

Tang Sect 51

Chapter 51.1: The Butterfly Goddess Slash and the Berserk White Tiger

“Year 2, Class 1. Wang Dong.” Wang Dong strode forward and handed his test form to the referee.

That’s right. This time Wang Dong was the first to take the field instead of Huo Yuhao. However, the other students had all expected this sort of change. After all, Huo Yuhao had previously used his special soul skill to intimidate the soul beast, not harm it. This time around, his soul skill had been restricted. Thus, he naturally couldn’t be Class 1’s opening act. Class 1 needed an opening that would stun their opponents.

In Dai Huabin’s eyes, however, Huo Yuhao was a coward. The thought of him kowtowing and acknowledging his mistake to Huo Yuhao turned the intense humiliation he felt into bitter resentment, which wrecked havoc in his mind. Revenge. I want revenge! I will first trample them beneath my feet, then find an opportunity to eradicate them all. No, I want to see them kneel before me, wailing and begging me for mercy! Only then will I kill them!

Dai Huabin, who wasn’t even thirteen years old, had long since seen bloodshed. There was already a merciless look in his eyes!

“I choose a thousand year soul beast.” Wang Dong’s voice drew Dai Huabin out of his reverie. He couldn’t help but be taken aback when he heard Wang Dong’s selection. Despite his thousand year soul skill, Wang Dong’s cultivation was only that of a Soul Grandmaster. He actually dared to choose a thousand year soul beast, the highest ranked opponent in this examination?

The two referees were also shocked.

Two days ago, Huo Yuhao had shocked them. He’d been the first to take the field, and had chosen a soul beast with a cultivation of a hundred years. This was a soul beast reared in the Great Beast Duelling Arena, yet Huo Yuhao had managed to scare it witless with the aura of two hundred thousand year soul rings, an event which had stunned everyone present. This time around, Class 1 had sent out someone else, who’d immediately chosen a thousand year soul beast. Were these kids really intending to corroborate Shrek Academy’s slogan, that they only bred monsters?

However, the referee didn’t dare to delay the matter any further with Dean Yan Shaozhe in the audience. “Wang Dong, are you ready?”

“I’m ready.” Wang Dong nodded with a serious expression on his face as brilliant blue rays of light enveloped him. He didn’t waste any time in releasing his martial soul. Even he wasn’t sure of himself when it came to confronting a thousand year soul beast.

“Ah!” Cries of surprise rang out as all of the students and even several teachers became gobsmacked by what they saw.

They weren’t taken aback by Wang Dong’s martial soul, the Radiant Butterfly Goddess, but rather by the three soul rings that had gradually risen from beneath his feet. That’s right. There were now three soul rings. This was Wang Dong’s secret.

When they'd had to report back to the academy, Huo Yuhao had been late, while Wang Dong had rushed back with only two days to spare! Just what had he been up to? In the short span of just a month, he'd succeeded in breaking through his cultivation bottleneck of Rank 30 with the help of his clan and had even managed to obtain his third soul ring.

Yan Shaozhe's eyes shone as he sat on the Spectator's Stand. With a slight nod of his head, he said, "Good. He has one yellow soul ring and two purple soul rings. This kid's talent and martial soul has far surpassed those of his peers. He's definitely going to be a great asset in the future. However, the Radiant Butterfly Goddess..." A hint of a playful smile lifted the corners of his lips when he mentioned that point.

Wang Dong's third soul ring was also a purple soul ring, which meant that it was a thousand year soul ring. Thus, the Soul Elder-ranked Wang Dong already had two thousand year soul rings. These weren't imitation soul rings but the genuine article.

Dai Huabin would never have thought that Wang Dong would give him such a huge "surprise." That's right, his cultivation in soul power was truly stronger than Wang Dong's by a large margin. But they were both Soul Elders wielding three soul rings! On top of that Wang Dong overpowered him in terms of the ranks of their soul rings. This meant that if they were to compete purely based on their soul skills, Wang Dong would still be able to hold the upper hand in their battle. Thus, the gap between their cultivations would be closed.

Dai Huabin's face sank and the expression on his face immediately turned vile, however, his confidence didn't waver. From his point of view, Huo Yuhao didn't have the ability to directly injure soul beasts without using his second soul ring and could only rely upon his spiritual shock of his. Dai Huabin believed that Huo Yuhao could only follow his teacher's advice and pass the examination by accumulating the minimum amount of points required. He also believed that he would perform even better than Wang Dong. However, he couldn't help but feel nervous despite his complete confidence in himself.

At this moment, a tyrannical aura seeped out from the open metal gates located some distance away from Wang Dong. A tall figure slowly walked out of the beast pen.

Even though it didn't have the speed of that Windspirit Wolf Huo Yuhao had fought the last time, the pressure its aura emitted was far superior.

The soul beast was three metres tall and walked out on its hind legs like a human. There was a faint fishy smell coming from its light brown fur. On its chest was a huge patch of white fur in the shape of a check mark that resembled the veined patterns on the wings of Wang Dong's Radiant Butterfly Goddess. The sheer size of the bear was truly impressive.

The most eye-catching feature of this massive bear was its eyes. It had faintly red eyes that were filled with callousness towards its prey.

Even if they were all similarly aged thousand year soul beasts, the natural strength that gnus, goats, and cows possessed could not be compared to that of lions, tigers, leopards, and bears. Moreover, the probability of these carnivorous soul beasts having cultivated for over a thousand years was also very high.

The thousand year soul beast that Wang Dong was going to face off against was called the Bloodthirsty Demon Bear, a powerful earth attributed soul beast.

Wang Dong spread his wings and took flight the moment he saw his opponent's appearance. However, an enormous formless pressure immediately pushed him down to the ground before he could fly more than five meters into the air. The referee's voice rang out in his ear, "You are not allowed to fly more than five meters above the ground in this advancement test."

The Bloodthirsty Demon Bear didn't appear to be very fast as it slowly walked towards Wang Dong on its hind legs and with an ominous glint in its eyes. However, the stifling aura that came along with it secretly startled Wang Dong. This was his first time facing a thousand year soul beast alone, but nevertheless he was still confident in his strength.

It was also at this time that a three-dimensional image quietly appeared in his mind. Huo Yuhao sat not far off at the edge of the arena, with a faint golden glow already visible in his eyes.

If it wasn't for the bet with Dai Huabin, he definitely wouldn't have chosen to cheat. But this time the stakes were high and he couldn't lose to one of his enemies that had been the cause of his mother's death. In any case, he could also better protect Wang Dong with his Spiritual Detection, so that no harm came his way.

Wang Dong raised his shoulders, clasping his front wings together as he similarly moved forwards. He only took small steps as advanced in the Bloodthirsty Demon Bear's direction. Just like the bear, he wasn't quick at all. Rather, his steps were extremely steady and reflected the calm state of his mind.

The two were slowly approaching one another. The two referees were also attentively observing their movements from a close vantage point. They needed to immediately take action if they felt that Wang Dong's strength had been depleted too far. After all, humans were not like soul beasts. It wasn't as though there weren't any casualties from such events. They'd seen Wang Dong's test form just now and has noticed his status as a core disciple. That fact alone made it all the more important that they not lose him in an accident.

The Bloodthirsty Demon Bear looked a little stupid as it stood up and walked like a human. Not only was it slow, but it was also swaying unstably. However, when it was about thirty metres away from Wang Dong, its front limbs suddenly dropped down. Now, all four of its limbs were touching the ground.

The sudden change shocked Wang Dong, and he unconsciously stopped in his tracks. He then moved a few metres to the side in anticipation.

The Bloodthirsty Demon Bear continued approaching him as though nothing had happened. A mocking expression even seemed to peek through its faint red eyes. When a soul beast reached a thousand years of cultivation, it would obtain some limited form of intelligence. It was only when soul beasts reached a cultivation of ten thousand years or more that they developed intelligence not inferior to that of humans and so were also able to interact in human speech.

Wang Dong hesitated at the Bloodthirsty Demon Bear's appearance, and it was in that moment of hesitation that the Bloodthirsty Demon Bear suddenly sped up. A thick layer of bloody light shrouded its whole body, making it look like a red cloud as it sprinted in Wang Dong's direction. It moved so quickly

that for a moment its speed was comparable to that of the Windspirit Wolf that Huo Yuhao had fought the other day.

The changes in its speed along with the sudden utilisation of all four limbs, these were all classic strategies used in psychological warfare! It was no wonder thousand year soul beasts were experts among the same rank. The strength displayed by this thousand year Bloodthirsty Demon Bear couldn't be compared to a hundred year soul beast at all.

In the time it took to take two breaths, the bear had already closed the distance between them and was now within thirty metres of Wang Dong. Wang Dong seemed to be standing there in a daze as the Bloodthirsty Demon Bear swung its huge paw at him with a ball of bloody light trailing behind its movements.

The judges had been waiting for some action after the slow movements from the two of them. The judges sitting in the Spectator's Stand couldn't help but frown too. They had earlier been pleasantly surprised by a Year 2 Soul Elder student who had three soul rings and was also a core disciple. How could his experience in real combat be so bad that he was terrified to the point of uselessness?

Was Wang Dong terrified? Obviously not. Seeing the Bloodthirsty Demon Bear's huge paw already in front of him, he suddenly slid down on one foot and made a half turn. The Bloodthirsty Demon Bear's slap seemed to brush dangerously close to his body but Wang Dong was already behind the Bloodthirsty Demon Bear.

He unfurled his front wings and made a criss-cross scissoring movement as he swept them across the Bloodthirsty Demon Bear's neck.

The thousand year Bloodthirsty Demon Bear was an exceptional beast. It had immediately sensed that something was amiss the moment its paw came in contact with nothing but air. The bloody light surrounding its body gradually turned yellow and its light brown fur instantly turned as hard as steel.

The instant Wang Dong's Guillotine Wing grazed its tough fur, a series of sparks flew out along with an ear-piercing screech.

Being an earth attribute soul beast, the Bloodthirsty Demon Bear was naturally extremely good at defending. Unfortunately, it had still been a half beat too slow in responding to the situation. The bear thought that Wang Dong had been duped by the psychological warfare it had used against him. Therefore, the bear had pounced rather abruptly under such circumstances. But now, although it had been able to react in time, Wang Dong had taken a huge chunk of meat from its neck with his Guillotine Wings.

Who didn't know how to wage psychological warfare against their opponent? Wang Dong let out a cold laugh. His attack had hit the mark but he didn't follow up on it. With a flap of his wings, his body suddenly retreated five metres back, dodging the Bloodthirsty Demon Bear's frantic counterattack. n)-
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Without Huo Yuhao's Spiritual Detection Sharing, he would've gained quite an advantage even if he hadn't been duped by the bear. However, the Spiritual Detection could help him clearly identify the blood vessels and circulation of soul power within the Bloodthirsty Demon Bear's body, as well as its attack patterns. How could he not utilise this great opportunity?

Sure enough, a stunned look crossed the eyes of all the judges sitting in the Spectator's Stand after witnessing this attack from Wang Dong. Included amongst them were Dean Yan Shaozhe and Director Du Weilun.

Wang Dong had remained calm in the face of the Bloodthirsty Demon Bear's attack and had even used his opponent's stratagem against him. His calm demeanor as he fought against a thousand year soul beast in such close proximity impressed the judges. The judges hadn't even seen such high level battle tactics from students in higher year groups!

Chapter 51.2: The Butterfly Goddess Slash and the Berserk White Tiger

The Bloodthirsty Demon Bear roared in both pain and anger as it rose up on its hind legs. Its pale-red eyes flashed with a bloody light as its immense frame swelled with power and began to emit a savage aura. This was the beast's innate skill, Bloodthirst.

The reason it was called the Bloodthirsty Demon Bear was due to the existence of this innate skill. On top of that, its earth attribute and bloodline skill further boosted its strength.

Even the fur on its body was stained with a red layer once it activated Bloodthirst. An intense stench of blood began to emanate from its body and it pounced towards Wang Dong, its front claws releasing an intense yellow light.

Wang Dong unfurled his wings and forcefully waved them forward, which caused his own body to slide backwards. It seemed like he was trying to increase the distance between himself and the Bloodthirsty Demon Bear.

However, the Bloodthirsty Demon Bear's speed had explosively increased after activating Bloodthirst. Moreover, Wang Dong's retreat was half a second too slow. Although its front claws didn't strike him, they dealt a heavy blow to the ground in front of him. Immediately, an intense yellow light blossomed from the point of impact.

This was the Bloodthirsty Demon Bear's earth-type skill, Seismic Wave.

There was a notable difference between the abilities of thousand year soul beasts and hundred year soul beasts. While there was only a possibility for hundred year soul beasts to possess long-range attacking abilities, thousand year soul beasts would undoubtedly possess long-range or area of effect-type soul skills.

Seismic Wave was the Bloodthirsty Demon Bear's specialty. The skill would not only cause its opponent lose their balance due to the strong vibrations, but would also cause them to feel dizzy to a certain extent. As long as the effects of its Seismic Wave remained active, the Bloodthirsty Demon Bear would savagely devastate its opponents soon after.

Because of that, the two referees quickly approached Wang Dong as soon as the Bloodthirsty Demon Bear released the Seismic Wave. They were ready to interrupt the match the moment they felt that Wang Dong was trapped within its Seismic Wave.

Oftentimes during a battle between a soul master and a soul beast, the outcome of the match would hinge on a single soul skill. The situation in which a single soul skill was able to change the situation of the entire match after landing was incredibly common.

Wang Dong's rear wings rose up the instant the Bloodthirsty Demon Bear's paws struck the ground and released the Seismic Wave. Simultaneously, he tilted his front wings downwards as his second soul ring lit up.

He'd flapped his wings forward previously, which had created a backwards stream of air. However, he now only adjusted his actions by a hair's breadth, which immediately caused his retreating body to fly up into the air by borrowing the stream of air, resulting in him instantly rising three meters into the air. Furthermore, his body remained parallel to the ground and was thus able to dodge the rumbling Seismic Wave just in time. As if that wasn't enough, the Bloodthirsty Demon Bear who'd struck the ground was currently right below Wang Dong, its sturdy back completely exposed.

All of the golden patterns on the dazzling blue wings of his Radiant Butterfly Goddess martial soul instantly lit up. A series of terrifying explosions immediately rang out amidst the flickering golden lights.

This was Wang Dong's second soul skill, his thousand year soul skill – the Light of the Butterfly Goddess.

The tyrannical yellow light from the Light of the Butterfly Goddess mercilessly rained down without pause onto the Bloodthirsty Demon Bear's back. Even the sounds that rang out due to the violent explosions were painful! The Bloodthirsty Demon Bear had just released its attack which had left its body slightly sluggish for a brief period. Thus, it wasn't able to dodge Wang Dong's attack. From the moment it was struck by the first ball of golden light, it could only try its best to curl up and use its thick back to endure the bombardment from the Light of the Butterfly Goddess.

The violent explosions lasted for a full three seconds before they finally ended. Wang Dong slowly floated upwards as his dazzling blue wings suddenly turned an intense golden color. He moved his hands back to his chest and his palms touched his chest. Following which, his third soul ring released a large amount of light.

A ball of pure golden light appeared between Wang Dong's palms and then started to expand at an astonishing rate amidst the light surrounding him. In the blink of an eye, the ball was already a foot wide. The ball of golden light was surrounded by golden electricity that illuminated Wang Dong's entire body.

The golden wings on Wang Dong's back unceasingly flickered as they released curved golden shadows that fused with the pure gold ball of light, causing its volume to further increase.

Under the series of explosions caused by Wang Dong's Light of the Butterfly Goddess, the Bloodthirsty Devil Bear was already sprawled on the ground. Although it had gone put everything into its defense, how could a thousand year soul skill be so easily defended against? The flesh on its back had been lacerated and its entire back was stained with fresh blood. The damage has been so severe that even its Bloodthirst had been interrupted.

As an earth-type thousand year soul beast, however, the Bloodthirsty Devil Bear's defensive abilities were extremely powerful. Despite the violent bouts of pain coming from its back due to the Light of the Butterfly Goddess, it hadn't yet lost all of its combat strength. But since two of Wang Dong's blows had struck one of its rear legs, its speed had dropped a large margin which had greatly reduced its ability to move.

Sensing the terrifying aura above it, the Bloodthirsty Devil Bear forced itself to turn around. It couldn't help but let out a lament when it saw the terrifying golden ball of light in front of Wang Dong's chest. Raising its front limbs, it managed to barely congeal a ball of yellow light in Wang Dong's direction. The yellow light then turned into a small shield that barely protected its body.

"Alright, the test is over. Wang Dong, withdraw your soul skill." Du Weilun's voice rang out from the tall stage.

However, a soul skill wasn't easy to withdraw. Wang Dong hurriedly moved his hands outwards and the golden ball of light in front of his chest rose into the air. Since the Great Beast Dueling Arena was located outdoors, the golden ball of light shot a hundred meters into the air before numerous golden crescent moon-like shadows blossomed out from it. They looked just like the petals of a flower as they flew into the air and turned into motes of golden light before they finally exploded, instantly creating a spectacular screen of golden light.

The two referees simultaneously made a move and subdued the Bloodthirsty Bear before they declared the end of this round of the advancement test.

There was simply no need for the judges to speak. All the students understood that Wang Dong had passed the test with the highest possible score.

After releasing his third soul skill, Wang Dong's body swayed slightly and his face was clearly pale too. If it weren't for their bet with Dai Huabin, he would have no need to use his third soul skill in this test. However, his aim right now was to do everything in his power to obtain the highest possible score he was capable of.

