Huo Yuhao snapped back around at her with a look of astonishment and a little bit of anger, but he then realized that the girl was stuffing the entire piece of baked bread into her mouth as if she wanted to swallow it whole. Her tender and pretty cheeks instantly puffed out as she struggled to chew.

Their gazes met once more, and Huo Yuhao laughed through his tears and sniffing as he watched her swallowing furiously. He handed her the water bag in his hands.

It wasn't easy, but Wang Qiu'er finally swallowed the baked bread in her mouth with the help of some water.

"Ugh..." Wang Qiu'er took a deep breath, and she couldn't help but whisper, "It tastes terrible."

Huo Yuhao chortled and said, "It's not so bad. It's not terrible to the point where it's inedible, at least."

Wang Qiu'er snapped, "I'm talking about your saliva."

Huo Yuhao was stunned momentarily. Right! They had both taken turns to bite into this baked bread, and it could be said that they were swallowing each other's saliva. There was a little bit of awkwardness amongst all this, and he subconsciously turned to look at Wang Dong'er, who was still meditating, a feeling of guilt surging up from the bottom of his heart.

Wang Qiu'er grunted contemptuously and said, "Men who are afraid of women are good for nothing. You're a grown man now, and you're still sobbing and crying like that. That's even worse." She handed the water bag back to Huo Yuhao and stood up.

Huo Yuhao didn't get angry at all as he put the water bag away. He didn't follow Wang Qiu'er, but remained where he was. He made a mental note that had to maintain his distance from Wang Qiu'er, and he couldn't let Wang Dong'er misunderstand.

However, he swiftly raised his head at this moment. His eyes were still filled with tears, but they suddenly froze as he stared in one particular direction. His Spiritual Detection was initially working in an area around him, but he instantly switched to a particular direction in front of him.

Wang Qiu'er was also part of his Spiritual Detection, and she naturally gazed over at the first possible moment. Both of them felt their hearts skip a beat.

The first feeling that Huo Yuhao's Spiritual Detection gave them was an aura that seemed to blanket the entire world: it didn't come from a single soul beast, it was from a group, and one that was charged with power.

Pair after pair of dark red eyes glowed faintly in the darkness of the night, and their muscular bodies didn't make a sound at all as they traversed the forest. They were like specters of the night as they gradually moved closer.

Huo Yuhao instantly warned everyone who was still cultivating with his Spiritual Detection. He didn't make a sound at all, and he made a gesture to Wang Qiu'er to keep quiet at the same time.

He still didn't know whether these soul beasts were coming after them, or if they were just passing by. These soul beasts were about eight hundred meters away, and they were gradually pushing forward.

Everyone woke up one after another. They didn't need Huo Yuhao to tell them verbally, they could "see" the soul beasts that were coming closer through Huo Yuhao's Spiritual Detection.

At this moment, the students from the inner courtyard displayed their exemplary qualities. Nobody made a sound as they swiftly started to move, and they relied on their geographical advantage to find a spot where they could best defend themselves.

Zhang Lexuan came next to Huo Yuhao swiftly, her pretty eyes sparkling. She didn't look a single bit like she did when she was meditating.

She made an inquisitive gesture toward Huo Yuhao, and Huo Yuhao responded with a subtle shake of his head to signal that he didn't know what these soul beasts were after.

Zhang Lexuan waved her hands for everyone to maintain their formation.

There were quite a few soul beasts in this pack, at least a few hundred. Soul beasts that lived in the Hybrid Region had at least a thousand years of cultivation, and several hundred of them would be extremely difficult to deal with. Furthermore, Huo Yuhao's Spiritual Detection told him that there were more than just thousand-year soul beasts among the pack they were facing. It was better not to provoke this pack if they could help it.

The soul beasts didn't seem like they had discovered the company, and were just gradually moving towards the humans' position.

Zhang Lexuan's eyebrows knit together. She was a little conflicted at this moment; she felt like these soul beasts weren't coming after them, but the marks they would leave behind if they left this location now would definitely be discovered. However, they would definitely meet up with these soul beasts if they didn't move away. Such an enormous pack would undoubtedly assault them if they saw them.

Zhang Lexuan glanced at Huo Yuhao subconsciously, but right at this moment, Huo Yuhao suddenly used his spiritual power to signal in everyone's minds, "Prepare for battle!"

Just when he gave out the signal, the soul beasts that seemed like they had no target all suddenly picked up speed, and split into two groups as they flanked the Shrek band from both sides. The seven or eight soul beasts that were charging at the front were the leanest and most robust ones.

They were simply too quick – the forest's complicated landscape didn't seem to impede them at all. They separated and flanked, and it was obvious that these soul beasts had premeditated their battle strategy. They had clearly discovered the company way earlier, and treated them like prey.

Zhang Lexuan growled softly, "Prepare for battle, everyone! Maintain the original formation – these soul beasts are very hard to handle, so everyone is to go straight for the kill! Give your all in this fight! Mo Xuan, unleash your Halo!"

"Yes!" Mo Xuan acknowledged as two yellow, two purple, and two black soul rings rose up from his feet. In the next moment, halo after halo rippled from his body, enveloping everyone.

Huo Yuhao could clearly feel that his strength and speed had been amplified in tandem, and his spiritual focus became a little stronger. Mo Xuan had unleashed his first three halos, but the strength of his

amplification couldn't really be complimented, as its effects couldn't even reach a fifth of Ning Tian's Seven Treasures Glazed Pagoda.

The soul beasts arrived right when Mo Xuan activated his halos. The seven or eight burliest soul beasts were in the vanguard.