His third soul skill was called the Butterfly Goddess Slash. It looked like a ball of light, but was actually a slash that contained a hundred and eight blades of light within it. The moment it struck its target, the hundred and eight blades within it would burst outward and rip their target to shreds.

The Light of the Butterfly Goddess was an area of effect attack and though it was very powerful, it lacked explosive power. However, the Butterfly Goddess Slash was different. It sacrificed the lock-on ability and range that a long-distance attack would normally have for unparalleled attack power. The Butterfly Goddess Slash had no way of locking onto a target and the blades of light contained within it would automatically start to leak out once the attack was more than five meters away from the user until it was completely depleted of power. This was also the reason behind the marvelous scene that had occurred earlier.

A major reason why Wang Dong had chosen this skill as his third soul skill was because of Huo Yuhao's Spiritual Detection Sharing. Only when he had the assistance of Huo Yuhao's Spiritual Detection could he unleash the full might of this skill.

After talking to each other for a bit, Du Weilun and Yan Shaozhe completed their evaluations.

Du Weilun spoke in a solemn voice, "Wang Dong, who chose to face the highest-ranked thousand year soul beast for his test has obtained a hundred marks for his base score. Considering the attack power of his final soul skill, there was a 70% chance that the Bloodthirsty Demon Bear would've been killed instantly. Thus, he has obtained full marks for his foundations. His performance during the battle can be

considered perfect and for that he has obtained the full fifty marks for battle technique.”

During the advancement test, differently ranked soul beasts would give different base scores. The lowest-ranked hundred year soul beast would only give ten marks, and only by displaying an extraordinary amount of battle technique and defeating it would a student be able to pass the advancement test. However, the thousand year soul beast Wang Dong had chosen gave a hundred marks as its base score. In addition to the fifty marks he had been given for his battle technique, he had obtained a total of a hundred and fifty marks. In comparison, the advancement test for the Year 2 students only required thirty marks for one to pass. In other words, even if he hadn't been able to defeat the Bloodthirsty Demon Bear, he would've been able to easily obtain over thirty marks.

Wang Dong was overjoyed to learn that he had obtained a perfect score. Huo Yuhao didn't even need to intervene for them to win the bet. He had obtained full marks by himself, which meant that Dai Huabin couldn't even put up a fight against them anymore.

However, before he could rejoice, Du Weilun's next words shot him down.

“However, the Bloodthirsty Demon Bear is an earth-type soul beast. Its defensive abilities rank amongst the top within thousand year soul beasts, which meant that it still had a 30% chance of blocking your final attack. Meanwhile, your soul power was almost completely drained after releasing that attack. Under such circumstances, there would have been no way for you to contend against it again. If that had happened, you could've been injured by its last-ditch attack or maybe even have been killed. As a soul master, carelessly staking everything on a single attack is an unwise decision. After talking to Dean Yan, we have decided to deduct fifty marks from your score. This puts your final score for this test at a hundred marks. You pass the advancement test.”

“Ah?” Wang Dong was flabbergasted, “That's way too many penalties. After all, I beat a thousand year soul beast!”

Yan Shaozhe replied warmly, “As an outstanding soul master, your first priority in a battle must be your own safety. Only after you have guaranteed your safety should you think of how to beat your opponent. How long have you cultivated for? If you end up exchanging your life for the death of just a single soul beast, what meaning would your cultivation have? The reason

we deducted fifty marks from you is because you're a core disciple of the academy. Core disciples receive better treatment than ordinary students, but at the same time they have to fulfill much more stringent requirements. Do you understand?”

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Wang Dong was extremely dejected, but there wasn't much he could do. He had no choice but to step down from the stage with his head lowered. Despite his disappointment however, 100 points in the advancement test was already an extremely high score. Not many students received such a score, even from previous years. On top of this, he'd defeated a thousand year soul beast! Indeed, Yan Shaozhe and Du Weilun had been severe on the surface, but they were still very pleased in their hearts. They had only deducted so many points from Wang Dong's score because they didn't want him to become too arrogant.

Wang Dong returned to Huo Yuhao's side, then said with a dejected look, "That was too unfair. I can't believe they actually deducted so many points from my score."

Huo Yuhao replied in a low voice, "Forget it. Your score is more than enough to guarantee that we won't lose the bet. Leave the rest to me; don't worry about a thing. Moreover, it wasn't really that unfair. What do you think your chances of victory would've been if you hadn't had my Spiritual Detection?"

Wang Dong stuck his tongue out at Huo Yuhao, then said, "Probably less than 30%. That big fellow wasn't just difficult to deal with, he was also extremely sly. Hmph, you only need 30 points to pass this test. In other words, Dai Huabin will have to get a score of at least 130 points in order to have a shot at victory. I refuse to believe that he'll be so much better than me."

One must know that Dai Huabin didn't have someone like Huo Yuhao that could secretly aid him! Wang Dong also knew that, in a one-on-one fight, he was no match for Dai Huabin. From another point of view, his Radiant Butterfly Goddess martial soul was a combination of the assault and agility systems, while Dai Huabin's White Tiger martial soul was both the purest and the strongest assault type martial soul. In a direct fight, unless he had something such as Huo Yuhao's Spiritual Detection Sharing that could help him foresee his enemy's actions, he wouldn't stand a chance.

Of the freshmen this year with the highest battle prowess... Dai Huabin—the son of the White Tiger Duke—was certainly one of the most talented.

"Year 2 Class 2, Dai Huabin." Dai Huabin's powerful voice suddenly echoed outwards. The advancement test had yet to begin, yet his body had already begun emitting a firm, steely aura. As such, he seemed like a volcano about to erupt.

Yan Shaozhe's eyes lit up when he saw this. He said to the nearby Du Weilun, "Is this the strongest student in Year 2?"

Du Weilun nodded and replied, "The White Tiger Duke's posterity is truly outstanding. His natural talent is actually even a bit higher than his older brother's, who didn't have this level of cultivation at his age. Furthermore, I've heard from Mu Jin that he's put much more effort into cultivating than his peers. Based on his current cultivation speed, it's extremely likely that he'll break through to the Soul Ancestor level in one to one-and-a-half years. If that really does happen, he'll go down in history within the academy."

"It's not that easy to become a Soul Ancestor," Yan Shaozhe said with a faint smile, "however, this child truly is outstanding. Let's keep an eye on his performance."

Dai Huabin didn't wait for the referee as he announced, "I choose a thousand year soul beast."

Based on Wang Dong's precedent, the referees weren't surprised by Dai Huabin's choice. Once they'd asked Dai Huabin if he was ready, they immediately sent out his opponent.

Coincidentally, Dai Huabin's opponent was extremely similar to his martial soul.

A low roar echoed as a nimble, two meter-long, tiger-like soul beast leapt out of the beast cage.

Once it had leapt out of the iron cage and landed, it began to carefully observe the nearby Dai Huabin. Its body was pale-yellow, and had long, dark-green stripes running through its fur. Its figure was a bit

smaller than the Flaming Demon Tiger that Huo Yuhao had seen, but it appeared to be more agile. Its two eyes emitted a dark-green radiance as it observed Dai Huabin. It was a Wind Tiger—one of the fastest amongst wind-attributed tiger-type soul beasts.

The Wind Tiger seemed to realize that there was a dangerous aura coming from Dai Huabin's body, as it didn't move forward, but instead began to move laterally. It was obviously planning to use its speed in order to probe its enemy's abilities and strength. Its four paws trailed along the ground as if it were cotton; they didn't make a single sound.

The dangerous aura emanating from Dai Huabin's body suddenly lessened, which caused the Wind Tiger to charge. However, Dai Huabin didn't even release his White Tiger martial soul when he saw this. This action left the referees surprised. What was this student trying to do?

After gauging the situation, the thousand year Wind Tiger judged that the threat represented by Dai Huabin wasn't all that great. A green light flickered through its eyes as its four paws were suddenly pressed flat against the ground. Afterward, its body suddenly accelerated towards Dai Huabin like an arrow. It looked like a green bolt of lightning as it pounced towards Dai Huabin, as its speed was much faster than other, similarly wind-attributed soul beasts. Needless to say, its attack power was also many times stronger as well. Wolves and tigers were already on two different levels, let alone a hundred year soul beast and a thousand year one.

The distance between the two parties was almost instantly reduced. The Wind Tiger's two front paws opened in midair as it flashed forwards, which revealed its sharp claws. The tiger shot proceeded to shoot ten foot-long blades of wind towards Dai Huabin as it shot towards him. Its trailed behind the blades it had sent towards Dai Huabin, as its body was the strongest weapon it had at its disposal. The sharp claws at the end of the tiger's palms glittered with green glint as it approached Dai Huabin as well, which caused a large amount of wind-type soul power to fluctuate as they cut through the air. This in turn made its claws gain even more penetrating power.

Despite being faced with the attack of a thousand year Wind Tiger, Dai Huabin still didn't evade. Instead, the roar of a tiger suddenly echoed; he had at last released his White Tiger martial soul. Once he had, he immediately attacked the Wind Tiger fearlessly. His fighting style was different from Wang Dong's, however. What he relied on wasn't skill, but absolute strength, as both his first and third soul rings simultaneously lit up.

Dai Huabin's body suddenly began to emit the aura of a White Tiger now that he'd released his martial soul, which caused the thousand year Wind Tiger to involuntarily show a panic-stricken expression. The White Tiger stood at the apex amongst tiger-type soul beast; wild White Tigers were considered kings amongst tiger-type soul beasts. This Wind Tiger, however, was now in midair. Even if it were faster, it still wouldn't be able to dodge in its current situation. It would have to wait until the end of its attack to display its superior speed.

Dai Huabin's thousand year soul skill caused his body to suddenly expand; it reached its peak condition instantaneously. Under normal circumstances, when he used his third soul skill, he would require a certain amount of time in order to complete this transformation. Despite this, he had reduced that time to the minimum; one could imagine what kind of toll this had on his body. If one were to look at his outward expression however, they wouldn't notice anything amiss.

Dai Huabin's White Tiger Shield began to emit a layer of white light now that he'd activated his White Tiger Vajra Transformation, while his tiger-like claws turned golden.

The spectators all thought that Dai Huabin should've first tried to resist the thousand year Wind Tiger's attack before he attempted to counterattack. He didn't plan on doing that however. What he planned to do was something that the average person would never attempt.

Dai Huabin didn't pay any attention to the ten wind blades approaching him. He also ignored the two powerful tiger claws filled with destructive power closing in on him. Instead, he aimed at the Wind Tiger's head with both of his claws. If one were to see this, one would simply think that it was suicidal!

Even the widely-experienced Yan Shaozhe and Du Weilun were greatly surprised by his actions. Was this really the fighting style of a twelve-year-old? He looked even more ferocious than a soul beast!

At this point, the Wind Tiger had already been influenced by the White Tiger's aura released by Dai Huabin. Because of this, it had become somewhat scared.

The wind blades it had flung towards Dai Huabin struck his body one after another. Even though the White Tiger Shield had been strengthened by the White Tiger's Vajra Transformation, it wasn't able to completely nullify ten successive strikes from a thousand year soul beast. Bloodstains appeared on Dai Huabin's shoulders and chest, yet this didn't even cause him to flinch; it was as if he couldn't feel any pain. After they were weakened by his White Tiger Shield, the Wind Tiger's wind blades were only able to leave a few superficial wounds on his body.

Both Dai Huabin and the Wind Tiger's claws closed in on each other at the same speed. However, based on the time they'd attacked and their arm's lengths, it seemed like the Wind Tiger's claws would reach Dai Huabin first.

This was a battle of brute force! Who would win?

When two tigers meet each other, the most valiant will win!

The Wind Tiger was already somewhat scared. When it saw that it was about to collide with Dai Huabin, it promptly retracted its claws and tried to grab ahold of his arms; It wanted to stop its opponent's attack.

However, Dai Huabin had already displayed this sort of reckless fighting style. How could he possibly be scared? He suddenly released a deafeningly loud roar. This roar contained the dignity of the king of the beasts, and if one were to look into the Wind Tiger's eyes, they would notice that its pupils had instantaneously widened. Under the effect of his mental counterattack, the speed of its claws immediately slowed down by a bit. At the same time, Dai Huabin suddenly infused his legs with strength, which caused his body to shoot forwards like an arrow.

By doing this, he made it so that the Wind Tiger's claws would only hit his shoulders, while at the same time making it so that his own claws would gain even more speed.

"Peng—" The Wind Tiger's claws smashed into Dai Huabin's shoulders. At the same time, its pupils shrank as Dai Huabin's two golden claws ruthlessly smashed towards the Wind Tiger's head from both sides.

At that moment, their fearful fight had reached its peak. The Wind Tiger's muffled groan echoed outwards. The moment it was about to be hit, it suddenly opened its jaws wide in a last ditch attempt to bite Dai Huabin's palms.

However, Dai Huabin was determined to win; would this really make him stop? He recklessly smashed his claws into the Wind Tiger's mouth, ripping apart the Wind Tiger's cheek muscles, the Wind Tiger's sharp teeth piercing his palms in the process. Despite this, he managed to grab hold of the Wind Tiger's long, sharp teeth and break its jaw so that it couldn't close its mouth.

At this time, his second soul ring suddenly lit up, which caused a ball of white light to ruthlessly explode inside of the Wind Tiger's open mouth. This was the White Tiger's Fierce Light Wave!

"Stop." Du Weilun's voice echoed from atop the high platform. The two had fought for only a short time, yet the victor and the loser were already clear.

However, Dai Huabin was already brimming with killing intent. In his mind, what he was fighting wasn't the Wind Tiger, but Huo Yuhao and Wang Dong. He took advantage of the fact that the Wind Tiger was still in a daze in order to arch his body backwards and cut open its soft abdomen, while at the same time, he used his claws to tear the tiger's lower jaw apart with a cracking sound. Its stomach was cut open at the same instant as he tore apart its jaw.

As the Wind Tiger's body lay atop of Dai Huabin with its belly cut open, Dai Huabin immediately became drenched in blood.

Chapter 52.1: The Ice Empress' Armor

The referees had arrived in the arena, but there wasn't anything they could do at this point. The battle had already ended, and as if to mock them, a purple ring of light rose from the Wind Tiger's body.

A kill!

There had only been a single collision between Dai Huabin and the Wind Tiger, yet Dai Huabin had savagely overwhelmed the Wind Tiger—a thousand year soul beast—with brute force, and had torn its body in half. Dai Huabin's body was drenched in the Wind Tiger's blood. The students from both Class 1 and Class 2 had all become pale-faced, while some female students couldn't even bear to continue looking.

Only Zhu Lu had an extraordinary splendor in her eyes. After all, this was the man whom she most admired! She loved to see how valiant Dai Huabin was.

"Dai Huabin, didn't you hear me tell you to stay your hand?" Du Weilun's angry voice rang out. The death of a thousand year soul beast wasn't exactly a small loss to the academy. It wasn't easy for them to capture a thousand year soul beast and domesticate it, nor was it easy to soothe Gong Changlong.

Dai Huabin indifferently replied, "A battle between soul masters and soul beasts is always one of life and death. Since it wanted to kill me, why couldn't I kill it? Besides, I couldn't stay my hand. If I had, its counterattack could've injured me. In order to obtain full marks, I needed to avoid the error that Wang Dong made. I didn't have the 30% chance of failure that he did. As for the academy's loss, I'm willing to compensate the academy for it."

Du Weilun furrowed his brows tightly. Even though Dai Huabin was powerful, he was still too vicious. Furthermore, the personality of a rebellious student like him would grow stronger and stronger as his power increased, which would make it harder to control him.

Du Weilun glanced towards Yan Shaozhe, who nodded slightly and whispered a few words to him.

Du Weilun sat back down and spoke in a low voice, “Dai Huabin, you have obtained a hundred marks as your base score for choosing a thousand year soul beast during the advancement test. The way you met force with force also embodied the strong points of an assault-type soul master. However, your technique was somewhat lacking. You’ve obtained 45 marks for your battle technique. You will also have to compensate the academy’s loss within ten days. If you don’t, the academy will strip you of your status as a core disciple.”

“Yes.” Dai Huabin had somewhat regained his composure by this point. He naturally wouldn’t go against Du Weilun’s word. He bowed slightly, saluted, then walked back towards his class with large strides.

He’d obtained a total of a hundred and forty five marks! This was an outstanding result that neared perfection! A score like this had never appeared within the Year 2 advancement test in the past—at least in Wang Yan, Zhou Yi, and Mu Jin’s memories.

In reality, Dai Huabin’s performance truly had neared perfection. Though his hands had been injured, he’d retained his fighting strength. Moreover, he’d valiantly killed a thousand year soul beast in battle despite being only twelve years old! Having such a cultivation at his age was extremely rare, even in the history of Shrek Academy; this was the main reason that Dean Yan Shaozhe had still given him such a high score.

Yan Shaozhe could tell that a student like Dai Huabin was different from Wang Dong: Though he had a steadfast personality, Dai Huabin could break too easily. He couldn’t try to control him by giving him a setback like he had with Wang Dong. He could only guide him slowly. Giving him a high score would benefit his confidence in himself. That, and Yan Shaozhe was confident that he could control his rebelliousness. After all, he’d taught many other students who’d been even more rebellious. Furthermore, Shrek Academy was proud of its ability to train monsters. It wasn’t worried about people with bad personalities; it was only worried that they wouldn’t have the ability to back said personality up.

When Mu Jin saw the blood-drenched Dai Huabin walking towards to her, she furrowed her brows. “Huabin, head back and clean yourself up. You’ve already passed.”

However, Dai Huabin shook his head. He towards Class 1, then raised his right hand’s index finger and pointed at Huo Yuhao.

Huo Yuhao was currently gazing straight at him. At that moment, Dai Huabin realised that Huo Yuhao’s gaze was extremely calm—so calm that it almost icy. He didn’t seem to have any intentions of cowering in front of his blood-drenched, savage appearance. On the contrary, he didn’t relent at all when their gazes met.

Huo Yuhao knew that Dai Huabin was telling him, ‘It’s your turn now.’

“Indeed, it’s my turn now.” Huo Yuhao clenched his fists tightly once he’d finished speaking. He nodded towards Wang Dong, then strode towards the arena with large strides.

It took a few minutes for the arena to be cleaned up. Once it had been, the referee sent Huo Yuhao’s test form to the tall stage.

“Class 1, Huo Yuhao.” Huo Yuhao reported his name calmly. As he did so, he stood tall and straight. Not only was he much more robust compared to a month ago, he was also quite a bit taller. Suddenly, the referee noticed that he was somewhat similar to Dai Huabin. Was it in his appearance? They seemed to be slightly similar. However, it had more to do with the confidence they both exuded; the confidence that they would definitely win.

“Are you still going to choose a hundred year soul beast?” The referee’s impression of him was still fresh in his mind; this was the student who’d alerted even the Beast King two days ago.

Huo Yuhao shook his head. “I choose a thousand year soul beast.”

“A thousand year soul beast?” The referee was stunned. “Huo Yuhao, you need to carefully think about this. You’re only a two-ringed Soul Grandmaster; a thousand year soul beast is still a bit too much pressure for you. You saw what just happened! Even if we wanted to help you out, in a close-combat fight like this, it’d still take time for us to reach you.”

Despite his warning, Huo Yuhao confirmed his decision unhesitatingly. “Teacher, I’ve decided to take on the test’s highest-ranked opponent, a thousand year soul beast.”

He spoke very loudly, thus those atop the tall stage, as well as the other students, were all able to hear him clearly.

Dai Huabin’s pupils contracted as a trace of astonishment appeared in his eyes. He’s choosing a thousand year soul beast? What could he be relying on? He can’t even use his second soul skill... is he just relying on his Spiritual Shock? That skill’s not too bad, but it’s nowhere near enough to take on the likes of a thousand year soul beast. Could he even manage to break its defences if it were to simply lie down and let him attack it?

He’s courting death! Does he think that they’re pushovers because Wang Dong and I were able to defeat them?

Dai Huabin had obtained 145 marks, while Wang Dong had obtained 100 marks. In other words, Huo Yuhao just needed to obtain more than 45 marks to win the bet. At the same time, the academy had requested that he not use his second soul skill during the test. In exchange, they had guaranteed that he would score at least 30 marks in order to ensure that he passed the advancement test.

Du Weilun had undoubtedly made a decision like this in order to see what he was capable of. If he hadn’t, Huo Yuhao would be able to pass the test solely by relying on his Imitation, just like his performance the other day!

“Let him.” Du Weilun’s voice rang out from atop the tall stage.

“Alright.” The referee responded. The arena had already been fully cleaned up by this point.

“Huo Yuhao, are you ready?” The referee asked.

He nodded.

The referee gestured towards the arena, then reminded him, "Pay attention to your safety. If you don't think that you can beat your opponent, do your best to protect yourself."

Huo Yuhao nodded slightly, but he didn't reveal any emotions on his face, as he was currently fully concentrated on the upcoming battle. As such, he couldn't even spare the effort required to say a word of thanks.

He was just a two-ringed Soul Grandmaster after all. Furthermore, he couldn't even use his second soul skill. In a situation such as this, the difficulty of taking on a thousand year soul beast could be imagined. Of course, he naturally understood that he was somewhat inferior to Wang Dong and Dai Huabin in terms of direct fighting strength. The only reason he dared to take on a thousand year soul beast was because of his confidence in his Spiritual Detection and the Ice Empress' two soul skills.

A pale golden light flickered as two soul rings rose from beneath his feet.

Wang Dong and Dai Huabin's three rings hadn't surprised any of the other students, but the students from Class 2 immediately cried out in surprise the moment his soul rings appeared.

Both of them were white, which represented two ten year soul rings! Yet, would anyone truly dare to underestimate these ten year soul rings? Two days ago, they had both been blood-red. At this point, almost no one who could tell what rank his soul rings truly were.

Yan Shaozhe's gaze was fixed on his body, and his eyes flickered slightly. Even though he didn't have a martial soul like the Spirit Eyes that could enhance his eyesight, his spiritual perception and vision weren't any less than Huo Yuhao's when he was using his Spiritual Detection due to his cultivation.

"What a strange skill. When he activates it, even I can't sense the intensity of the aura from his soul rings. Is his second soul ring truly a ten year soul ring?" Du Weilun furrowed his brows.

Yan Shaozhe shook his head. "There's no way it's a ten year soul ring. We've seen thousands upon thousands of soul rings. How could a soul ring that's capable of imitating the aura of a hundred thousand year soul ring possibly be a ten year soul ring? If it were only a ten year soul ring, could he really have scared hundred or thousand year soul beasts? If I were to make a guess, it's very likely that his soul ring is a thousand year one, just like Wang Dong's."

Du Weilun was stunned. "That can't be right. His first soul ring's only a ten year one; how could his second one be a thousand year one? His body shouldn't have been able to withstand absorbing one."

Yan Shaozhe shook his head. "Don't forget that he has twin martial souls. Furthermore, it's extremely likely that his second martial soul had a late awakening. Though this occurs very rarely, it could've changed his physique. However, you mentioned that he left the academy by himself, and that he's an orphan. There's almost no chance that he'll be able to kill a thousand year soul beast by himself. Is there anyone outside the academy who could help him out?"

At that point, their conversation stopped for the time being, as Huo Yuhao's opponent had appeared.

Surrounded by an intense aura of heat, a fire-wreathed lion charged out from the beast cage.

It was no wonder they were the highest-ranked opponents a student could challenge during the advancement test. Not only were the soul beasts Wang Dong, Dai Huabin, and Huo Yuhao faced thousand year ones; they were all tyrannical existences such as lions, leopards, and bears too.

Huo Yuhao felt somewhat strange when he saw the Flaming Lion King. He thought back to his match with Wu Feng. It was that match that had resulted in him obtaining stable footing in Class 1 and in sending Wu Feng to Class 2.

Chapter 52.2: The Ice Empress' Armor

Wu Feng, who stood near Dai Huabin, gazed towards Huo Yuhao, her eyes filled with anger. She couldn't understand why a sense of fear towards him had welled up in her heart after their match, despite him clearly being much weaker than her. It was because of this feeling that, during the months that followed their match, she hadn't issued him another challenge.

Wu Feng didn't know why this had happened, but the unyielding look in Huo Yuhao's eyes would frequently pop up in her mind.

He's actually going against the Flaming Lion King. This is gonna be a nice show to watch. Vicious thoughts popped up in Wu Feng's mind. It'd be good if it burned him to cinders.

The Flaming Lion King charged out of the beast cage and roared towards the sky. The lion's distinctive mane spread outwards and its fire-red fur looked even more formidable due to the fire surrounding it.

It was much more robust than the Wind Tiger that Dai Huabin had faced; its body was a full three meters long and its shoulders were one and-a-half-meters wide. Its muscles were outlined distinctly and its light brown eyes had a grim look to them. After letting out a roar, it shot through the air towards Huo Yuhao.

The flames around its body rose unceasingly as it charged towards Huo Yuhao. The flames were so hot that they began to distort the air around them.

Could Huo Yuhao really take on a thousand year Flaming Lion King? It was even stronger than the Bloodthirsty Demon Bear and Wind Tiger that Wang Dong and Dai Huabin had faced.

Dai Huabin did not believe for a second that such a miracle would occur. In his opinion, Huo Yuhao wouldn't even be able to take a single blow from it.

Huo Yuhao stood unyieldingly as he faced the Flaming Lion King's charge. He released his Spiritual Detection and locked it onto its body. Despite having faced a thousand year soul beast in the past, it would be a lie to say that he wasn't nervous. This was still his first time facing a soul beast of its level by himself. However, he let out a mental sigh of relief once he sensed his opponent's attribute.

By this time, it had already reached within fifty metres of Huo Yuhao. A large majority of the audience was now focused on its body. Yet, due to their focus on the Flaming Lion King, they didn't notice that a change had occurred to Huo Yuhao's soul rings.

This time, the change wasn't the color of his soul rings, but rather the number of them. His two soul rings had suddenly become a single one, though they still remained white.

That single white soul ring emitted a weak and feeble light as a layer of translucent crystals silently covered his body. Every crystal was about the size of a fingernail, and didn't hinder his movements even though they had covered his entire body. On the contrary, they formed a suit of armor made of ice.

These crystals of ice were all hexagonal and multifaceted. Thus, any light that shone on these ice crystals would result in dazzling reflections.

After the crystals of ice covered Huo Yuhao's body, the Flaming Lion King suddenly stopped. The blazing flames around its body converged and turned into a fiery light identical to its body which then shot straight towards Huo Yuhao.

This was the Flaming Lion King's innate skill, Flaming Clone Strike.

The fiery light surrounding its body vanished as soon as it released this attack. However, the speed of its charge didn't diminish in the slightest as it continued to charge towards Huo Yuhao.

The referee had been following the entire situation closely. He felt somewhat surprised when the layer of ice crystals appeared on Huo Yuhao's body. Just what was his martial soul? Furthermore, the audience had just noticed that his two soul rings were now just a single soul ring.

This strange phenomenon sent the two referees into a daze for a brief moment. Naturally, this wasted some of their time; by the time they came back to their senses and realised that Huo Yuhao might not be able to withstand the Flaming Lion King's attack, it had already reached him.

Du Weilun had already risen to his feet with his right hand pointed downwards. He could naturally see that the two referees wouldn't be able to make it in time to help Huo Yuhao.

Yan Shaozhe flicked his sleeve and blocked Du Weilun's hand. He smiled slightly and said, "No need."

At that moment, the Flaming Clone Strike had already struck Huo Yuhao.

Astonished cries began to ring throughout the entire stadium, both Zhou Yi and Wang Yan rushed into the arena simultaneously. However, they suddenly stopped after taking three steps; they had just witnessed a miraculous scene.

Right when the lion's Flaming Clone Strike had collided with Huo Yuhao's body, a layer of white mist surged from his body. Immediately after that, an illusory shadow flashed behind his body. Following which, the lion's skill vanished without a trace. It was as though it had never occurred in the first place.

After the white mist disappeared, Huo Yuhao's body returned back to its normal state. He clasped his hands behind his back and glared at the lion coldly. "Scram!" he shouted with a stern voice.

The huge lion had unexpectedly shivered before it turned around and ran away with its tail between its legs. Its terrified appearance was as though it had seen something extremely terrifying. Yet, it was only Huo Yuhao who stood there, with a completely nonchalant attitude.

The two referees were left dumbstruck. Last time, a hundred year soul beast had been paralyzed from fear and this time, a thousand year soul beast had been scared to the point of fleeing. Furthermore, he had withstood its attack without releasing a hundred thousand year soul ring!

Just what had happened? All the teachers within the arena were baffled.

Yan Shaozhe slowly rose to his feet, turned towards Du Weilun and spoke, "I'm going to head back now. Huo Yuhao gets full marks for his advancement test. I want this kid."

With that, he took a step forward and left the tall stage. Then, he flashed through the sky and disappeared.

Of all the spectators observing the match, the only person who had clearly seen what Huo Yuhao had done was Yan Shaozhe.

After he was struck by the lion's Flaming Clone Strike, a white mist had poured from Huo Yuhao's body. At the same time, the crystalline ice armor he wore had turned jade-green. Furthermore, an illusory image had appeared behind him as the white mist floated upwards.

It was a meter-and-a-half tall scorpion and Yan Shaozhe had clearly seen the scorpion coldly glare at the Flaming Lion King with its crystal-yellow eyes. At that exact moment, the lion... had pissed itself...

This wasn't the sense of fear caused by his Imitation skill, but a true intimidation caused by the attribute of his martial soul. It was just like the intimidation Dai Huabin's White Tiger released towards the Wind Tiger.

Yan Shaozhe's emotions surged violently as he hurriedly left. It had already been 76 years since he'd entered Shrek Academy, but this was the first Ultimate element martial soul he'd seen.

Ultimate Ice, this was the Ultimate Ice attribute!

The fire-type Flaming Lion King was frightened to the point of fleeing by Huo Yuhao's Ultimate Ice-type martial soul. This was the absolute suppression that stemmed from their attributes!

Only Yan Shaozhe had been able to see through everything clearly and he had made many decisions as a result. The skill Huo Yuhao had just released was called the Ice Empress' Armor, and it was the other skill that the Ice Empress' four hundred thousand year soul ring had given him. The Ice Empress' Pincer and the Ice Empress' Armor were absolute godly skills. Only, the current Huo Yuhao wasn't able to reveal their true strength. However, the strength required to send a fire-type opponent fleeing through elemental suppression posed no problem to him.

Yan Shaozhe had left earlier because he had seen what he had come to see. Now, all he needed to do was figure out a way to make Huo Yuhao stay in the Martial Soul Department without losing face.

A slight sinister smile appeared on Yan Shaozhe's face. Qian Duoduo, ah, Qian Duoduo. I was taken in by your scheme this time, but let's see who gets the last laugh. My Martial Soul Department is the true number one department on the continent and we have certain things that your Soul Tool Department doesn't. If this Dean doesn't hesitate to spare no expense, hehe... it's all worth it for an Ultimate element!

The silence in the arena vanished following Yan Shaozhe's departure, and the spectators all flew into an uproar.

Just what in the world had occurred?

Dai Huabin's earlier feat of killing a thousand year soul beast was already enough to astonish them, but Huo Yuhao hadn't even made a move. Yet, he'd sent his opponent fleeing by merely withstanding a single blow from it. This was even more stunning than a direct kill!

But, just what did he use to achieve this? After all, he wasn't allowed to use his Imitation!

Dai Huabin's confident eyes turned somewhat dazed. He muttered to himself, "Just how could this happen, how could this...?"

At this moment, Du Weilun's voice boomed across the arena, "Huo Yuhao's test is over. According to the Dean's evaluation, Huo Yuhao has obtained 150 marks. He passes with full marks."

"Ah" The astonished cries of various students immediately rang out. They didn't even know that the Dean had been watching this round of the advancement test. Without a doubt, Du Weilun's announcement of Huo Yuhao's score had been made even more persuasive with his use of the Dean's name.

Huo Yuhao slowly walked back to the area where the rest of the Class 1 students were waiting. In reality, even he didn't know that a situation like this would occur. It hadn't even been his own intention to yell out the word 'Scram'; in that instant, the Ice Empress had awakened. The Ice Empress had urged him to yell that out and as a result the grand Flaming Lion King was actually scared witless.... The might of the Ice Empress Jade Scorpion was truly terrifying.

Without even waiting for Huo Yuhao to return, Wang Yan instinctively ran up to him. Though his eyesight wasn't as good as Yan Shaozhe's, his research in the field of martial souls was extremely profound. Moreover, he more-or-less understood Huo Yuhao's abilities which resulted in him obtaining a few ideas as to what had really happened.

"Yuhao, you, just now, the soul skill you used just now, what happened? Your two rings became a single ring... don't tell me you have two martial souls? Your second martial souls belongs to the Ice element?"

Wang Yan's words rang out like a string of cannon shots.

Huo Yuhao might've been able to conceal the truth from other people, but Wang Yan had always treated him extremely well. Furthermore, he had always been extremely concerned about Huo Yuhao's growth. The heartfelt respect that Huo Yuhao held towards Teacher Wang was no less than the respect he held for Fan Yu and Zhou Yi. He nodded softly, affirming Wang Yan's guess.

Chapter 52.3: The Ice Empress' Armor

Wang Yan's eyes lit up. "This... were you were late because of your second martial soul? Is it because it just awakened? Come, follow me. There are some questions I'd like you to answer for me." He grabbed Huo Yuhao's arm as soon as he'd finished speaking and left. Zhou Yi had an odd expression on her face when she saw him leave, but she couldn't leave since he had! In order to guide their students through the advancement test, a teacher was required to be present at all times.

Huo Yuhao had been dragged away, but Wang Dong was still there! Even though he had been just as surprised by Huo Yuhao's performance, Huo Yuhao was still his martial soul fusion companion. The stronger Huo Yuhao was, the stronger their combined combat strength would be. Thus, although he was stunned, he was also greatly excited. He turned and looked towards Dai Huabin with a look of disdain,

whose face had begun to alternate between shades of green and white. He ridiculed, "How about it, Mr. Dai? It seems that you were full of shit this time around. Whaddaya mean 'taking on both of us by yourself'. Huo Yuhao's score alone is enough to beat yours. Remember to honor your promise later. Aih, the feeling of looking down on you from above truly feels good."

"You—!" When he heard this, Dai Huabin became so angry that his entire body began to shiver. His blood-drenched body caused him to look even more sinister. Zhu Lu almost rushed towards Wang Dong, while Xie Huanyue simply had an astonished look on his face.