Everyone could clearly see that the soul beasts were a bunch of baboons when they came nearer. They were huge and tall, and could even be compared to a normal bear species. Their muscles were tight and bulging, and their lean and mean appearance instilled a sense of fear in people's hearts. Their faces were ghastly white, in strong contrast to their black fur. Their blood-red eyes in their white faces were daunting, and this appearance was especially petrifying in the darkness of the night.

"These are Bloody Baboons. Be careful, everyone – Bloody Baboons have powerful physical strength, and Bloodlust is their innate skill. Bloodlust allows them to immediately boost their offensive and defensive capabilities. Their heads are their vital point, so everyone should go for their heads."

Zhang Lexuan didn't panic at all as they faced this siege from a pack of high-level soul beasts. She rapidly gave the necessary commands while she released her martial soul at the same time.

Huo Yuhao was standing behind her, and he could see two yellow, two purple, three black, and one red soul ring rise from beneath her feet. The pack of Bloody Baboons paused momentarily when her red soul ring appeared, as if they were a little hesitant.

Bloody Baboons were soul beasts that were extremely hard to deal with. They moved in packs, even as their individual fighting strength was also relatively formidable. They were known as beings who had bronze skin and steel bones. They had strong defensive capabilities, and they had immense strength powerful enough to strangle a tiger to death with their bare hands. They were highly resistant to soul power of any element, and their black fur, which was as tough as metal, was their best defensive trait. What was even more frightening was their innate skill, Bloodlust: once it was used, their defensive and offensive capabilities would be boosted exponentially, while they would lose the ability to feel pain and would no longer fear death.

Bloody Baboons were naturally cruel and fierce, and they were also very intelligent. They were clearly trying not to be discovered when they were coming forward slowly. Fortunately, Huo Yuhao could tell through his Spiritual Detection that their blood essences were changing, and he was able to warn everyone to get ready in advance.

The tallest Bloody Baboon at the very front had a conspicuous lock of golden fur on its forehead. It howled into the sky, more than three meters tall when it stood up straight as it hammered its chests heavily with its fists, which it sounded like deafening drums. A circle of golden light radiated from its body, and the Bloody Baboons around him were covered with a pale golden layer. Their auras became even more fearsome than before, and the fear that had flashed across their eyes before vanished into thin air. Murderous looks exploded from their eyes as they snarled and charged forward.

Zhang Lexuan lowered her voice and said, "That's the Baboon King. He's a fifty-thousand year soul beast! Be careful, everyone – this is Mass Berserk!"

Something glowed behind Zhang Lexuan's back as she spoke: it was a crescent moon that seemed like it was hanging off a tree as everything lit up after its appearance.

Zhang Lexuan's skin looked pale and translucent under the moonlight. She pointed forward with her right hand, and moonlight immediately erupted from the crescent moon above her. The baboons that came forward first were immediately smashed away wherever the moonlight fell.

However, the Bloody Baboons' defensive capabilities were boosted under the effects of Mass Berserk, and they just rolled around on the ground before they got back to their feet, mostly unharmed.

The group from Shrek Academy had been surrounded at this moment. Large throngs of baboons leapt out from their surroundings, but they didn't come any closer, forming a tight and compact circle around the humans.

The company could tell from their movements that these baboons had between two to three thousand years of cultivation. The Baboon King was undoubtedly the strongest one, and there were several other ten-thousand year baboons beside him. There were also several other ten-thousand year baboons in the packs that had flanked them to either side.

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The Baboon King continued hammering his chest. His Mass Berserk continued to spread, and quickly encompassed all the baboons around him. However, the baboons were not hasty with their attack, and only pushed forward gradually.

The air immediately became extremely tense.

The students from Shrek weren't panicky or flustered in the least, even though they were facing such a hazardous situation. The Baboon King had fifty thousand years of cultivation, which meant that he was almost equivalent to an eight-ringed Soul Douluo. The humans had two Soul Douluo on their side, and they even had Dean Cai, who was a Titled Douluo, to hold the fort. These Bloody Baboons were difficult to deal with, but it wouldn't be easy for them to threaten their company.

Han Ruoruo had shifted behind Zhang Lexuan at this moment. Her Dazzling Golden Rope shimmered into view. However, she didn't attack her enemies, but wrapped the rope once around her companions' waists. A powerful control-type soul master didn't just control his or her enemies, but also had to take care of his or her own people.

The Baboon King stared at Zhang Lexuan with those ferocious eyes of his, while Zhang Lexuan returned his gaze with a calm expression.

All of a sudden, the Baboon King roared as he applied strength to his thick and strong lower limbs. His incredibly muscular body immediately barreled towards Zhang Lexuan, while a layer of golden light glimmered on his body. His tremendous forward-moving figure actually appeared faintly surreal and illusory.

Zhang Lexuan's first and third soul rings lit up at the same time. A streak of moonlight first descended on her body, and she was completely encircled by the radiance, before another beam of moonlight shone on the Baboon King's body immediately afterwards.

There was a loud boom, and the Baboon King's momentum paused, but he still continued his charge at Zhang Lexuan.

The other baboons charged forward when the Baboon King made his move, and the ten-thousand year Bloody Baboons immediately launched their hysterical assault.

Zhang Lexuan placed her hands in front of her chest. The crescent moon behind her burst with light as streak after streak of moonlight blasted down from the sky. She blocked the Baboon King's forward momentum and four other ten-thousand year baboons at the same time.

Of course, she wasn't the only target, and enemies circled in from all sides.