Dai Huabin grabbed ahold of Zhu Lu; he'd unexpectedly managed to calm himself down after such a short amount of time. He looked towards Wang Dong and said indifferently, "Since I was willing to make a bet with you, I'm also willing to admit my defeat. I'll naturally honor my promise when I see Huo Yuhao later." After he said this, he turned towards Mu Jin. "Teacher Mu, I'm heading back to clean myself up first." With that, he let go of Zhu Lu and glanced towards her with a deep look before leaving.

The rancor and killing intent within Dai Huabin's eyes surged out like a waterfall as he left the Great Beast Duelling Arena.

Wang Dong lips curled as he watched Dai Huabin's distant figure. "He's actually quite a man; he still knows how to pay up when he loses." However, he didn't realize that Dai Huabin's loss today had thoroughly transformed him into a crazy madman who would disregard the consequences of his actions.

Wang Yan dragged Huo Yuhao all the way to his office, then shut the door once they'd entered. As soon as he'd shut the door, he impatiently inquired, "Yuhao, did you just awaken your second martial soul?"

Huo Yuhao nodded, then proceeded to give Wang Yan the same explanation he'd given to Zhou Yi and Fan Yu.

Wang Yan became somewhat tongue-tied as he listened to his story. Once he'd finished listening, he asked, puzzled, "Why would this happen? Just what in the world could cause this!? This can't be right! Even if your Body Soul were to have a second awakening, a brand new martial soul shouldn't have appeared. Twin martial souls are born at the same time; how in the world could a second one appear after the first? Was your second martial soul hidden from the very beginning? However, a situation like this has never occurred in the annals of history..."

The current Teacher Wang was a completely fanatical scholar. He continued to ponder unceasingly as he talked to himself.

"Yuhao, what exactly is your second martial soul?" Wang Yan looked towards him, an urgent tone in his voice.

Huo Yuhao replied, "I heard Teacher Zhou say that it's the Ice Jade Scorpion."

Wang Yan sharply inhaled when he heard this. Perhaps the other teachers wouldn't recognize the Ice Jade Scorpion, but he did. He had always devoted his efforts to the research of martial souls, thus he had naturally done research on soul beasts that solely belonged to the Extreme North. He naturally knew about the terrifying existences that lived in that place.

"I understand, I understand." Wang Yan's eyes lit up. "No wonder that Flaming Lion King ran with its tail between its legs. Your second martial soul is actually an extremely rare Ultimate martial soul! Heavens... it's actually an Ultimate martial soul!"

Huo Yuhao scratched his head. "Teacher Wang, I think I've heard Teacher Fan Yu mention this as well. What does an 'Ultimate martial soul' mean?"

Currently, Wang Yan was looking at Huo Yuhao the same way he'd look at a lover in a dream. Huo Yuhao felt somewhat guilty when he saw this.

"What is an Ultimate martial soul? How should I explain this to you... Let's put it this way. As you know, there are various ranks within the world of soul masters."

Huo Yuhao nodded.

Wang Yan continued, "Within these ranks, it's appropriate to say that twin-souled soul masters are existences who stand at the top of the pyramid. Regardless of what their martial souls are, they're definitely much stronger than ordinary soul masters, due to the fact that they can add soul rings to their second martial soul after they reach a certain level of strength. However, twin-souled soul masters are extremely rare. You're one of them, and Xiao Xiao is too. It's the first time in the outer courtyard's history that two twin-souled soul masters have appeared at the same time.

"Besides a unique situation such as this however, there are certain differences between martial souls. There are Beast Souls, and then there are Tool Souls. All martial souls have characteristics that belongs to them alone; its existence is worth something as long as soul power appears when it awakens. Due to this fact, it's often very hard to differentiate strong and weak martial souls. Under different circumstances, or perhaps I should say, 'different domains', there won't be just one 'strongest' martial soul. However, even though that's normally the case, there are a few martial souls publicly recognised as extremely powerful ones.

"The first of these are Body Souls. Body Souls are extremely powerful due to the fact that they're a part of a soul master's body. A soul master's trained body is naturally more accommodating to their wishes when compared to a martial soul created after its awakening. Furthermore, a second awakening can occur in a Body Soul. This second awakening can both occur during the initial awakening of the Body Soul, or at higher ranks. I've been paying a lot of attention to your Spirit Eyes, in the hopes that I would be able to see it undergo a second awakening. A Body Soul will experience a qualitative leap when it undergoes its second awakening, and will become an existence that lords over ordinary martial souls. It's just like a hundred thousand year soul beast that's broken through its limits; we can use the word 'transcendent' to describe martial souls that have achieved this.

"When a martial soul can be referred to as transcendent, it's obvious that it will definitely be much stronger than a normal martial soul. Besides Body Souls that have undergone their second awakening, there is another type of martial soul that can be classified as a transcendent martial soul: Ultimate martial souls. An example of this would be your second martial soul."

Huo Yuhao conscientiously listened to Wang Yan's explanation. He'd never expected Ultimate martial souls to be evaluated this highly.

The more Wang Yan spoke, the more excited he got. His face turned slightly red as he continued, “The strength of Ultimate martial souls is reflected in the word ‘Ultimate’. There are several different types of Ultimate martial souls, and they can belong to any element. However, for a martial soul to reach the pinnacle of any element is easier said than done. If it’s lacking even a little bit, it can’t be considered to have reached the pinnacle. You’ve seen Wu Feng’s Red Dragon; it’s a relatively top-ranked martial soul within the fire element. However, her fire isn’t Ultimate Fire. In fact, there’s a large gap between her fire and Ultimate Fire. Because of that, we say that her martial soul is a Fire Dragon, not a True Fire Dragon. When a True Fire Dragon appears, it’s capable of scorching everything within a thousand miles. However, your Ice Jade Scorpion is a true Ultimate Ice martial soul! Ice Jade Scorpions are soul beasts that live within the Extreme North. The Extreme North is an area that we humans simply cannot enter; soul beasts are the absolute masters of that place.”

“According to the legends, there are three extremely powerful ice-type races who live within that extremely frigid world. They are known as, respectively, the Titan Ice Devils, the Ice Jade Scorpions, and the Snow Ladies. The kings of their respective races are known as the Three Emperors of the Extreme North. I can guarantee that these Emperors are transcendent soul beasts.”

A sense of admiration spontaneously arose in Huo Yuhao’s heart when he heard Wang Yan say this. His description of the Extreme North was identical to what the Skydream Iceworm had said. In a situation where there was no way for them to collect any information from that place, Teacher Wang somehow possessed this much knowledge about it. The amount of dedication he’d put towards the research of soul beasts could be seen from this. Even the newly awakened Ice Empress couldn’t help but praise that he was somewhat knowledgeable.

Wang Yan naturally didn’t know what Huo Yuhao was thinking. He continued excitedly, “The Snow Ladies are supposedly the strongest race within the Extreme North. Nobody’s clear about their origins, but I strongly suspect that they have human blood; their appearance resemble those of humans as well. They’re definitely Ultimate martial souls. Other than the Snow Ladies, there’s the Ice Jade Scorpions, who have also reached to the pinnacle of the ice element. However, the Titan Ice Devils, who are likewise one of the three strongest races in the Extreme North, can’t be considered to have achieved transcendence in terms of their element. As far as I know, I’ve never heard of a Snow Lady or an Ice Jade Scorpion appearing as a human’s martial soul. I didn’t think that I’d actually be able to see one during my lifetime. Furthermore, it even turned out to be one of my students.”

Huo Yuhao was somewhat embarrassed. “Teacher Wang, I’m not even clear as to what happened myself.”

Wang Yan replied, “Ultimate martial souls are extremely rare. The academy’s entrance contains the sculptures of the first generation Shrek’s Seven Monsters. They were extremely powerful. Even the founder of your Tang Sect—Ancestor Tang San—was one of them. However, none of them had an Ultimate element. In the ten thousand year history of our academy, an Ultimate element martial soul has only appeared thrice before. They were, respectively, Ultimate Wind, Ultimate Fire, and Ultimate Wood. This is the the first time the Ultimate Ice element has appeared. In the past, the three of them all managed to achieve extreme fame amongst their contemporaries. Of them, the most famous is the possessor of the Ultimate Fire martial soul. It was under his leadership that the three original empires of our Douluo Continent were able to defeat the Sun Moon Empire. Later on in his life, he created an

extremely powerful clan. However, the martial souls that his descendants inherited didn't have the word 'Ultimate' attached to them.

"Do you know why Ultimate martial souls are so rare?"

Huo Yuhao shook his head blankly.

Wang Yan continued, "It's because it's extremely hard for our bodies to endure an Ultimate martial soul. Think about it. Regardless of whether it's your Ultimate Ice or that ancestor's Ultimate Fire, the extreme amount of power that appears once it awakens could easily blow a soul master's body apart. Without an unusual amount of innate talent, a person simply couldn't withstand it. Because of this, the chances that an Ultimate element will appear on the continent are miniscule; they're exponentially rarer than Body Souls. Based on what you've said, I'm going to make an outrageous hypothesis: Your second martial soul had already appeared when you first awakened your martial soul, but a mutation occurred and it gained a shred of intelligence. Its element was too tyrannical, thus it must've restrained itself."

Chapter 53.1: Irrefutable Benefits? (Preview)

"In order to withstand it, your soul power must've needed to reach at least rank 20; only then did it fully awaken. Now that it has, your body should be able to bear its load. I know that what I'm saying right now might sound inconceivable, but I think that this is the best way to explain your situation."

It might sound inconceivable? Huo Yuhao felt like his back had become drenched in cold sweat when he heard Teacher Wang's explanation. Teacher Wang was just too amazing... simply too amazing! His Ice Empress martial soul obviously hadn't appeared when he'd awoken his Spirit Eyes, but besides that, there hadn't been a single mistake in what Wang Yan had said! His martial soul truly was sentient!

Wang Yang took a deep breath. "Yuhao, let me give you a piece of advice. Even though you've become a core disciple of the Soul Tool Department, you're still someone who has an Ultimate martial soul. As such, the Martial Soul Department is the best place for you to study. Only in the Martial Soul Department will you be able to properly raise your Ultimate martial soul. To tell the truth, your innate talent is the highest I've ever seen. I never could've imagined that, not just twin martial souls, but both a Body Soul and an Ultimate martial soul could coexist inside of the same person."

"You aren't that strong right now. However, given enough time and assuming you continue to cultivate properly, your strength will continue increasing at an extremely fast pace. At the same time, your Spirit Eyes martial soul can still awaken twice! Heavens! I'm already incapable of imagining the heights you'll reach in the future. However, you'll have to pay close attention to your cultivation. An Ultimate element is extremely strong, but even an Ultimate martial soul has its disadvantages, which is related to the speed of your cultivation. According to the academy's records, the three ancestors who possessed the Ultimate element all felt their cultivation speeds drop dramatically once they reached Rank 30."

Huo Yuhao was startled. "A drop in cultivation speed? To what extent is this drop?"

"You don't need to worry," Wang Yang said with a faint smile, "even though your cultivation speed will drop by a large margin, a soul master with an Ultimate martial soul will still be much stronger than other soul masters of the same rank. Furthermore, a slower cultivation speed is definitely acceptable when it's for the sake of strengthening both your body and your Ultimate element. After all, it's not like you won't

make any progress at all. Actually, progressing slowly isn't necessarily a bad thing for an Ultimate martial soul; you won't encounter any bottlenecks since you have an Ultimate element."

Once Huo Yuhao had finished listening to Wang Yan's explanation, he realized just how much of an advantage his martial soul granted him. Moreover, Wang Yan didn't know that he also had both a million year intelligent soul ring and a four hundred thousand year intelligent soul ring inside of his body.

Just like Wang Yan had said, Huo Yuhao was weak right now. At the same time however, his prospects were limitless.

"So, what do you think? You should seriously consider transferring to the Martial Soul Department. If you're willing to, I'll personally notify the Dean. He'll surely give you the position of a core disciple this time. Furthermore, I can assure you that, with your level of talent, you'll definitely advance to the inner courtyard." n/-0velbn

Huo Yuhao furrowed his brows slightly. However, in the end, he shook his head. "Thank you, Teacher Wang. I appreciate your good intentions. However, when I was in a pinch, it was the Soul Tool Department that accepted me. Now that I've become a core disciple of that department, I can't go back on my word."

Wang Yan sighed. "The Martial Soul Department is also at fault for being so short-sighted! When you and Wang Dong placed first in the freshmen assessment, I went ahead and asked Elder Xuan to take another look at the two of you. However, they..." Wang Yan sighed again. "An Ultimate martial soul can't be wasted. Yuhao, even if decide to specialize in soul tools in the future, you absolutely can't neglect the cultivation of your martial soul. I'll do my best to convince the Martial Soul Department to help you obtain your future soul rings. You definitely must cultivate this Ultimate element of yours properly."

Huo Yuhao's eye sockets became somewhat red when he heard this. "Teacher Wang, I'll remain your disciple forever. You don't have to worry about me. I'll definitely cultivate diligently and live up to your expectations."

Wang Yan patted him on the shoulder and said, "You should head back to your dorm room and rest for now. The advancement test will continue for the rest of the day; there aren't any more classes today. I'll go and look for the Dean; he should've seen your performance just now as well. In fact, I bet he's already paying quite a bit of attention to you. However, you don't need to be in a hurry to choose. Dean Yan is always looking for people with outstanding talent. Now that he's found someone like you, there's no way that he'll give up on you."

"Hm." Huo Yuhao nodded, then turned to leave.

When he did so, a gentle voice suddenly echoed from all directions. "Teacher Wang, you live up to your reputation of being one of the most outstanding teachers in our Martial Soul Department. I have to thank you for all the work you've done for the academy. There's no need to look for me, as I've decided to come of my own volition. Please open the door."

This gentle voice was like a warm breeze; it was extremely pleasing to the ear. When he heard it, Huo Yuhao immediately felt his spiritual sea fluctuate slightly.

The Skydream Iceworm and the Ice Jade Empress Scorpion both simultaneously exclaimed from inside of Huo Yuhao's spirit sea, "This human is extremely powerful!"

Wang Yan became delighted when he heard these words, and immediately moved to open the door to his office. The person waiting outside was the Dean of the Martial Soul Department, Yan Shaozhe.

Dean Yan had held a meeting with all of the core teachers when he'd returned to the inner courtyard. After a simple discussion, he'd left once again and had returned to the test area to look for Huo Yuhao as fast as he could. He then heard that he'd been led away by Wang Yan. When he'd learned this, he decided to come to place directly. With his cultivation, he could hear the sound made by flies and mosquitos flapping their wings from several kilometers away; listening in on the contents of Wang Yan's speech had been a piece of cake for him.

"Dean." Wang Yan greeted Yan Shaozhe respectfully. He admired Dean Yan from the bottom of his heart.

Yan Shaozhe smiled faintly. "Teacher Wang, I heard what you said. In my capacity as Dean, I thank you on behalf of the academy. You've done your best to convince this talented youth to enter our Martial Soul Department. No matter what, once Huo Yuhao and the others graduate from their class in the outer courtyard, you'll be allowed to teach in the inner courtyard. If I'm not mistaken, you've always wanted to read the books held within the secret library. Look for me when you've entered the inner courtyard. I'll give you clearance to enter the secret library."

Wang Yan was overjoyed. "Thank you, Dean. This is incredible! Really... this is just incredible!" If it weren't for the fact that Yan Shaozhe was there, he would've immediately begun to jump for joy. Becoming a teacher of the inner courtyard and being able to read books from the secret library... these were things that Wang Yan had always hoped for! He hadn't expected that his lifetime goal would be achieved just like this. How could he not be happy?

Yan Shaozhe stepped into Wang Yan's office. Once he had, the door to the office closed of its own accord.

Huo Yuhao, who was near Wang Yan, also hurried to greet him respectfully.

Yan Shaozhe arrived in front of Huo Yuhao and said with a faint smile, "Student Huo Yuhao, I came specifically to talk to you this time. First things first, I would like to apologize to you on behalf of the entire Martial Soul Department." Once he'd finished speaking, one of the true members of Shrek Academy—the majestic Dean who possessed an enormous amount of prestige within the world of soul masters—bowed slightly to Huo Yuhao.

Huo Yuhao couldn't stop him; he'd been in a daze from the moment that Yan Shaozhe had entered the room.

The moment that Yan Shaozhe had appeared, he'd already guessed that he'd come here for him, in the hopes that he'd enter the Martial Soul Department. Huo Yuhao had planned to reject his offer, but he hadn't expected Yan Shaozhe to use a trick like this.

Let alone Huo Yuhao, even the nearby Wang Yan had become so shocked that his mouth was wide open. He'd never seen Dean Yan bow to anyone.

There had once been a time when a king had come to visit the academy. Yet, this king had been the one to bow in front of Dean Shaozhe! This was because the king in question had studied at the academy once. Even though he hadn't been able to graduate from the outer courtyard and had been dismissed from the school, he'd still been full of respect for the academy. This was more than enough to show what level of authority the academy held.

And yet, Dean Yan Shaozhe, one of the two leaders of the academy, was currently bowing to a twelve-year-old second year student. If this matter were to be publicized, it would shock every single soul master on the continent.

After bowing, Yan Shaozhe straightened his back. He was still smiling like before, and didn't seem to be even the slightest bit embarrassed. He gently said, "Student Huo Yuhao, because of our negligence, the Martial Soul Department nearly lost someone as talented as you. I sincerely apologize for this. The blame rests with us; we were unable to properly assess your skills. We almost lost an outstanding student."