Two of the ten-thousand year baboons charged toward Huo Yuhao and the others. At this moment, Wang Dong'er was on Huo Yuhao's right, while Wang Qiu'er was on his left, both of them having removed their veils for the night's rest.

The two baboons leapt into the sky at the same time, and one of them went straight for Huo Yuhao. It raised placed its elongated hands above its head and clenched them into fists before slamming them straight down.

Huo Yuhao was young, but he was an experienced fighter. Cold light flickered in his eyes as four soul rings rose from beneath him.

His eyes instantly turned white as a white light circle spread in all directions: Mass Enfeeblement!

Huo Yuhao's Mass Enfeeblement was also like a halo, but it was far stronger than Mo Xuan's halos. Almost all the Bloody Baboons slowed down in that instant, and the ferocity of their forward momentum was greatly reduced.

The Bloody Baboons were adept with physical attacks, while Mass Enfeeblement targeted physical bodies, so it could be considered a counter. Mass Berserk had just taken effect on these baboons, but its effects were immediately countered and offset by Mass Enfeeblement.

Huo Yuhao was taking care of the whole battlefield, but he chose to advance instead of retreat as he slipped forward in a flash. His body slid just underneath the ten thousand year baboon's armpits as he slapped his right hand toward the other one.

The Bloody Baboons' tactic of choice was to meet force with force. The baboon didn't even bother evading Huo Yuhao's attack as it swung its arms out and swept them towards Huo Yuhao.

However, was Huo Yuhao's right hand that easy to fight against? When his right hand pressed against the baboon, the Controlling Crane Capturing Dragon was immediately used. He didn't pull, but pushed instead, and he borrowed the baboon's own strength to bounce backwards rapidly. Five streams of blood spurted out as that ten thousand year Bloody Baboon howled ferociously.

A dark golden blade glimmered in Huo Yuhao's right hand; the foot-long blade had been buried entirely in the baboon's body. Its fur was tough, but it was still a far cry from Huo Yuhao's Darkgolden Terrorclaw.

Still, this baboon was truly fearsome – its ribs were heinously injured, but it hadn't lost its ability to fight. It began to roar hysterically on the spot while a dense blood essence erupted from its body. It was about to enter Bloodlust mode.

Huo Yuhao had singled out one of the two ten-thousand year Bloody Baboons, so the other one naturally went for Wang Dong'er and Wang Qiu'er.

Wang Dong'er was focused on Huo Yuhao, and she immediately followed up after Huo Yuhao launched his attack. The Radiant Butterfly Goddess' wings stretched out behind her back as the voluminous Light of the Butterfly Goddess burst forward.

The Light of the Butterfly Goddess wasn't weak, but it was definitely not strong enough to break through the Bloody Baboon's defenses. All it could do was hinder the baboon's forward movement.

Wang Qiu'er made her move at this moment. A crisp dragon roar could be heard as Wang Qiu'er's body flared up with riveting and brilliant golden light.

She arrived before the baboon in an instant.

The baboon swung its fist at her without hesitation.

A stunning scene occurred. Wang Qiu'er was such a pretty little lady, but she didn't use any soul skills at this moment, choosing to meet force with force instead. Her small white fist clashed with the baboon's dustpan-sized fist in the air, just like that.

Wang Qiu'er's fist turned golden in an instant. Her eyes were incredibly determined and unwavering, and the Bloody Baboon actually halted in its tracks after colliding with her simple punch.

Golden light burst out as a shrill cracking sound could be heard. That Bloody Baboon's arm arched backward in the instant after the collision, but only half of its arm moved. It had such a thick and tough arm, and yet it broke, just like that! The ten-thousand year Bloody Baboon's forte was meeting force with force, and yet it actually lost the fight, and absolutely so!

Wang Qiu'er seemed to have expected this, and she didn't pause after launching her fist. She tapped on the ground with the tip of her foot, and her entire body was propelled forward with a boom, as if she were a golden cannon shell!

The Bloody Baboon wanted to use Bloodlust as it howled in agony, while extending the fingers of its other hand to make a grab at Wang Qiu'er.

Wang Qiu'er's body was still in midair, but she didn't dodge or evade the attack, making the exact same grabbing action.

Behind her, Wang Dong'er didn't even see how she did it; all she saw was Wang Qiu'er grabbing one of the baboon's fingers. In the next moment, her forward-moving body suddenly plummeted toward the ground, and she touched down like a five-hundred-kilogram sluice.

Boom! An even more violent impact could be heard this time, and an intense shockwave erupted from where Wang Qiu'er landed on the ground. She flipped over several other Bloody Baboons that were charging behind her.

Afterwards, she was still grabbing onto that Bloody Baboon's finger as she hurled its two-meter tall, muscular, and lean body into the air.

Yes, she hurled it into the air.

Boom! The ten-thousand year Bloody Baboon was slammed forcefully into the ground, the force of the impact knocking over two other baboons. Wang Qiu'er released that finger, which was broken until it couldn't be broken any further, and she raised her right fist as two yellow, two purple, and one black soul rings rose from her body. Her first purple soul ring sparkled, and she punched out as a dragon head seemed to flash by in midair and integrate itself into this fist... and this fist rained down onto the Bloody Baboon's tough skull.

Boom! The Bloody Baboon's head was driven directly into the ground. Its enormous body was still exuding blood energy as it suddenly stopped, and its legs curved upward before they crashed down heavily once more. The baboon was no longer moving.

This...

Wang Dong'er held herself in high regard, but even so, she couldn't help but draw in a cold breath as she watched. So violent! Wang Qiu'er is just so violent! From beginning to end, Wang Qiu'er had relied entirely upon her fearsome and ferocious strength to fight, but this seemingly simple brutality and fighting style actually killed a ten-thousand year Bloody Baboon in such a short period of time.

Huo Yuhao's fight was also ending on the other side.

The Bloody Baboon had just unleashed Bloodlust, but it couldn't really use it before it landed heavily onto its own kin.

Huo Yuhao used Spiritual Confusion, and it hit the baboon right at the time when it had raised its Bloodlust to the highest possible level.

The ten-thousand year Bloody Baboon was experiencing pain, hysteria, weakness, and bloodlust at the same time, and it finally went insane. It began to wave its fists around with all its strength like a windmill, and the first two targets were its partners beside it as it knocked them into the sky.

It began to whirl its arms around even more crazily in the next moment.

Huo Yuhao was a member of Shrek Academy, and he naturally had some knowledge about soul beasts in their Bloodlust state. Soul beasts that were under the effects of Bloodlust had their strength greatly amplified, but their intelligence would also be lowered to the minimum; that was the price of Bloodlust. It was easy to imagine how soul beasts would react to Spiritual Confusion when they could no longer maintain their rationality and intelligence.

It was easy to see that Huo Yuhao's Mass Enfeeblement and Spiritual Confusion were exceptionally effective against Bloody Baboons.

Huo Yuhao didn't pursue his target as faint lights flickered. He was a control-type soul master, so his main role was to assert control over the entire battlefield and protect his companions at the same time, thus eventually achieving victory.

He turned around after unleashing Spiritual Confusion, and he caught the scene where Wang Qiu'er hurled the other Bloody Baboon into the sky and slammed it into the ground.

Huo Yuhao's mouth opened so wide a duck egg could probably fit inside. This... isn't this the girl that snatched the baked bread from me? This strength is a little too terrifying...

Huo Yuhao's strength was relatively formidable, but he knew that he could not reach that level of brutality and explosiveness. But she had managed to do it; the Golden Dragon truly lived up to its name as the Ancestor of Strength! Furthermore, her strength seemed to be even higher than his previous speculations. Faced with this fearsome draconic prestige, the savage Bloody Baboons seemed a little afraid to come forward...

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They were very successful on this side, but there weren't many problems on the other side either. Under the light of the moon, Li Yongyue's Moonblade demonstrated the great offensive strength that an agility-type soul master should possess.

Han Ruoruo had been observing everything. After seeing that things were fine on Huo Yuhao's side, she turned her attention to the other side. As she unleashed her Dazzling Golden Rope, the strongest few baboons were sent flying away. Only the weaker ones were left behind, but they were still tangled and restrained by the rope. Li Yongyue's only job was to kill them.

At the front, the strongest five or six baboons couldn't inch any closer as they were facing the bright moon in the sky. They roared furiously, but were helpless.

Zhang Lexuan was calm from the very start. She was also observing everything.

Dean Cai was missing at this point. Her whereabouts were unknown. But even though she didn't fight, she was the backbone. Everyone was confident that she was around.

At this point, a large number of baboons were rushing toward them from all directions. Although they were entrenched atop the slope, it wasn't a one versus one duel anymore. The pressure on them increased greatly, and Han Ruoruo's immense fighting strength was demonstrated.

This time, Han Ruoruo was Huo Yuhao and Wang Dong'er's team member. It was also because of her presence that there was a sudden change in the soaring pressure.

Han Ruoruo pointed up, and her Dazzling Golden Rope shot into the sky, forming a golden halo in the air before it abruptly descended. As the halo descended, no one felt any threat from it. When it finally landed, four baboons were caught within it. The rest of the baboons, including the Bloody Baboon King, were located outside of the halo. The Baboon King had been struck by Zhang Lexuan earlier, and blasted out of the region of the halo.

In the next instant, the bright-golden halo blew apart and unleashed an immense explosive force. This explosive force didn't possess tremendous destructive abilities. However, its impact was great. Countless baboons were sent flying, and they knocked down the rest of the baboons that were rushing up the slope. Only the four baboons within the halo remained there. The rest of the area was temporarily cleared of baboons.

Everyone else was highly skilled, so they wouldn't let such a great opportunity slip. Zhang Lexuan's fifth soul ring shone brightly, and the crescent in the sky turned golden. Instantly, this crescent started to divide and form equally huge crescents that eventually streaked down.

Moonfall!

The golden-yellow crescents turned into reaper's scythes. Two baboons in the ten-thousand year level were chopped in half as the moonlight crossed them. They didn't even have a chance to unleash their Bloodlust.

Zhang Lexuan wasn't the only one who attacked. Li Yongyue also leapt up, and gestured towards the crescents above Zhang Lexuan. Suddenly, the surface of his Moonblade was covered in a layer of golden light. No one saw him using any soul skills. His figure only flashed by his target as his Moonblade displayed countless forms. In the next instant, one baboon froze in place, and several fresh wounds appeared on its body before it collapsed to the ground.

The fourth baboon was taken down by Wang Qiu'er's fist. The fight was simpler this time. After the golden halo toppled the other baboons, the Dazzling Golden Rope tangled that baboon. As Wang Qiu'er turned around, she jumped into the air, and her body was covered by a dim-golden light as she punched half the baboon's body into the ground with her landing. It was unlikely to be alive after the blow.

Huo Yuhao and Wang Dong'er became bystanders as these few exchanges occurred. The two of them had reunited at this point. As they held hands, the Haodong Power circulated, and brought them to their strongest state.

"Wang Qiu'er is very strong." Huo Yuhao whispered.

Wang Dong'er nodded and replied, "She's too wild. Turns out she's one violent lady."