Huo Yuhao was only able to react now: His small face had become entirely red, and gestured again and again. However, he couldn't say anything.

The difference between him and Yan Shaozhe was comparable to that of heaven and earth. Yan Shaozhe had unexpectedly bowed to him; this alone had left him dumbfounded! His mind had been thrown into confusion, thus he didn't know how to reply. He had already forgotten the words he'd prepared in order to refuse his offer.

Yan Shaozhe continued, "I saw your martial soul today. When you used your soul skill, your martial soul also manifested itself. If I'm not mistake, it should be an Ice Jade Scorpion, right? An Ultimate martial soul of the ice element. I know that you've already become a disciple of the Soul Tool Department. However, this isn't a problem. I can go and have a talk with their department. If you were to specialize in soul tools whilst being the owner of an Ultimate martial soul... I can only say that it would be a huge waste. I dare say that, throughout the entirety Douluo Continent, the only soul masters capable of providing the proper guidance to someone with an Ultimate martial soul are those of our Martial Soul Department. If you're willing, from today onwards you'll become a disciple of the inner courtyard of the Martial Soul Department. I'll teach you personally, and will become your academic advisor. Given your innate talent... even with your cultivation speed slowed by your Ultimate martial soul, I'm confident that you'll become a Titled Douluo in less than 40 years under my tutelage. A Titled Douluo with an Ultimate martial soul, do you know what that means?"

Huo Yuhao unconsciously shook his head.

Yan Shaozhe smiled faintly. Then, he continued in a firm tone, "It means that you'd be invincible and unmatched in the world."

These words spoken by Yan Shaozhe were like a bomb. Huo Yuhao's body swayed, and he had to take a step back. Luckily, his will was much stronger than that of the average person's. If it weren't, he might've fallen down, which would've caused him to lose a large amount of face.

Chapter 53.2: Irrefutable Benefits?

Yan Shaozhe said, "Soul Tools have been rapidly developing during these past few years. However, the power of soul masters still lies deep within ourselves. If you like soul tools, it'd be fine for you to try them out when you reach the rank of a Titled Douluo in the future. I hope that you'll think about this carefully and won't let this chance slip by. If you're willing to join our Martial Soul Department you'll receive a large amount of resources from the inner courtyard. At the same time, I can pledge three things to you, to compensate for our past misjudgement."

"The first is regarding Wang Dong and Xiao Xiao. Wang Dong can fully utilise your fusion skill, and has worked together with you this entire time. Xiao Xiao has also worked together with you, and is also a soul master who possesses twin martial souls. I can guarantee that they'll definitely become inner courtyard disciples of the Martial Soul Department like you in the future. You need to realize that core disciples and inner courtyard disciples are entirely different. Not all core disciples can definitely enter the inner courtyard. Furthermore, you'd get more resources from the academy if you become an inner courtyard disciple ahead of time."

"Secondly, with my position as Dean of the Martial Soul Department, I can assure you that the academy will do everything in its power to give you a complete set of soul bones. I'll do my best to give you soul bones of the highest quality to ensure that you have the highest possible fusion rate with the soul bones. I can also guarantee that there will be at least one soul bone from a hundred thousand year old soul beast included within this set. n-)~~OVel&1n~~

Thirdly, I can guarantee that you'll be given a hundred thousand year old soul ring, at the very least."

Wang Yan became dumbfounded when he heard everything that Yan Shaozhe had to say. His first reaction to the Dean's proposal was that the Dean had gone crazy...

Even though Shrek Academy was extraordinarily wealthy, the three things that Yan Shaozhe had promised Huo Yuhao were all similarly extraordinary things! A hundred thousand year soul ring and a hundred thousand year soul bone meant that the powerhouses from Shrek Academy would have to set out to kill a hundred thousand year soul beast just for Huo Yuhao! These rewards were unprecedented in the history of the academy. Not to mention the fact that Yan Shaozhe had added a complete set of soul bones to the deal!

Yan Shaozhe was especially cunning however, as he'd also proposed letting Wang Dong and Xiao Xiao enter the inner courtyard together with Huo Yuhao. Wang Dong and Xiao Xiao were both Huo Yuhao's best friends. With this condition present, Yan Shozhe was certain that Huo Yuhao wouldn't reject him without a good reason.

If it wasn't for the competition with the Soul Tool Department, or if the Martial Soul Department had discovered the talent known as Huo Yuhao earlier on, Yan Shaozhe wouldn't have had to promise such things so early on, even if he'd wanted to go all out and snatch him over. However, things were different now; Huo Yuhao had already become a core disciple of the Soul Tool Department, and one of Fan Yu's personal disciple. Yan Shaozhe thus understood that he needed to present real benefits if he truly wanted Huo Yuhao to change his mind. More importantly, he needed to carry out his overt plot to steal Huo Yuhao over to their side in a just and honorable manner so the Soul Tool Department wouldn't be able to say anything.

The Soul Tool Department might be wealthy, but could they find a top-ranked soul bone? Could the Soul Tool Department help Huo Yuhao hunt down a hundred thousand year soul beast? It was evident that both of these things would be impossible to them!

Yan Shaozhe had returned to the inner courtyard before he'd come over and had had a discussion with a few of the teachers in charge of the core disciples. In the end, they'd decided that they definitely had to keep Huo Yuhao in the Martial Soul Department, no matter the cost.

If someone were to ask him if Huo Yuhao was worth this incredible cost, Yan Shaozhe's answer would be that he definitely was.

That's right, the Martial Soul Department was going to huge lengths just for the sake of obtaining Huo Yuhao. However, when Huo Yuhao became an adult, Shrek Academy's position as number one on the continent would definitely be solidified for at least the next three hundred years with him around.

It was normal for a person who'd cultivated to the rank of a Titled Douluo to live for three, or even five hundred years. Furthermore, there was already considerable veiled criticism towards Shrek Academy circulating due to their influence. These criticisms had reached both the Sun Moon Empire, and even the three original empires of the Douluo Continent. This was evident due to the fact that the three empires no longer sent children from the royal family to Shrek Academy to study.

Yan Shaozhe saw the potential in Huo Yuhao. There was a possibility that he would become a powerful leader in Shrek Academy in the future. Huo Yuhao wouldn't necessarily remain in Shrek Academy, but so long as he was able to nurture him into a formidable powerhouse, Shrek Academy would definitely be able to stand tall in the face of any adversity it faced.

What could their investment now amount to, when faced with a few hundred years of honor for Shrek Academy? Besides, an academy was an institution where students were taught; a place that sought out talented individuals. Was it truly that easy to come across an Ultimate martial soul? This encounter was a first for both Wang Yan and Yan Shaozhe!

That didn't mean that his Ultimate martial soul was definitely the strongest martial soul currently, but it did mean that it had the possibility to at least become one of the strongest. Furthermore, Huo Yuhao possessed twin martial souls.

These elements combined were enough for Yan Shaozhe to come to his current decision. Hence, he'd gone to look for Huo Yuhao at the first possible moment.

When he heard what Yan Shaozhe had to say, Huo Yuhao didn't know how to reply—the weight of his words were just too much to bear. No matter how smart or calm he was, Huo Yuhao was still a twelve-year-old child. As the Dean of the Martial Soul Department, Yan Shaozhe's aura was just too powerful. For a moment, Huo Yuhao actually felt a little bit speechless.

At that moment, a hurried shout suddenly rang out. It was so sudden that both Huo Yuhao and Wang Dong trembled in shock.

"Yan Shaozhe, have you no shame?"

"Bang——" Someone forcibly pushed the office door open. Qian Duoduo immediately took large strides into the room with a furious look on his face, Fan Yu trailing closely behind him.

Yan Shaozhe had been observing the advancement test, but had left once he'd given Huo Yuhao a perfect score on his test. Zhou Yi had felt that something was amiss when Wang Yan pulled Huo Yuhao away afterwards. Thus, while the test was still going on, she'd written a note for Wang Dong to give to Fan Yu.

When Fan Yu saw the note, he immediately knew what was going on. For what reason had Yan Shaozhe personally observed the advancement test? It was undoubtedly for Huo Yuhao's sake! When his thought process had reached this point, he hadn't dared waste another second; he immediately began searching for Qian Duoduo.

Actually, they had already arrived a few minutes ago. Yan Shaozhe had also realized this when was standing inside of the room. As such, it was only natural that they'd heard what Yan Shaozhe had said a moment ago. A flurry of verbal abuse rapidly left Qian Duoduo's mouth as both anger and shock intermingled inside of him.

Yan Shaozhe smiled and replied, "Old Qian, how'd you manage to get enough free time to come over to the Martial Soul Department's office building?"

Qian Duoduo exasperatedly said, "Yan Shaozhe, do you still want your face? Ah? What did we agree on? You promised to give Huo Yuhao to the Soul Tool Department—for him to be a core disciple. This is what was agreed upon when I won the bet at that time!"

Yan Shaozhe replied, "Indeed, I did promise that. However, even I am human, and humans will always have times where they make mistakes, right? There's an old saying: 'One can only reform oneself after recognising one's mistakes.' Am I not correcting my mistakes right now?"

Qian Duoduo became furious. "Rubbish! Are you saying that you can shove shit back inside after you've excreted it?! If you dare to steal him from me, I'll have to fight you."

Yan Shaozhe expression remained beaming as he replied, "You wanna fight?! Sure! We fought a lot when we were younger. Now that we're old... it really has been a long time since we've learned fighting techniques from each other! Sure, let's go and find a place to fight at. If I win, Huo Yuhao stays inside of my Martial Soul Department, and you can't fight me over him anymore."

Qian Duoduo almost fainted from anger. "Yan Shaozhe, I've met shameless people. However, I've never seen you behave so shamelessly before. You don't keep your word. You're shameless!"

Yan Shaozhe felt like he'd been wrongly accused, and it showed on his face. "I didn't keep my word? How so? How am I shameless too? I did what I promised you! Huo Yuhao is already a core disciple of your Soul Tool Department. I didn't stop that from happening, right? I'm only proposing something to him now. If he chooses to abandon the Soul Tool Department and return to the Martial Soul Department, then I'll naturally need to welcome him back wholeheartedly. This isn't about me not keeping my word. Yuhao, you should make your decision soon. I can tell you with utmost certainty that the Soul Tool Department can't achieve all of these promises that I've made to you. One can't just kill a hundred thousand year soul beast just because they say they can. If you're not a Titled Douluo ranked 95 and above, it's definitely impossible for you to kill a hundred thousand year soul beast. However, it just so happens that I've cultivated to rank 95. You'll understand what I mean by this when I give you an example. If I were to swap pointers with the vice-dean of the Soul Tool Department, this Qian Duoduo

standing before you wouldn't stand a chance against me, even if I were to let him make the first move in a one-on-one battle. He's also a Titled Douluo like me. You can ask him whether or not he has the ability to kill a hundred thousand year soul beast yourself."

Qian Duoduo felt like his lungs were going to explode. Yan Shaozhe had always overpowered, ever since they were young. This fact had remained true this time around too. However, he truly wouldn't be Yan Shaozhe's opponent if they ended up fighting. Even though Yan Shaozhe's words were harsh, he'd only spoken the truth. However, Qian Duoduo became even angrier than before because of this. It had never occurred to him that Yan Shaozhe would personally look for Huo Yuhao, nor that he would pledge so many conditions in order to steal Huo Yuhao away from him.

However, he couldn't argue with Yan Shaozhe, thus he turned towards Huo Yuhao. "Huo Yuhao, you're already a core disciple of the Soul Tool Department, as well as Fan Yu's direct disciple. Fan Yu will be the Dean of the Soul Tool Department in the future. You're also extremely talented at making soul tools. You're well aware of how the Soul Tool Department treats you. As such, I hope that you'll consider this matter carefully."

Consider? Consider what? Huo Yuhao's mind had become a sticky mess; he'd lost all of his ability to think.

The honorable Dean of the Martial Soul Department stood on one side, while the vice-dean of the Soul Tool Department stood on the other. Both of them were Titled Douluo powerhouses, with Dean Yan Shaozhe being a Transcendent Titled Douluo who's soul power was rank 95. Huo Yuhao was only a student! What could he even say in such a situation? He wouldn't dare to offend either party!

Fan Yu looked towards Huo Yuhao and saw that he had become completely flushed and couldn't say a word. He immediately rushed to Huo Yuhao's side and patted him on the shoulder in a comforting manner. He then said, "Deans, you shouldn't bother Yuhao anymore. Dean Yan, you're truly the one in the wrong regarding this matter; Yuhao has already become a core disciple of the Soul Tool Department. In order to maintain the unity of both departments, please let sleeping dogs lie."

Chapter 53.3: Irrefutable Benefits?

Yan Shaozhe's attitude changed as he faced Fan Yu. He said indifferently, "Fan Yu, you should already know that Huo Yuhao has an Ultimate element. Do you think your Soul Tool Department can nurture an Ultimate element better than our Martial Soul Department? Do you know what an Ultimate soul master means to our academy? During the past ten thousand years, our Shrek Academy has become the continent's number one academy by taking one step at a time. Other than the extreme leap we experienced under the leadership of Ancestor Tang San and the original Shrek's Seven Monsters, our academy has had three glorious batches. Those three batches were all created through the leadership of an Ultimate Douluo. This was how we solidified our status. Thus, Huo Yuhao's Ultimate element has great significance to us. Under ordinary circumstances, I wouldn't have used a method like this to request that he return to the Martial Soul Department. However, this matter is no longer negotiable. I'd rather not be so thick-skinned but we have to make him stay in the Martial Soul Department for the sake of the academy's glory."

Fan Yu tightly furrowed his brows. He didn't think that Yan Shaozhe would be this stubborn and troublesome.

“Yan Shaozhe, shouldn’t you ask me first before stealing one of my students?” A clear and melodious voice rang out as another person walked into the room, making Wang Yan’s office much more congested.

The rage on Qian Duoduo’s face immediately dissipated the moment he saw this person. “Lin’er, I’m glad you finally came. Otherwise, I’d die from anger due to this old bastard.”

The newcomer was a woman, about 1.7m tall. She looked like she was in her early fifties. Her skin was white, her black hair was neatly bundled up, and her gilded clothes made her look extremely experienced. Though she was aged, one could still tell that she was definitely an absolute beauty in her youth.

Fan Yu bent down to Huo Yuhao’s ear and whispered, “This is our Dean, Xian Lin’er.”

Huo Yuhao had calmed down much more with Fan Yu by his side. He knew that remaining silent at this moment was for the best. When the gods were fighting, it was better for a lowly student like him to stay out of the way.

Yan Shaozhe furrowed his brows upon seeing Xian Lin’er, “Lin’er, you’re...”

Xian Lin’er said icily, “When we were young, you never kept your word. Now that we’re over eighty years old, you’re still the same. You’re bullying my men to their breaking point. Didn’t you say that you were very good at fighting? Come on, I’ll duel you right now. Let’s go to the Soul Duelling Arena.”

Yan Shaozhe, who previously had a clear advantage over Qian Duoduo and Fan Yu, had an embarrassed look on his face now. “Lin’er,” he said, “why are you doing this? I truly regret what I’ve done regarding this matter. However, you should understand what an Ultimate soul master means for the future of our academy. This isn’t something that a simple bet can change. I’ve already talked it over with the teachers from the inner courtyard; Huo Yuhao must stay in my Martial Soul Department.”

Xian Lin’er said icily, “And what are you relying on in order to pull this off? Is it just because your Martial Soul Department is the top-ranked one in the continent? Does that mean that our Soul Tool Department has to give you our core disciples? How do you know that this child won’t become someone outstanding by staying in our Soul Tool Department? I admit that what you’ve said isn’t wrong; if your Martial Soul Department nurtures him well, it’s very likely that he’ll become your department’s future pillar, and in turn will allow you to maintain your position as the number one martial soul department on the continent. However, you haven’t thought about what happens if our Soul Tool Department manages to nurture him well, he might be able to bring our Soul Tool Department to the number one spot in the entire continent, allowing us to be free from the suppression of the Sun Moon Empire? I’ve explicitly stated that you won’t be able to snatch any student from my department. You don’t need to force this child either; he belongs to my Soul Tool Department. You were talking about a hundred thousand year soul beast? When the time comes, I’ll help him hunt one. If worst comes to worst, I’ll just hand my life over to the Great Star Dou Forest. Then, I’ll have been forced to death by you.”

Qian Duoduo’s expression became somewhat strange. He was slightly embarrassed and yet not. However, the anger on his face had completely vanished.

This time around, Yan Shaozhe’s face alternated between shades green and white. He had a myriad of forms of sophistry, yet he couldn’t use any of them in front of Xian Lin’er. He had a guilty conscience

regarding her, due to certain things he'd done during his youth. However, an Ultimate twin-souled soul master was something that might not even occur once in a millennium for the Martial Soul Department. Thus, as the Dean of the Martial Soul Department, he couldn't simply give up because of his personal feelings.

Yan Shaozhe took a deep breath. "Lin'er, here's how I see it. This matter has already reached the point where we can't settle it through a simple conversation. Why don't we decide it with a meeting in the Sea God's Pavilion? What do you think?"

Xian Lin'er didn't hesitate to reply, "Fine. A meeting at the Sea God's Pavilion it is. I'm just afraid that you won't show up. No matter what way you word it, our side's more logical. Come, we'll go and gather the elders from the Hall of Consecration and start the meeting. I want to see how why you think you can steal my student."