Huo Yuhao grinned without speaking. He had a deeper impression of Wang Qiu'er eating a baked biscuit.

An orange-gold light flashed, and the Snow Lady came out of Huo Yuhao's body. Her deep blue eyes blinked as she watched the baboons reorganizing. After that, she turned to Huo Yuhao.

Huo Yuhao and Wang Dong'er only interacted briefly before they started to attack. They moved up to the baboon that was pushed into the ground by Wang Qiu'er, and Huo Yuhao pressed his left hand on its body.

Wang Dong'er wasn't idling either. With the support of their Haodong Power, both of them were surging with soul power. Wang Dong'er was a six-ringed Soul Emperor, and her cultivation was one level above Li Yongyue, Wang Qiu'er, and Mo Xuan. Her fourth soul ring lit up, and her two hands pointed forward successively. Hexagram Arrays started to rapidly appear on the ground.

These Hexagram Arrays were lined up in a specific way. Each array was five meters from the next array, but their colors were varied.

Apart from one at the front that was golden, the rest flashed before disappearing.

Hexagram Arrays were very restrictive, but only one could be used at a time. However, there was a technique in unleashing this soul skill. Although only one Hexagram Array could be used at a time, the position of multiple arrays could be set up beforehand.

There wasn't such a need for such a setup in a duel. However, she could set up multiple arrays according to the geographical conditions if they were encircled.

The Baboon King had a fifty-thousand year cultivation. Seeing his own tribe members being massacred, he didn't command them to rush up the slope. Instead, he roared furiously, and continued to unleash his Mass Berserk in a bid to neutralize Huo Yuhao's Mass Enfeeblement. Following this, he roared three more times.

Suddenly, the Bloody Baboons started to cry out, and thick blood fog was released from their bodies.

All the baboons were in a Bloodlust state now! Even Zhang Lexuan's expression turned serious at this point. It was very difficult to deal with these baboons in their Bloodlust state.

Zhang Lexuan turned and asked Huo Yuhao, "Yuhao, can your domain avoid harming those on your side?"

Huo Yuhao shook his head and replied, "No. I can only prevent everyone from being attacked, but the low temperature is unavoidable. Eldest senior sister, why don't Wang Dong and I charge ahead? I don't think it's too dangerous if we use my domain."

"No." Zhang Lexuan rejected his proposition. He had to be joking. She was supposed to protect Huo Yuhao on this mission. How could she let him subject himself to danger?

Han Ruoruo said, "Then let's stick to the original plan. Lexuan, we won't hold back anymore if we really have no choice."

Zhang Lexuan nodded slightly. Her eight soul rings shone, and a dim silvery fog rose from her feet. Her body was covered by the fog, but she appeared indistinctly beautiful at this moment.

This was...

Huo Yuhao was shocked. Zhang Lexuan wasn't using any soul skills now, but what was this silvery fog she had released?

Through his Spiritual Detection, he could clearly sense Zhang Lexuan's soul power and aura rising rapidly under the effect of the fog. It felt as if she was accumulating her strength. The crescent above her head grew larger and larger, and started to expand into a full moon. Zhang Lexuan's eyes also shone with silver light at this point.

Wang Dong'er said softly, "Eldest senior sister seems to be using a secret technique to ignite her own strength. It feels similar to the baboons' Bloodlust, only without the mania. If her soul power can be likened to water, then it must be boiling right now."

Wang Dong'er's explanation was very apt, and Huo Yuhao agreed with her assessment. However, this was evidently not the time to be bothered about this. Huo Yuhao didn't hold back any further as he faced these strong enemies.

A dim golden streak of light shone from his forehead. Following this, a weird golden vertical eye slowly opened. When his eye opened, all the surrounding lights seemed to turn dark. Everyone, including the baboons, turned their attention to Huo Yuhao.

Third eye? He actually has a third eye!

Wang Qiu'er was also looking at Huo Yuhao at this point. She wasn't stunned, but showed a peculiar look instead. She could clearly sense his aura soaring. In terms of scale, he wasn't weaker than Zhang Lexuan.

"Eldest senior sister, we have to capture the king if we want to take all of them down. I'll help you control the Baboon King. Senior Han, you can control the entire battlefield." Huo Yuhao pulled Wang Dong'er to him and came beside Zhang Lexuan.

Zhang Lexuan didn't say anything, and only nodded at him.

At this point, the congress of baboons started to exhibit their Bloodlust state.

The baboons started to grow larger. A layer of dark-red light had appeared over their pitch-black hair. A thick, fishy smell spread out in a nauseating miasma. Their eyes seemed to be dancing with blood-red light. Instantly, the surrounding trees were layered with a dark-red color that exuded a dangerous aura.

The Bloody Baboon King roared into the sky. It straightened its body and lifted its thick arms up high. Suddenly, its figure ballooned in size, and every inch of its muscles bulked up massively as its huge fangs grew in length. Even the surrounding air started shaking!

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The Bloody Baboon King signaled an attack with an earsplitting roar. Its speed soared as it targeted Zhang Lexuan. Evidently, it had a lot of hatred for her. It even understood that Zhang Lexuan was the leader of this team.

The Baboon King was very different after it entered the Bloodlust state. As it burst forward, it left a blood-red wake behind it.

Before it, a full moon shone, and a streak of silver light shot down towards the Baboon King.

The Baboon King glared. As it roared furiously, it punched its fist out and forcefully crushed the moonlight that was descending towards it.

When it unleashed its fist, Huo Yuhao could clearly sense that its attack resembled a soul masters' offense when they combined their spiritual and soul power. It wasn't a skill, but an innate ability. It was the combination of a Bloody Baboon's maniacal fighting will and fighting strength as it entered the Bloodlust state.