Yan Shaozhe furrowed his brows tightly, then turned to Huo Yuhao and revealed a warm smile. "Huo Yuhao, this matter is also related to your own interests. You should consider it carefully. As for us, we'll have to discuss the matter first." With that, he turned around and left.

Xian Lin'er's expression turned grave as she turned to face Huo Yuhao. "Child, ignore him. You don't need to pay this matter too much attention. Continue to cultivate diligently; the academy will make everything clear soon." With that, she left as well. Qian Duoduo hurriedly chased after her, leaving Fan Yu and Wang Yan in the office.

Wang Yan was somewhat speechless. "It seems that this matter's gotten noisy. Aih..."

Fan Yu patted Huo Yuhao on the shoulder. "Yuhao, head back and rest first. Dean Xian's right; you don't need to worry too much about this matter, nor should you feel any mental burdens over it. No matter what the Academy decides, in the end, it won't be a bad thing for you. Work hard and continue cultivating. Increasing your cultivation is the most important thing for you right now."

Once the Deans had left, the pressure that Huo Yuhao felt in his heart lessened by a large amount. He hurriedly nodded and replied, "Yes, teacher." The smartest thing he'd done throughout the situation was to not show where he stood on the matter. Though his heart was naturally inclined towards the Soul Tool Department, it would be a lie if he said that Wang Yan and Dean Yan Shaozhe's words hadn't moved him.

The thing that had moved him most hadn't been Yan Shaozhe's promises, as he already had two extremely powerful and intelligent soul rings. He wasn't worried about his chances of obtaining powerful soul rings and soul bones in the future either. What Wang Yan had said about the Martial Soul Department being best qualified to teach a student with an Ultimate martial soul, however, had moved him. Furthermore, Yan Shaozhe had apologised to him with his status as a Dean, and had even promised to allow Wang Dong and Xiao Xiao to directly enter the inner courtyard. Even if he didn't think about himself, it wasn't as if he could simply not care for his companions. For him to make such a decision right now was simply too difficult for him. As such, he'd simply decided to remain silent and allow the academy to make the decision for him. He'd already thought it through; no matter what the academy's final decision was, he'd fully comply with it. In the deepest recesses of his heart however, he didn't truly wish to give up on either side, nor was he able to.

When left the faculty building, he saw Wang Dong and Xiao Xiao waiting for him. They immediately rushed over to him the instant they saw him.

Wang Dong spoke in a low voice, "What's the situation? What did Teacher Wang call you over for?"

Huo Yuhao didn't conceal anything in front of them. He recounted the events that had occurred in Teacher Wang Yan's office. Both Wang Dong and Xiao Xiao's eyes went wide when they heard that the three Deans had fought over him.

Wang Dong was astonished as he said, "Truly capable! You've become so popular so quickly. Dean Yan seems really sincere, too! However, the Soul Tool Department's treated you well. What do you think?"

Huo Yuhao smiled bitterly. "What's there to think about? There's nothing I can change; I'm merely a student. Do you really think that I get to decide anything? I'll just comply with the academy's arrangements. Dean Yan, Dean Xian, and Dean Qian have all left to have a meeting. I reckon that they'll have a result shortly. However... I'd prefer to not give up on either side."

Xiao Xiao was somewhat worried. "Wouldn't you not get anything good from both parties then? Yuhao, you don't have to worry about us. I'm confident that I'll be able to enter the inner courtyard with my own hard work. It's fine if you make your own choice."

Huo Yuhao was greatly moved when he heard her words. He looked at her small, pretty face and sincerely said, "Thanks, Xiao Xiao."

Wang Dong's expression tensed up, but then quickly relaxed. "Let's head back first. You're right, it'd be best for the academy to make the decision."

Huo Yuhao suddenly asked, "Right, Xiao Xiao. How'd you do in your test?"

Xiao Xiao giggled. "110 marks. I'm a control-type soul master, and I also chose a thousand year soul beast. Even though the soul beast and I fought for quite a while, it couldn't do anything to me until my soul power had been fully drained. The judges gave me a high score when they saw this."

Wang Dong said, "Right, that Dai Huabin lost to us again. When will we settle our bet?"

Wang Dong truly wasn't in the mood to deal with Dai Huabin. Furthermore, he felt somewhat regretful. If it hadn't been for their bet, he wouldn't have had to reveal his abilities during their advancement test. If not for that, he naturally wouldn't have to deal with the predicament he was currently in.

"We'll ignore him for now," Huo Yuhao replied, "let's just head back to our dorm rooms and wait for the academy's decision. It'd be best to simply be a bit more obedient for the time being."

Wang Dong nodded. "That's that then. Let's head back and cultivate."

"It's rare for you to be this diligent!" Huo Yuhao replied jokingly.

Wang Dong snorted. "How could I not feel endangered now that you've become so popular? Speaking of which, that Ultimate martial soul of yours is really magical. Even a thousand year soul beast was scared to the point that it tried to flee from it."

Huo Yuhao replied, "I was simply relying on my elemental advantage. If it were a true 1v1, you and Dai Huabin are much stronger than I am. I'm definitely not a match for you guys. Right, Xiao Xiao, what soul rank are you at now?"

Xiao Xiao said, "I'm at Rank 28 now! I reckon that I'll be able to reach Rank 30 by the end of the year." When she'd first entered the academy, her soul rank had been at around Wang Dong's level. However, she didn't have the Haodong Power that Wang Dong and Huo Yuhao had. As such, the difference in their cultivation speed was apparent now.

"Let's head back," Huo Yuhao said "the most important thing we have to do right now is to work hard and increase our strength. We'll be considered to have established ourselves in the academy once we become disciples of the inner courtyard."

Sea God's Island.

Sea God's Island had several buildings on it, but one among them was unquestionably the tallest and grandest. This building was the Sea God's Pavilion, situated in the heart of the island.

Sea God's Pavilion was six floors tall, and every floor was more than ten meters high, which resulted in an extremely grand structure. In turn, the mist that pervaded the island year-round made it so that Shrek Academy's outer courtyard was unable to see it clearly.

Sea God's Pavilion was the most important place within Shrek Academy, as the Hall of Consecration was located within it. The secret library that Yan Shaozhe had spoken to Wang Yan about was also located here. There were also a few secrets not known to anyone located here as well. Thus, there was no lack of extremely valuable treasures here.

Chapter 54.1: Meeting at the Sea God's Pavilion

Of course, a place that held treasures would always attract thieves. Numerous arrogant experts who'd thought highly of themselves had secretly tried to infiltrate Sea God's Island in the past, in hopes of stealing the items within. However, none had ever been able to leave once they entered the island.

Meetings would be held at Sea God's Island every time a major event happened within Shrek Academy. These meetings were of the highest importance to the academy. Only the Deans and Vice Deans of the Martial Soul Department and Soul Tool Department, along with the resident elders of the Hall of Consecration, had the right to take part in these meetings. Important matters would be resolved through a show of hands.

The Dean and Vice Dean of both departments had one vote each in these meetings.

Currently, the grand conference hall was completely silent. Inside of the room, ten people sat around a long oval table. A recliner had been placed at the innermost section, where the head of the long table sat. The light around the recliner was extremely dim; one could only faintly see that a person seemed to be lying on it. Compared to the ten people sitting around the round table, his posture caused him to appear particularly unusual.

Xian Lin'er and Qian Duoduo sat on the right hand side of the long table, at the very end, while Yan Shaozhe and a woman who looked to be around fifty years old sat at the end of the table on the left hand side. The woman looked like she'd been extremely beautiful when she was young. Though they were both women, she didn't even glance in Xian Lin'er's direction. She instead maintained a stern appearance as she sat next to Yan Shaozhe. Just like Qian Duoduo, they sat opposite one another.

Besides the four of them, the six people who were sitting closer to front of the table were all Elders. Every single one of them were old, gray-haired individuals. Of course, their forms were different, a fact that could be seen through the way each of them sat.

Xian Lin'er, Qian Duoduo, Yan Shaozhe, and that woman that looked fifty years old sat in a comparatively proper manner, while the Elders all sat in various postures. Present amongst them was the Elder that Wang Yan had called Elder Xuan. He was seated near the front of the table and to the right of the chairperson. This also meant that he was currently seated in the first seat at Yan Shaozhe's end of the table.

At that moment, Elder Xuan had a drumstick in his left hand and a wine calabash in his right. He looked extremely relaxed as he continued to eat and drink at the table.

"Now that everyone has arrived, let's begin the meeting. Shaozhe, take charge of the meeting." A gentle voice rang out. Hearing this voice would cause one to feel as if their soul and mind had been cleansed, yet it wasn't enough to discern the owner's age. This voice came from the head of the table—from the one lying on the recliner that was hidden within the darkness.

"Yes, teacher." Yan Shaozhe stood and bowed towards the person sitting at the head of the table.

If any outsiders were to hear the way Yan Shaozhe addressed that person, they would jump in shock. One had to realize that Yan Shaozhe was famous for being over sixty years old, but in reality, he was over ninety years old. Furthermore, his teacher was actually still alive and in good shape! This was really shocking news!

Even Elder Xuan put his drumstick and wine calabash down when he heard the gentle voice rang out. He rubbed his oily palms on his clothes, then proceeded to sit relatively straight. The other resident Elders also assumed rather proper sitting positions; only the person lying down kept their posture.

Yan Shaozhe bowed slightly toward the Elders in front. "Teacher and fellow resident elders, Lin'er and I have gathered everyone here today and initiated a Sea God's Island meeting for a matter that will decide whether or not our academy will continue to prosper in the centuries to come."

"Bang!" Xian Lin'er violently slammed his hand down on the table. "Cut the chit chat and stop trying to scare people Yan Shaozhe. Get to the point."

The elders became somewhat shocked when she slammed her hand down on the table. The looks in their eyes turned somewhat strange as well. The old woman who was sitting to the right of the chairperson frowned and said, "Lin'er, this is a meeting on Sea God's Island. If you're going to make a ruckus, get out."

There was a slight change in Xian Lin'er's expression when she heard this. She snorted, but didn't say anything else.

The old woman's hair was as white as snow, but there weren't many wrinkles on her face. An extremely gentle glow was also present within her eyes. No matter what way one looked at it, she looked like an amiable old grandmother. She then turned towards Yan Shaozhe, gave him a small smile, and said, "Shaozhe, continue."

"Yes, Elder Lin." Yan Shaozhe looked towards Xian Lin'er. Even though a somewhat apologetic look was present in his eyes, his determination shone through even more. As the Dean of the Martial Soul Department, he definitely couldn't let his personal feelings affect his decisions.

Xian Lin'er turned her head to the side, refusing to look him in the eyes.

Yan Shaozhe lowered his voice and said, "To all the resident elders, the matter is as follows..." As he spoke, he didn't conceal the truth. He began with the bet he'd made with Qian Duoduo, then narrated Huo Yuhao's performance without missing a single detail.

"...When this student returned from the holidays, not only did he have a second martial soul, it was also an Ultimate martial soul. Even though his first martial soul isn't that good, as an Ultimate type soul master, he's bound to become a pillar for the academy in the future—if he's nurtured with care. Furthermore, this child is an orphan. There's a possibility that we could also fight for him to stay within the academy.

"I lost the bet with Dean Qian, but it must be stated that only the Martial Soul Department has the experience to properly raise and teach someone with an Ultimate element. It's also the only way he'll reach his full potential."

Yan Shaozhe's words were simple, but he spoke in a very natural manner as he exposed the way that Qian Duoduo had laid a trap by using a stratagem in order to ensure that Huo Yuhao could become a core disciple of the Soul Tool Department.

When they heard what he had to say, surprised looks on all of the resident elder's faces. Elder Xuan in particular had knit his eyebrows closely together—as if he could no longer see the drumstick before him.

There were two ways a Sea God's Island meeting could be held. One was the periodic meeting that was held annually, while the other was an interim meeting. The periodic meetings were normal, but when an interim meeting was held, it implied that something major had happened in the academy. The few times that an interim meeting had been held throughout the course of history had decided the direction that the continent would head towards.

It was definitely worth hosting a interim meeting for an Ultimate attribute soul master. However, when the resident elders realized that the Martial Soul Department and the Soul Tool Department were fighting over the student, their expressions relaxed quite a bit. This was an internal problem; it should be relatively easy to settle compared to other matters.

As soon as Yan Shaozhe had finished speaking and had sat down, Qian Duoduo immediately stood up.

"Fellow elders, I don't completely agree with Dean Yan's narration. Sure, we made a bet. However, when we did so, even the Soul Tool Department didn't know that Huo Yuhao would gain a second martial soul. It goes without saying that this is an extraordinarily rare occurrence. Anyway, what we saw in him was his talent towards soul tools.

“Huo Yuhao had been formally declared as Fan Yu’s disciple. In the short span of eight months, he’s gone from a normal soul engineer—someone who’d never once touched a soul tool in his life—to a Class 2 soul engineer. This rate of improvement is a new record in the academy’s history. This child is both hardworking and endures hardship. He has no small amount of Fan Yu’s praise. When we learned of this, we had already decided to take him in as a core disciple; how could we let such a talent slip through our fingers? Furthermore, the Martial Soul Department chose not to make him a core disciple, despite him leading his team to win the freshmen test. However, just as luck would have it, Dean Yan discovered his second martial soul, thus he is now fighting us over him. What happened to the academy’s rules? I stand here as a representative of the Soul Tool Department: No matter what happens, the Soul Tool Department absolutely won’t give up on such a talented person. Furthermore, the Soul Tool Department has already decided to put all of our resources into nurturing this child. We shall strive to nurture him into Shrek Academy’s first Class 9 soul engineer within thirty years.

“In order to nurture Huo Yuhao, Dean Xian, Fan Yu, and I have talked things over. We’ve decided that the Ultimate Soldier Plan will rest on his shoulders. As such, He Caitou—who was originally tasked with carrying out this plan—will act as an auxiliary soul engineer and will help educate him.

“Fellow resident elders, I can understand Dean Yan’s feelings; an Ultimate-type martial soul is indeed extremely important to the Martial Soul Department. However, is it not important to the Soul Tool Department as well? Their department has already become the number one martial soul department on the continent, yet ours hasn’t. We’re always striving to do our best in the hopes that we’ll make a breakthrough. Yet, what do we lack the most? Talent! Fellow resident elders, please think this through. Ever since our department was established, when have we not accepted the rejects of the Martial Soul Department? How are we supposed to compete with the Sun Moon Empire under such circumstances? We aren’t lacking in money, nor are we lacking in resources now. What we are lacking in is talent! Huo Yuhao has displayed extraordinary talents towards being a soul engineer. Furthermore, he now has twin martial souls, one of which is an Ultimate attribute. I’m absolutely confident that I can nurture him into an extremely powerful soul engineer. As such, we definitely will not, and are not willing to, part with this student.”

Qian Duoduo went straight to the point without beating around the bush. His words were far more direct than Yan Shaozhe’s had been. In reality, the Soul Tool Department was actually being reasonable about this matter.

Xian Lin’er said, “Dean Qian’s intentions are my intentions. The Soul Tool Department is willing to stake everything on this child. If he’s unable to fulfill the Ultimate Soldier Plan, I’m willing to resign from my position as Dean of the Soul Tool Department.”

Yan Shaozhe and the woman sitting beside him were shocked when they heard her say this. This was too cruel! Xian Lin’er really was being ruthless when she made this move.

It was true that the Martial Soul Department had held absolute dominance within the academy ever since Shrek Academy had been founded. However, when both departments were aligned side by side, Xian Lin’er and Qian Duoduo were on par with them in soul rank. Even though most of the resident elders were from the Martial Soul Department, they couldn’t disregard the opinions of both Deans from the Soul Tool Department. This was even more true since the Soul Tool Department were actually being reasonable about the matter.

For a moment, Yan Shaozhe couldn't help but feel that things really had become more difficult for him. If they continued to fight like this, the conflict between both parties would really spiral towards an all-out explosion. This wasn't what he hoped to see.

Chapter 54.2: Meeting at the Sea God's Pavilion

Elder Xuan finally spoke up. He coughed slightly before he said, "I understand your intentions, and I examined this student Huo Yuhao in the past. At that time, the Martial Soul Department didn't want him mainly because of his ten year soul ring. Moreover, it'll be extremely difficult to obtain soul rings for his Spirit Eyes in the future as it's a spiritual-type martial soul. Thus, it'll be hard for him to perform to his fullest potential. Though it was a Body Soul, I investigated his body's condition. From the state of his body at that time, I saw that the possibility of him awakening his Body Soul a second time was very small."

"As we all know, the more important the location of a Body Soul is, the stronger it is. However, this only applies after the second awakening. The more important the location of a Body Soul, the smaller the chances of it awakening a second time. The eyes are the window to the spirit, making them the strongest spiritual-type martial soul among Body Souls. This means that it will be too hard for him to awaken it a second time. I've never heard of a Body Soul on this level, even within the Body Sect. Thus, I can guarantee that the origins of his second martial soul are unrelated to his Body Soul." n))o//v.)e--l.(b-)1-)n

"This is somewhat strange. Where did his second martial soul come from? I feel that it'd be better for us to dig into this a little deeper."

Elder Lin who was seated opposite Elder Xuan smiled slightly. "Elder Xuan, you're straying from the topic at hand. We can investigate this child's situation later, but our current meeting is being held to decide the path of his future cultivation."