Zhang Lexuan's eyes shone with silver light. Her first, second, and third soul rings lit up at the same time. The full moon in the air was like a soul tool shooting out soul rays, streaks of moonlight were fired continuously, all targeting the Bloody Baboon King.

The Baboon King seemed to have gone mad too. Although it was unable to charge forward as quickly as before, it still advanced with solid steps. As it moved forward, it destroyed a streak of moonlight every time it waved its fist. Even when the streaks of moonlight struck it, they only reduced its speed, and couldn't force it back.

At this point, all the Bloody Baboons in the Bloodlust state started to attack all-out. Their speed, strength, offense, and defense were all greatly enhanced by their Bloodlust state, and they all rushed up the slope.

Han Ruoruo was undoubtedly the one under the greatest pressure. Her golden halo was put to use again. However, it couldn't topple the baboons like before. The baboons could only be pushed back slightly. Following that, more and more baboons continued to rush up the slope.

Wang Qiu'er's performance was the most eye-catching. The baboons' Bloodlust didn't seem to have any effect on her. Her fighting style was also very uncouth and violent. Her body was completely engulfed by golden light. As dragon roars echoed, every baboon that collided with her was flung into the air. She guarded her area so well that it was seemingly impregnable. Not far from her was the baboon corpse that Huo Yuhao had previously grabbed with his left hand.

Wang Dong'er's Hexagram Array also started to take effect. The Hexagram Array sent two baboons into the air the moment it was activated. They screamed pathetically amidst the fiery light.

Each Hexagram Array only lasted for about ten seconds before it would change locations and rise again. The magical thing was that the baboon's Bloodlust state would be lost once they were burned by the fiery light. It was as if they were being cleansed.

However, everyone was still under great pressure. There were simply too many baboons in the Bloodlust state, attacking ceaselessly. Han Ruoruo's soul power was also being depleted quickly as she kept on using her golden halo.

At this moment, Huo Yuhao finally acted.

A white halo that was much stronger than before started to spread from his head. The bodies of the baboons were covered by a layer of pale-white light as the halo passed them, repressing their auras considerably.

The white light from the Eye of Destiny was retracted. In the next moment, a purplish-gold light surfaced within it. The purplish-gold glow in the Eye of Destiny flashed once before disappearing. Suddenly, the Bloody Baboon King screamed in horror. It grabbed onto its head and shrieked in pain.

Zhang Lexuan exploited this opportunity. Her sixth soul ring suddenly lit up, and it rose into the air before fusing with the full moon.

The full moon transformed – its original silvery-white color turned dim. Following that, it turned completely black, with a ringlike layer of silver surrounding it.

Following this, a silvery halo descended from the sky. Huo Yuhao could feel that it wasn't actually a silver halo, it was just that the light that it contained was black, making it nigh-invisible in the darkness.

As the black light flashed, it struck the Baboon King, who had been hurt by the Eye of Destiny's Spiritual Shock.

The Baboon King's body stiffened. Following this, a streak of moonlight shot straight down from the sky and engulfed its body. A frightening explosion occurred, and the Baboon King collapsed.

Huo Yuhao's Spiritual Detection lost its detection abilities in that direction. He only saw moonlight crashing down after the black light. After that, he couldn't see clearly. The Bloody Baboon King had already been blown apart and collapsed to the ground.

There was a huge stab wound around half a meter in diameter in the center of the Baboon King's chest. Its body had been pierced through. More terrifyingly, its hair had turned silver, and was melting at an alarming speed.

What soul skill was this? It was extremely strong. Huo Yuhao suspected that the effect of this strike wouldn't change much even without the aid of his Spiritual Shock! Zhang Lexuan was extremely strong. At this point, neither Zhang Lexuan nor Han Ruoruo had unleashed their Martial Soul True Bodies.

Zhang Lexuan remained calm as she looked at the Baboon King that had collapsed. In mid-air, the black moon had turned into a silver moon again. Streaks of bright silver light descended from the sky and flung the baboons into the air.

If it were any other soul beast tribe, the death of the king would cause a large drop in morale, and might even cause the rest to retreat. However, the baboons were in their Bloodlust state, and were far too bloodthirsty now, their intensity didn't waver at all.

"Ruoruo, come on! It's not early anymore," Zhang Lexuan said calmly.

"Alright!" Han Ruoruo acknowledged. In the next moment, her body also turned bright-golden. Dazzling Golden True Body!

Countless strips of Dazzling Golden Ropes started to extend in all directions. Following this, the ground turned golden, and Han Ruoruo disappeared. However, the ground of the dense forest was shaking tremendously.

The baboons seemed to have stepped into a swamp, finding it difficult to move forward. Following this, streaks of golden light shot out from the ground and sent their bodies into the air.

Golden Skysurge! It was Han Ruoruo's eighth soul skill.

At this point, there were around a hundred baboons left. They were all sent into the air by Han Ruoruo's Golden Skysurge.

After this, the bright moon in the sky expanded.

Zhang Lexuan's body turned silvery-white. The burning white light illuminated her surroundings. In the sky, the bright moon expanded at a terrifyingly quick speed. It reached more than a hundred meters instantly, and engulfed all the baboons that had been thrown into the air.

"Moonlight!" Li Yongyue exclaimed.

Following this, everyone from Shrek Academy felt their surroundings turning blurry-white. Huo Yuhao's Spiritual Detection lost its effect underneath this terrifying white light.

The gold from the Golden Skysurge and the silvery-white from the Moonlight fused together completely. A bright radiance lasted for close to five seconds before it faded away.

Plop, plop, plop, plop... A series of heavy impacts sounded out. When everyone regained their vision, they saw many Bloody Baboon corpses falling from the sky.

No, they should be called Silvery-white Baboons instead. The hair of every baboon had turned silvery-white, while their bodies were slowly but steadily melting.

Zhang Lexuan had already returned to her normal state. Her expression was calm, as if nothing had happened. This fight didn't seem to have taken much of a toll on her at all.

Not a single baboon could move at this point. The surroundings started to turn abnormally quiet. Even the sounds made by birds and bugs ceased to exist. The night turned terrifyingly silent.

Wang Qiu'er's pupils shrank. As she looked at Zhang Lexuan, she furrowed her brow. She was considering how far her abilities were from Zhang Lexuan's.

This was a Soul Douluo's ability. Zhang Lexuan had turned into a bright moon with the help of Han Ruoruo's controlling ability as they faced the Bloody Baboons. As her Moonlight was unleashed, all the baboons were defeated.

The corpses that Huo Yuhao had prepared using his Ice Explosion Technique were not put to use at all. The fight had already ended before he could pull that move. He had thought that it was going to be a tough fight, but it ended so quickly.

"The Bloody Baboon King's cultivation is around fifty thousand years. Is there anyone who needs and can absorb its soul ring? Its Bloodlust is rather effective for close-combat soul engineers. The Mass Berserk isn't too bad, either. Furthermore, it'll be good for your body if you absorb its soul ring. Your strength, tenacity, and defense will all be enhanced." Zhang Lexuan seemed to have just performed something insignificant. She first overcame the obstacle before explaining the use of this Bloody Baboon King.

Huo Yuhao thought of something and said, "Eldest senior sister, I'm a spiritual-type soul master. Can I absorb this Bloody Baboon King?" He was confident in his own physical strength. He had twin martial souls, and now had more than nine soul rings in total. His was much stronger physically than most other Soul Kings. After he fused with the Snow Empress' Spirit, his spiritual power also became a part of why his body was so resilient. He had confidence in absorbing a fifty-thousand year soul ring. Moreover, Wang Dong'er could protect him as he did so!

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The Bloody Baboon King wasn't dead yet. Its chest was still moving as it lay on the ground. However, the silvery-white light was disintegrating its body. The fatal wound on its chest had also turned black and started to decay, the wound expanding in size. The Baboon King didn't have long to live.

After pondering for a moment, Zhang Lexuan replied, "I think it's possible. Although the spiritual power of the Baboon King isn't very outstanding, it uses its spiritual power when it initiates its Mass Berserk and Bloodlust. It isn't easy for your spiritual-type martial soul to find a suitable soul ring. If you think that its Mass Berserk or Bloodlust can help you, you can absorb its soul ring. After all, it can enhance your physical strength."

Huo Yuhao didn't even think any further, "Give it to me." Indeed, he was very familiar with how difficult it was to find a spiritual-type soul ring. He could accept both the effects of Mass Berserk and Bloodlust. Moreover, this Baboon King's cultivation was fifty thousand years! He was more than satisfied if his fifth

soul ring could be a fifty-thousand year one. It could also make up for some of his deficiencies in terms of soul skills.

In addition, Huo Yuhao had his own plan. After the tournament was over, he had some plans for himself. He still desired to improve his physical strength. Whether it was on the battlefield or exhibiting stronger soul tools, he needed a strong physical body.

Just as Huo Yuhao was ready to walk towards the Bloody Baboon King, he was stopped by someone.

“It doesn’t suit you. Give it to me instead.” This sudden voice caused great disharmony within the team.

He was stunned to find out that it was Wang Qiu’er who was blocking him.

Wang Qiu’er wore a cold look on her face as she spoke to Huo Yuhao. After finishing her sentence, she immediately walked towards the Bloody Baboon King.

Snatching a soul ring? This was a despicable act under any circumstance, but they were even teammates.

A golden light flashed. Wang Dong’er flapped open her Radiant Butterfly Goddess’ wings in front of Wang Qiu’er and raged, “Do you know what first come first served means? Are we supposed to follow your words just because you said it’s not suitable for him?”

Neither of them were wearing veils at this point. As they clashed, everyone was in a daze, since they both had the same appearance.

Wang Qiu’er said coldly, “Get lost! I’ve said it. This soul beast doesn’t suit him.”

Wang Dong’er also wore a cold look on her face as she retorted, “Don’t think you’re great just because you’re strong. I’ll let you fuse with this soul ring, but only if you beat me in a fight.”

Wang Qiu’er snorted, “That’s easy.” Golden lights started to rise and dragon roars echoed.

“Stop it!” A furious voice sounded. As silver light flashed, Zhang Lexuan had already stepped in between both ladies. Her expression was very cold.

Wang Qiu’er’s golden light faded, but the arrogance in her eyes didn’t disappear. There was a wintry look in her eyes. Even facing Zhang Lexuan, she had no intention of giving way.

Zhang Lexuan was cross as she said, “What are the two of you doing? Look at the both of you. What is this? Are you still schoolmates from the same academy? In the Great Star Dou Forest, you’re not just schoolmates, but fellow warriors too! If the two of you continue to bicker, will you still trust each other? Not only are the both of you lookalikes, but you even have similar names. However, you have been at odds since the start. Tell me, what’s going on? I’ll give you a chance to explain yourselves! Tell me now.”

Wang Dong’er and Wang Qiu’er were silent. Wang Dong’er turned her head away while Wang Qiu’er lifted her head towards the sky. Both of them were speechless.