Elder Xuan laughed mischievously. "Naturally, it'd be better for him to remain with our Martial Soul Department. Regardless of where his second martial soul came from, as long as it's truly an Ultimate one, staying in the Martial Soul Department is clearly the best option for him. We have precedent in training soul masters with Ultimate martial souls, and we're still lacking a few men."

Elder Lin shook her head. "This isn't proper. What Qian Duoduo said makes sense; the Soul Tool Department has always been extremely lacking in talent. That child's already a core disciple of the Soul Tool Department. Making such a change in the academy's policy isn't conforming to the academy's rules."

Elder Xuan curled his lips, "What isn't conforming to the academy's rules? Let me ask you this: where does the Soul Tool Department recruit students from? At the very least, from the third years in the Martial Soul Department. But, what about this Huo Yuhao? He's just entered Year 2. The Soul Tool Department's the one who has broken the rules in the first place."

Yan Shaozhe was overjoyed. He inwardly thought to himself, The older generation is still more experienced than the younger one! Even if Elder Xuan was normally drunk, he wouldn't be vague in the least during important moments.

The elder seated beside Elder Lin shook his head. "Elder Xuan, what you're saying doesn't have any meaning at all. I understand soul engineers better than you, and this is the first time I've heard of a person becoming a Class 2 soul engineer within eight months. I'm afraid that even the Sun Moon Empire doesn't have a student on this level. Furthermore, all of us approved of the Ultimate Soldier Plan during a meeting here. Now that Xian Lin'er and Qian Duoduo are trying to realise this plan together, we should be encouraging them. In any case, this student is staying in our academy, so going to the Soul Tool Department gives the same results."

Elder Xuan snorted. "The same? How can it even be the same? Leaving him in the Soul Tool Department is an utter waste of his talent."

Xian Lin'er became angry, and stood up. "Elder Xuan, why is leaving him in my Soul Tool Department a waste? The Martial Soul Department keeps repeating over and over again that they have experience in training a soul master with an Ultimate martial soul, but from what I recall, Huo Yuhao has an Ice-type Ultimate martial soul. Do you have experience in nurturing an Ultimate Ice martial soul? Moreover, you're an elder. You shouldn't be favouring the Martial Soul Department. Since you keep siding with the Martial Soul Department, is there any point in our Soul Tool Department existing?"

Elder Xuan became angry as well. "You girl! I'm biased because a martial soul is the root of a soul master, as well as the root of our Shrek Academy. The Soul Tool Department is indeed important, and I don't want to keep helping the Martial Soul Department in this dispute either. Why don't we do this? Shaozhe, choose ten core disciples from the Martial Soul Department and let Lin'er choose three of them for an exchange. This should be fine."

Yan Shaozhe's eyes lit up, Right! This was a good plan. Didn't your Soul Tool Department say that you were lacking talents? Then, I'll use talents to barter with you.

He hurriedly declared his position, "This isn't a problem. Why don't we use five core disciples of the Martial Soul Department and trade them for Huo Yuhao? This can be considered to be us having very good faith. It's true that our Martial Soul Department hasn't been supporting the Soul Tool Department enough during these years. Why don't we do this? Dean Xian, Dean Qian, though we're in charge of different departments, we all have the same goals; that is, to develop and strengthen our Shrek Academy even more. Right here, I'll promise you two that from now on, our Martial Soul Department won't choose our core disciples before they enter Year 3. After Year 3, we'll choose them along with you guys, allowing these students to choose the future path of their cultivations. This way, I'm confident that we won't even need ten years for the Soul Tool Department to develop at a rapid pace."

The expressions of the originally furious Xian Lin'er and Qian Duoduo softened immediately after listening to Yan Shaozhe's words. They had no choice but to admit that he was a man who made very prompt decisions. Furthermore, his promise to the Soul Tool Department would be of tremendous benefit towards their future development. At the same time, this revealed his determination to obtain Huo Yuhao. Qian Duoduo's stinginess was in the form of money, but Yan Shaozhe's stinginess was in the form of talents. The fact that he could make a concession like that truly signified that he was extremely sincere.

Elder Lin, who was seated on the first seat on the right side of the long table, turned towards Xian Lin'er, "Lin'er, what do you think?"

Xian Lin'er revealed a pondering light in her eyes, but Qian Duoduo stood up slowly. "Dean Yan, Dean Cai, various elders. I'm declaring my position on behalf of myself. With regards to me alone, I'm not willing to accept this trade. No matter how many fine horses you give us, it won't be worth a single Thousand Mile Colt. A large number of talents coming into our Soul Tool Department will truly give us an opportunity, but it is very likely that a single Huo Yuhao can directly make us flourish. At that time, will we have any lack of talents? With the current situation of our Soul Tool Department, it's more suitable for us to pool all our resources on a single person. I'm very grateful for Dean Yan's sincerity, but I personally hope that we can keep Huo Yuhao."

Xian Lin'er slowly stood up after listening to his words. "I agree with Dean Qian's words. Our Soul Tool Department refuses the trade. He's already one of our core disciples, and we will absolutely not give in."

Yan Shaozhe's expression became grave. He'd already made such a large concession, but Xian Lin'er and Qian Duoduo were still unwilling to give in to him. His heart surged with flames of anger.

"As the Dean of the Martial Soul Department, I'll declare where I stand. The appearance of an Ultimate soul master occurs less than once in a thousand years, and our Martial Soul Department cannot give up on a talent like this. I am determined to obtain Huo Yuhao. Since we've convened here today, we'll put it to a vote to determine his final destination."

The lady beside him who hadn't spoken yet slowly rose to her feet, "I support Dean Yan. An Ultimate element must stay in our Martial Soul Department."

She was the Vice-Dean of the Martial Soul Department, a person called Cai Mei'er, who normally remained within the inner courtyard.

Both parties weren't willing to give way to each other, and the various elders had awkward expressions on their faces. Regardless of how they settled this matter in the end, they would leave one party unhappy. Furthermore, this matter would definitely cause an enormous conflict between the two parties. Even if the Martial Soul Department held an absolute advantage, the Soul Tool Department was still an irreplaceable part of the academy. If they were to suffer a setback again, it would be overly detrimental to its development. There was even a high possibility that an outflow of talent would occur.

Because of that, the various elders were extremely cautious in their actions; none of them took the initiative to declare where they stood.

"All of you, sit down." The warm voice coming from the person seated at the head of the table rang out once again. After hearing this voice, both opposing parties immediately curbed themselves a bit. They respectfully sat back in their original positions.

The warm voice said indifferently, "You've both expounded on your reasoning very clearly. However, haven't you all thought of a single possibility? Let me ask you this—when our Shrek Academy was founded at the very beginning, what was our original objective?"

"To nurture talented soul masters who are monsters. Shrek Academy only trains monsters, not ordinary people." Yan Shaozhe replied respectfully.

The warm voice said, "Correct, we only train monsters, not ordinary people. Since that's the case, why don't we be a bit more bold and train a true monster? This child Huo Yuhao has met the requirements to

be considered a very gifted person. He's an orphan, and this means he won't be inclined toward any particular empire in the future. At the same time, it's very likely that he'll remain in the academy. Qian Duoduo."

"Present." Qian Duoduo stood up hurriedly, then said respectfully, "Elder Mu."

The warm voice said, "I ask you this: during the eight month period in which Huo Yuhao trained to become a soul engineer, were his studies in the Martial Soul Department interrupted at any time?"

"Never." Qian Duoduo replied immediately, "He trained for four hours with Fan Yu every night. It's because of this exact reason that I called him a genius! Even when he was distracted with his studies in the Martial Soul Department, he was able to become a Class 2 soul engineer within a mere eight months."

"Good. Then let me ask you all this: during the process in which Huo Yuhao became a Class 2 soul engineer, were his studies in the Martial Soul Department interrupted? Did his cultivation speed decrease?"

Yan Shaozhe said, "No. His second martial soul's awakened, and when I made a move earlier, I was able to tell that his soul power was around Rank 25. I've investigated this as well. This child was only at Rank 13 when he first entered the academy, but he was able to increase his soul power by 12 ranks within a short year. Regardless of whether he's innately talented or lucky, the facts are before us. Thus, your disciple thinks that he's more suited to stay in our Martial Soul Department. Even if his cultivation speed drops after he reaches Rank 30, a talent on this level shouldn't be affected by it too much."

The warm voice suddenly laughed, and his laughter was slightly coarse. "You're all confused by the situation at hand. Since this kid was able to study in the Martial Soul Department and the Soul Tool Department at the same time for an entire year without letting his studies fall, and instead displaying a genius-level performance, what are you fighting over? Why don't you just let him study in both fields at once?"

"Ah?" Yan Shaozhe, Cai Mei'er, Xian Lin'er, Qian Duoduo were all stunned.

Chapter 54.3: Meeting at the Sea God's Pavilion

One needed to realize that the person in the reclining chair was Shrek Academy's real boss. At the same time, he was also Xian Lin'er and Yan Shaozhe's teacher. This man was the Master of the Sea God's Pavilion; his word was absolute within the academy. Even old veterans like Elder Lin and Elder Xuan were lower than him in seniority. There hadn't been a single person that had dared to object to his decisions in the past.

Xian Lin'er couldn't bear it anymore and said, "Teacher! It doesn't matter whether it's our Soul Tool Department or the Martial Soul Department; the more one studies a subject, the more energy one needs to reach a higher level in it. Studying in both departments at the same time will have a negative impact on the student! He'll have a broader range of knowledge, but he won't be an expert in either of them. Isn't this the same as wasting his talent?"

The Master of the Sea God's Pavilion faintly smiled, then said, "Why are you so sure that he won't be able to study both subjects properly? Actually, all of you have made a mistake. All of you think that the

Martial Soul Department and the Soul Tool Department's fundamentals are opposed to each other. However, let me ask you a question: Can either of your departments do without soulforce or martial souls? The only difference between the Martial Soul Department and the Soul Tool Department lies in the methods used to attack and defend oneself; their fundamentals are still the same. Thus, you don't really need to think about this that much."

"Lin'er. If you truly hope for Huo Yuhao to become a first-class soul engineer, you must realize that he'll also have to become a first-class martial soul master as a prerequisite. How will he create and control powerful soul tools without enough soulforce if he doesn't? At the same time, the rate at which his soulforce increases will drop drastically once he gets past Rank 30, due to the fact that he possesses an Ultimate martial soul. Thus, if he lacks a proper technique from the Martial Soul Department to cultivate his Ultimate martial soul, won't his growth be impacted?"

"Shaozhe, the same goes for you. As you can see, Huo Yuhao is extremely talented at creating soul tools. He can create powerful weapons to protect himself because of this. A soul master won't become strong in just a year or two, but at the same time, you can't truly stay by his side all the time, right? When you encounter something dangerous, relying on yourself to survive is the best option. This being the case, why don't you let him become a soul engineer too? Besides, our Shrek Academy currently lacks a first-class soul engineer.

Now then, I've decided to let this child cultivate in both schools and to treat him as a special existence inside of the academy. You shouldn't force the child to choose. Rather, you should create a comfortable environment within the academy in order to let him cultivate in peace. All of you have ignored an important fact: What're Huo Yuhao's thoughts? After all, he's only twelve years old. If you pressure him too much, it'll only have a negative impact on his future growth.

"The best thing to do—at least for now—is to leave things the way they are. Let him keep studying as he was before. The two departments will spend an equal amount of resources on him. As for the future, we're not really in a rush. If he continues to receive excellent marks in both departments' tests, then we'll have truly trained an exceptional 'monster': An Ultimate Soldier that's close to perfection!"

Once they heard the Master of the Sea God's Pavilion, all of the veterans nodded one after another. Their complexions became much better as well.

Xian Lin'er said, "Teacher, what should we do if Huo Yuahao's grades start dropping?"

The Master of the Sea God's Pavilion smiled faintly and said, "Isn't it obvious? If that happens, simply let him choose a department. He'll join the department he likes the most. If that happens, we won't need to do anything else. However, Elder Xuan, don't inquire about the boy's second martial soul. Though I'm curious as well, I can say for sure that this child has a very kind and resolute heart. As such, no matter what his second martial soul is, there's no need for us to pry into this secret."

"I understand, Pavilion Master." Elder Xuan nodded in assent.

Yan Shaozhe and Xian Lin'er looked at each other, their tense expressions now much looser than they had been. Since both parties had been in a deadlock, this outcome seemed to be the best one.

The Master of the Sea God's Pavilion said, "If there are no further objections, this meeting can be considered over. Shaozhe, Lin'er, you two shouldn't get in touch with that boy again. At his age, it's best if his heart is focused on diligently cultivating. The less he's distracted by the outside world, the better."

"Yes."

As far as Shrek Academy was concerned, this meeting had settled everything. Huo Yuhao's fate had also been decided.

Huo Yuhao received the news from Fan Yu soon afterwards: The academy had decided that Huo Yuhao was now both a core disciple of the Martial Soul Department and the Soul Tool Department. With this, he'd become the first person in the history of the academy to become the core disciple of both departments.

As for Yan Shaozhe's other promise, he decided to not bring it up. Fan Yu urged Yuhao to keep cultivating with dedication. After all, he now had to attend class in the Martial Soul Department during the day, then study in the Soul Tool Department in the evening. He also reminded him that tomorrow evening he had to go and take the Soul Tool Department's advancement test.

This outcome gave Huo Yuhao some breathing room. Not having to choose was the best choice for him.

The advancement test for the Martial Soul Department's Year 2 students hadn't ended yet. After all, the students of both classes combined amounted to more than a hundred. It would take quite a while, considering the fact that they had to be tested one at a time.

Huo Yuhao was happily cultivated in the dormitory with Wang Dong the next day. They cultivated the entire morning.

After lunch, they took a short break. Afterwards, before the afternoon bell rang, Yuhao headed towards the experimental area of the Soul Tool Department.

He noticed from afar that He Caitou was waiting at the gate to the experimental area, waving towards him.

"Senior brother He." Huo Yuhao hurried over to where He Caitou stood.

He Caitou laughed as he hugged Huo Yuhao and twirled him around once. "I've heard that you've become the academy's center of attention Yuhao! It seems that several deans almost got into a fight because of you. Not bad, not bad!"

Huo Yuhao was surprised. "Senior apprentice, how did you know?"

He Caitou giggled. "Teacher told me. I was forbidden from revealing it to anyone else though."

Huo Yuhao relaxed a bit. He didn't want everyone to know about what had happened. If they did, he'd be criticized by everyone in the outer courtyard. His only wish was to cultivate in peace, nothing more.

"Come, let's head inside. The teacher said that you're going to take our Soul Tool Department's advancement test. Are you ready?" He Caitou threw an arm over Huo Yuhao's shoulders and pulled him inside.

Huo Yuhao asked, "Senior brother, what's the Soul Tool Department's advancement test about?"

He Caitou replied, "It's a battle as well! We have to agree with the Martial Soul Department on this: Only actual combat can properly assess our abilities. The teacher has already prepared everything. As for the details of your test, I'm not quite sure."

As they spoke, the two of them entered the experimental area. They soon arrived at the 12th laboratory.

The laboratory wasn't as peaceful as it usually was. There were currently around twenty students inside, all around the the same as He Caitou. Most of them were older than fourteen, with some even being eighteen or nineteen.

The testing area was inside of the battle area, which currently held two students in the midst of battle.

It was completely different from the Martial Soul Department's advancement test. The Soul Tool Department's advancement test was mainly based on the usage of soul tools. The students' bodies were wrapped in a layer of radiant light, which seemed like it was coming from some sort of defensive-type soul tool. The two were attacking each other while wrapped in this light. The sky was also littered with several balls of light; it looked like they were keeping an eye on the students below.

The current Huo Yuhao wasn't the ignorant youth from before who didn't know anything about soul tools; he was aware that the balls of light suspended in the sky were also a type of soul tool. They were Portable Soul Shields, which were a type of defensive soul tool that could be controlled from a distance. One needed to be at least a soul master of the fourth rank to control this sort of soul tool. It definitely wasn't something that these students could achieve. The function of these soul tools was pretty obvious: if the defense of the students who were fighting were to be breached, these Portable Soul Shields would immediately fly into action to protect them from any oncoming attacks. They were present in order to guarantee the safety of the students.

When Huo Yuhao and He Caitou entered, the battle between the two students had already reached a critical juncture. Beams of light had intertwined in the sky and were emitting a dazzling radiance.

Huo Yuhao unconsciously activated his Spiritual Detection. However, he didn't even have time to observe the beams before the battle had ended.

"Peng—" The shield of the student on the left broke and shattered into a myriad of lights that filled the sky. When it did, the Portable Soul Shield immediately appeared in front of him and blocked the other student's remaining attacks.

"Zi Feng has defeated Mo Ke. Their score has been increased by 1 mark." A teacher standing to one side of the testing area said as they noted something down.

"Next." The teacher hinted for the next couple of students to step forward.

"Wait a moment." Fan Yu's heavy voice echoed out. He walked over from another side of the testing area and said, "Yuhao, come here. You're next." He'd been the one controlling the Portable Soul Shields in the previous battle. He was able to make them react in the shortest time possible considering his cultivation level. Moreover, he'd been controlling all of the Portable Soul Shields simultaneously. Because of this, he'd been able to keep an eye on the students from all directions.

“Oh!” Huo Yuhao nodded and hurried over.