“Tell me! Say something! Whatever problem you have with each other, lay it out now. Otherwise, both of you should return to the academy immediately. I’ve led many teams in my time, but I’ve never seen anything like this! What are the two of you planning to do?” Zhang Lexuan was furious. The further they

went into the forest, the more dangerous it was. Even though she had teamed up with Han Ruoruo to defeat the Bloody Baboons earlier, it had taken their all. Even so, there was still some disharmony within the team. How could they venture further in given this situation?

Wang Dong'er replied, "Eldes senior sister, Yuhao said he wanted the soul ring first, but she tried to snatch it from him. How despicable can she get? Am I wrong to stop her?"

Wang Qiu'er groaned, "I told him that this soul beast doesn't suit him."

Wang Dong'er raged, "Are your words final? Do you know how difficult it is for Yuhao to find soul rings given that he's a spiritual-type soul master? He finally found one that's suitable, but you want to snatch it from him? I won't let you."

Zhang Lexuan also looked at Wang Qiu'er and asked, "When I asked everyone just now, why didn't you speak up? You only said something after Yuhao made his decision. Explain your actions."

Wang Qiu'er replied indifferently, "I've said that this soul ring doesn't suit him. It's still slightly suitable for me. I'm doing this for his own good."

Zhang Lexuan replied, "Although you just joined Shrek, your understanding of martial souls should be quite good considering your cultivation. I'm sure you know how rare spiritual-type soul beasts are. To find one that fits Huo Yuhao's cultivation is also very difficult. If you can tell me a soul beast that fits him in this forest and point out roughly where it can be located, I'll allow you to absorb this soul ring."

Wang Qiu'er turned to Huo Yuhao and asked, "Huo Yuhao, do you trust me? If you do, give me this soul ring. I'll lead the way from now on. It's not my first time entering the forest. If I'm not remember wrongly, I can bring you somewhere to find a suitable soul ring. Otherwise, you can take my life."

Her words sounded very serious. As she said this, even Wang Dong'er's fury dissipated. Although the Bloody Baboon King's soul ring was very valuable, it was too much to lay down one's life for it. Furthermore, it wasn't difficult for Wang Qiu'er to find a suitable soul ring given her abilities. Her words proved that she was confident in helping Huo Yuhao.

Huo Yuhao walked up to Wang Dong'er and grabbed her hands before nodding his head at Wang Qiu'er, "I trust you. You can absorb it, but you're running out of time."

Wang Qiu'er didn't waste any more time. She quickly made her way to the Baboon King. Wang Dong'er wanted to say something, but Huo Yuhao gripped her hands tightly, and she held her indignation.

Zhang Lexuan turned to Huo Yuhao, and he nodded at her. She didn't say anything else, but followed Wang Qiu'er with the rest. Wang Qiu'er and the Baboon King were surrounded by the rest of the team.

Wang Qiu'er's palm was already resting on the Baboon King's forehead, and she ended its life. After that, she sat cross-legged, and a black soul ring drifted up from the Baboon King's body.

It was definitely a fifty-thousand year soul ring. When it appeared, the air seemed to become viscous, and a ferocious aura was exuded from it.

Zhang Lexuan asked, "Wang Qiu'er, are you confident? This fifty-thousand year soul ring is far above your cultivation limit."

Wang Qiu'er shook her head and used her actions to provide the answer to the question. As golden light flashed, an image of a golden dragon appeared on her back. The size of this golden dragon wasn't very large, but it was clear, and seemed almost alive. Its wings flapped open, and it lifted its head proudly. It seemed a little scornful as it looked at the Baboon King before opening its mouth to absorb it. The black soul ring started to be engulfed by the golden dragon.

The golden light then returned to Wang Qiu'er's body.

Wang Qiu'er sat there and didn't move a single inch. A dim golden halo started to emanate from her body. As the golden light surged, it looked like a gentle fog. While her soul power experienced intense undulations, they didn't seem violent. It was plain to see that Wang Qiu'er had suppressed the aura of the Baboon King's soul ring, as no sign of it leaked out.

Zhang Lexuan was stunned. She knew that she had to look at Wang Qiu'er in a different light from now on. She had thought that her appraisal of Wang Qiu'er was already very high, but right now it didn't seem high enough.

It wasn't simple to absorb a fifty-thousand year soul ring. At least, Zhang Lexuan wasn't certain that she could do it before she became a Soul Emperor. Even when she absorbed her hundred-thousand year soul ring, it had been a stroke of fate, and she had had the protection of other, stronger individuals. After that absorption, she had to rest for half a year before she fully recovered.

Thus, she was stunned to seeing Wang Qiu'er absorbing the soul ring effortlessly. This was evidently not because of her cultivation, but the strength of her body. Her martial soul also completely suppressed the Bloody Baboon King. On a spiritual level, the soul ring couldn't struggle at all. She completely overwhelmed the Baboon King to complete this fusion.

"Everyone, please be careful. The smell of blood is very strong, and might attract other soul beasts." Zhang Lexuan warned the rest, and also gestured for Huo Yuhao to activate his Spiritual Detection.

Huo Yuhao took this chance to get busy. First, he moved the baboon corpses five hundred meters from where they were. The corpses formed a circle that surrounded all of them.

He took an hour to finish this task. Wang Qiu'er's soul power was rising quickly the whole time. As her aura grew stronger and stronger, she evidently reached a critical stage in her fusion.

Huo Yuhao was slightly fatigued, and sat cross-legged before he started to meditate. Wang Dong'er sat opposite him and cultivated with him.