At that moment, the students that had been planning to take the advancement test saw Huo Yuhao. A surprised look appeared in their eyes when they saw him. He was normally always studying with Fan Yu, thus this was the first time they’d seen him. However, this guy looked like he was only twelve or thirteen years old, yet he wasn’t even a student of the Soul Tool Department! Why was Teacher Fan Yu letting him take the advancement test?

Fan Yu said, “This test is very simple: You just have to fight. Everyone will have their soul tools carefully examined by the teachers, which must be self-manufactured. As long as you manage to destroy your opponent’s defenses, you’ll have won. I’m using these Portable Soul Shields to protect everyone.”

Huo Yu Hao pondered for a bit, then asked, “Teacher, is it possible to fight without the protection of a Portable Soul Shield?”

Fan Yu was surprised when he heard this. “Hm?”

Huo Yuhao said, “Since this is supposed to be a real battle, having a Portable Soul Shield will impact my performance. Furthermore, I’m sure that I won’t injure my opponent.”

Fan Yu asked, “And what about your own safety?”

Huo Yuhao replied without the slightest hesitation, “Teacher, I have faith in my abilities.”

Fan Yu smiled faintly, then said, “Fine. With this being the case, we’ll do things as you like. Remember to call for help if you can’t block the attack. With your Spiritual Detection, you’ll surely be able to tell if you can’t. Now then, go ahead and take the test.”

“Yes.” Huo Yuhao entered the testing area with large strides. As he did so, he began to adjust the soul tool he’d personally manufactured.

At that time, the students of the Soul Tool Department finally noticed the badge on Huo Yuhao’s chest that showed his status as a second rank soul engineer.

Was this for real? He was really a second rank soul engineer?

Chapter 55.1: A Soul Engineer! Huo Yuhao’s True Strong Point

Fan Yu had a kind look in his eyes as he watched Huo Yuhao enter the field. After all, a teacher would always hope for their disciples to be outstanding. It was hard to find a good teacher, but finding a genius student was just as hard! Regardless of whether he was talented or diligent, the strict Fan Yu was extremely pleased. Even if he’d spent a longer period of time teaching He Caitou, Huo Yuhao’s status in Fan Yu’s heart had already exceeded He Caitou’s. He could tell that Huo Yuhao’s future achievements would far surpass He Caitou’s.

“Ye Canying, Tang Suifeng, Ling Xue.” Fan Yu turned around and called for the next batch of examinees.

Two male and one female student walked up hurriedly and respectfully greeted Fan Yu.

Fan Yu said, “You three, go up together. Your objective is to defeat him. If you can defeat him, you’ll pass this year’s advancement test.”

The three students were all around fifteen to sixteen years old. They couldn't help but look at each other in confusion and dismay after what they just heard, Ye Canying blurted, "Teacher Fan Yu, are you sure? This fellow classman..."

Fan Yu furrowed his brows tightly. "Did you not hear me?"

Fan Yu was a special teacher in the Soul Tool Department. After the two Deans, he possessed the greatest authority within the department. Though the three students were bewildered, they didn't dare to say anything more. They immediately entered the Testing Area with their soul tools fully equipped.

The proctor revealed a doubtful look in his eyes and shot an inquiring gaze towards Fan Yu.

Fan Yu walked over to him, then whispered, "That's my inheriting disciple. I want to test his current limits. Don't worry, this is appropriate. Start."

"Okay." The proctor naturally didn't argue with Fan Yu's decision. "Both sides, prepare yourselves."

Huo Yuhao was startled when he heard Fan Yu send three students into the Testing Area. He could tell by their ages that they were at least third year students and maybe even fourth years. Although a portion of the Soul Tool Departments students were those who had been eliminated from the Martial Soul Department, they consisted mainly of auxiliary-type soul masters. However, this was still Shrek Academy! There were no weak students among those who had been able to last till Year 3 or 4. Huo Yuhao felt like his teacher's confidence in him was slightly excessive.

Though he was inwardly astonished, Huo Yuhao didn't plan on retreating. He closely observed these three students as he began to formulate a plan.

All three students all bore badges signifying their soul engineer ranks, they were all Class 2 soul engineers just like him.

"Start!"

Following the teacher's shout, the three students facing him made a move simultaneously, and their soul rings rose from their feet. The eldest of the three, Ye Canying, had three yellow soul rings, whilst the other two had two yellow soul rings each. They quickly raised their arms as they released their martial souls and a flash of light erupted as they activated their soul tools.

In his current situation where he was fighting against a team of three people—which included a Soul Elder—by himself, Huo Yuhao wondered whether he had any chance at all. In a situation like this, he could only win if he had the element of surprise.

Two white soul rings suddenly rose from his feet, and his second soul ring flickered slightly. Afterwards, his body noiselessly became somewhat illusory, but the three students he was facing didn't notice. Immediately afterwards, a scene that astonished them occurred.

A black, one-and-a-half meter-long metallic tube appeared on Huo Yuhao's shoulder, then instantly shot out an intense ray of white light.

Not to mention the three students Huo Yuhao was facing, even the proctor was stunned by the scene in front of him. He was about to call for them to stop, but Fan Yu placed his hand on his shoulder, causing him to swallow the words he'd been about to say.

What was the metal tube? All of the students in the Soul Tool Department had seen it before, but none of them had used it besides He Caitou. It was a stationary soul cannon! Stationary soul tools were renowned for their might, and though they didn't need too much soul power to be activated, it was extremely hard to control them. Because of this, even two-ringed Soul Grandmasters were able to use them, albeit with difficulty. However, each cannon shell was extremely expensive; a single shot cost over a hundred gold soul coins. The academy hadn't even implemented a course for using it.

However, even if a person had never eaten pork before, they still would've seen a pig in real life in the past. When students entered the Soul Tool Department, the first lesson they had to attend involved observing the might of a stationary soul tool.

The stationary soul cannon that had appeared on Huo Yuhao's body was identical to the one they'd seen in the past. They still clearly remembered the terrifying ten meter long, three meter deep ditch that had destroyed the ground when the cannon had been fired. Afterwards, their teacher had explained that soul masters who possessed less than six rings would definitely die if they received a head-on blow from a stationary soul cannon.

As such, how could the three of them not be stunned when they saw the white ray of light from the black tube? The white burst of light signified the firing of the stationary soul cannon; it was something irreversible! This wasn't something that the Portable Soul Shield could block. Furthermore, they hadn't even seen their Portable Soul Shields appear!

The only thing that they could do now was give up on their assault and run away. They also knew the problems that stationary soul tools possessed: They had to be manually aimed by someone, they couldn't automatically lock onto an enemy.

The three of them simultaneously ran in three different directions. At this point in time, they no longer cared that they were undergoing their advancement test. Their lives were more important than that!

The quickest of the three was Tang Suifeng. His second soul ring flickered as a shadow suddenly appeared beside him. Immediately afterwards, he sped up and crossed the distance of ten meters with a single leap.

A faint smile appeared on Huo Yuhao's face when he saw this. Beneath the astonished gazes of the spectating students, the stationary soul tool that had clearly begun its firing sequence soundlessly disappeared. Afterwards, he slid forwards in a specter-like manner towards the quick Tang Suifeng. Two blue lights appeared on his ankles as he sped up, causing his speed to quickly reach Tang Suifeng's.

Tang Suifeng suddenly threw himself to the ground and curled himself into a ball. He then pushed his soul power to the limit, causing a layer of light to envelop him; this was the Portable Soul Shield he'd personally created in order to defend himself.

However, the explosion he'd expected didn't arrive, leaving him astonished. Everything behind him seemed to be completely silent.

Tang Suifeng was stunned. Just what was that? Why didn't the stationary soul cannon make any noise? At that moment, he subconsciously raised his head in order to see what had happened. As soon as he did so however, he saw a warm and smiling face in front of him.

Though the defensive abilities of the Portable Soul Shield wasn't bad, it was better suited towards long-range attacks; in other words, it was better used to defend against soul power. Its defensive capabilities against physical attacks weren't very good.

A dagger that flickered with an incandescent light noiselessly penetrated Tang Suifeng's shield. The instant he finished raising his head, the blade of the knife reached his eyes and softly tapped his head.

Afterwards, the smiling face disappeared.

"Tang Suifeng, eliminated." The proctor's voice rang out. This was just the way it was. If Huo Yuhao had taken advantage of the opportunity he'd had to attack him, he would've been cleanly stabbed by the White Tiger's Dagger.

When they heard that Tang Suifeng had been eliminated, the other two knew that they'd been duped.

As students of Shrek Academy, they'd trained in the academy for many years. Their battle experience was relatively plentiful, thus they didn't bother to think about how Huo Yuhao had tricked them. On the contrary, they simultaneously launched attacks towards him.

The soul tools they used to attack him were both placed on their arms, and were both similar. There was a golden box on each of their arms, which when activated, three thin, golden tubes would simultaneously spit out a ray of white light.

This was a Class 2 soul tool known as the Soul Light Ray. The principle behind it was to compress the user's soul power via the use of the formation located within the core of the soul and then fire it out. It had a relatively decent amount of destructive power.

There were many ways to examine the strength of a soul tool, but the most important factors taken into consideration were its destructive power, attack range, and attack radius.

The Class 2 Soul Light Ray's attack could reach a hundred meters, and its destructive power was roughly equal to that of a long-range soul skill from a Soul Grandmaster.

Ye Canying and Ling Xue simultaneously made their move as they fired six light rays each. Though they weren't very well coordinated with each other, they were both extremely familiar with the way a soul engineer fought. The twelve light rays encapsulated an extremely large area and sealed off Huo Yuhao from evading their attacks.

However, the instant they fired their Soul Light Rays, they felt themselves go absent-minded for a brief moment. This caused their attacks to deviate from their intended targets slightly.

At this moment, they were about thirty-or-so meters away from Huo Yuhao. Though their attacks had only deviated by slight amount, it exponentially increased the time they took to reach him.

Huo Yuhao immediately activated the Ghost Shadow Perplexing Tracks, which caused his figure to flash slightly. He accurately found a place where the twelve light rays wouldn't reach him, thus causing their attacks to harmlessly pass him.

At the same time, Huo Yuhao raised his arms. The soul tools on his arms were identical to those of Ye Canying and Ling Xue; they were both black, wristguard-like pieces of metal that had been fastened to

his arms. The metal boxes opened following his muscle-movements, which caused three tiny tubes to reveal themselves on each of the two wristguards.

Yan Canying and Ling Xue's immediately released their Class 2 Portable Soul Shields in order to defend themselves. Once a Soul Light Ray had been fired, it would enter a short cooldown period that would prevent it from being fired repeatedly.

Chapter 55.2: A Soul Engineer! Huo Yuhao's True Strong Point

However, just like the stationary soul cannon that hadn't caused an explosion to ring out, Huo Yuhao's Soul Light Ray-like soul tools didn't cause any rays of light to appear. On the contrary, they released an ear-piercing screech.

Six bolts of lightning shot towards Ye Canying and Ling Xue. However, they didn't have trails of light following them.

When the six white streaks of light struck their shields, an astonishing scene occurred: White ripples began to appear on their shields, until immediately afterwards something actually drilled through them. The two of them felt their arms shake before the hands they'd raised were suddenly forced away. At the same time, they heard a snap, followed by a gray mist that covered their eyes and blocked their line of sight.

Just what sort of soul tool was this? Ye Canying and Ling Xue were simultaneously flabbergasted. However, as soul masters, they didn't just possess soul tools; they also had their own soul skills.

Ling Xue hurriedly retreated while simultaneously releasing a large patch of snow from her body that both blocked Huo Yuhao's line of sight and dispersed the gray mist around her.

Her martial soul was Snow. Snow was different from ice in that ice's toughness made it so that a soul master who possessed it could become a battle soul master, while snow could only be used for assistance. As such, Ling Xue was considered an auxiliary-type soul master. Her specialty was using her Snow to change the environment and hiding herself, then using her soul tools to attack. It was only because her martial soul had been suited towards letting her become a soul engineer that she'd joined the Soul Tool Department. *n(Ove**l**In*

Ye Canying's reaction wasn't slow either. His second soul ring lit up, which caused his body to shake and three shadow clones to appear. His martial soul was his Shadow.

Their arms had been knocked away, thus they couldn't fire their Soul Light Rays for a brief period of time. Furthermore, their Soul Shields had been broken. Because of that, they chose to defend themselves while they attempted to confuse their opponent.

In the span of their short collision, Huo Yuhao had actually managed to dominate the entire field, despite being placed in a 1v3 scenario. Who would've expected this before the test had started?

The light beneath Huo Yuhao's feet lit up again, which caused him to shoot forward. At the same time, a ball of light on his back lit up, which caused the light beneath his feet to grow more intense.

A Class 2 Thruster could instantly increase a soul master's speed in a single direction for a brief moment, and the soul tool below his feet was a Speed-varying Thruster.

He hadn't even been a soul engineer for a full year yet. In fact, he'd mainly directed his efforts towards creating soul tools that increased his speed in order to combine them with his Spiritual Detection. Because of this, the soul tool on his wrist didn't have sufficient attack power.

At that moment, Huo Yuhao took advantage of the fact that his two opponents were currently going all-out to both defend themselves and dodge his attacks to rush out at full speed. At the same time, the two soul rings around his body suddenly changed to a single one.

The Speed-varying Thruster he wore had a relatively low propulsion force. He could use it to speed up, but the extent to which he could speed up wasn't large; its advantage lay in the fact that he could use it to quickly change directions. The Class 2 Thruster, on the other hand, was the soul tool he used to largely increase his speed in a single direction. Though he could only minorly change what direction he was headed towards while using it, the short-distance explosiveness it gave him allowed him to catch up with the all-out sprint of a three-ringed agility-type soul master.

The two parties had originally had a distance of thirty meters between them, yet Huo Yuhao was able to appear right in front of them in the blink of an eye using this explosive burst of speed.

Ye Canying and Ling Xue had been put into a somewhat sorry state by Huo Yuhao's gray mist. Before they were able to vanish completely amidst Ling Xue's snow, he'd already reached them.

The two were greatly astonished when he appeared in front of them, revealing the weakness that was their unfamiliar cooperation. Ye Canying hurriedly dashed to the left, while Ling Xue quickly retreated backwards. They were instantly separated because of this.

All of the snowflakes that Ling Xue had released instantly fell to the ground without any prior warning, astonishing her. As a result, the barrier between her and Huo Yuhao completely vanished. At the same time, the full-speed Huo Yuhao appeared in front of her and reached for her with his crystalline, diamond-like hands that shone with splendor.

Ling Xue subconsciously lifted her hands. In her moment of panic, she was only able to release her Soul Light Ray.

Six rays of light shot immediately towards Huo Yuhao like bolts of lightning.

At that moment, a strange scene occurred. The six blazing beams of light from Ling Xue's Soul Light Ray unexpectedly scattered in four different directions.

As it turned out, his hands had been in just the right place to block Ling Xue's Soul Light rays; the six rays of light had instantly been reflected the moment they'd come into contact with his hands.

Afterwards, Huo Yuhao grabbed Ling Xue's hands.

A spotless shade of white instantly spread outwards from Ling Xue and Huo Yuhao loudly shouted, "Teacher, catch!" As soon as he'd finished, he sent Ling Xue soaring through the air. Astonishingly, her body was now covered in a white layer of frost. When Fan Yu caught her, he couldn't help but shiver instinctively.

Huo Yuhao instantly turned around once he'd thrown Ling Xue into the air, just in time for him to see a white light appear on Ye Canying's chest, who'd split into three shadow clones. He fired a white, palm-sized ball of light from all three of his chests towards Huo Yuhao from three different directions.

Concentrated Soul Cannon!

This was the strongest soul tool available to low-ranking soul engineers. After focusing their soul power into a formation array for a short period of time, a soul engineer could release a powerful attack. Unlike the Soul Light Ray, the Concentrated Soul Cannon had a siphoning effect. In other words, it would expedite the absorption of a soul master's soul power. Thus, though it was powerful, its soul power consumption was just as large. Normally speaking, a single shot from the Concentrated Soul Cannon would drain a soul master by a third of his soul power at the very least.

The Concentrated Soul Cannon had a single disadvantage, which lay in the fact that it had a short attack range. It could only normally only lock onto an opponent within a ten meter range. If they were any further away, both its strength and accuracy would progressively deteriorate.

Ye Canying's martial soul was his shadow, which made it an extremely strange martial soul. A martial soul like his was relatively decent at assisting him as a soul engineer, but it was unfortunate that his opponent was Huo Yuhao, who's martial soul perfectly countered his.

Huo Yuhao's Spirit Eyes' Spiritual Detection would cause all illusions to vanish. Huo Yuhao didn't even bother with the Concentrated Soul Cannon shots to his left and front. He immediately charged towards Ye Canying with his right hand raised, then grabbed the genuine Concentrated Soul Cannon shot with his right hand.

Afterwards, Ye Canying unexpectedly lost control of the left cannon shot. It didn't explode, but rather was flung by Huo Yuhao towards him. Furthermore, he'd even used the Tang Sect's Arrow Throwing Technique.

Stunned, Ye Canying was only able to activate his Class 2 Soul Shield in time to block Huo Yuhao's attack. At the same time, he released his third soul skill, causing a black shadow to emerge from his body and attempt to help him withstand the Concentrated Soul Cannon shot.

Despite this, Ye Canying's body was flung away with a violent explosion, but was caught midair by the proctor. The intense vibrations that came from the attack caused Huo Yuhao to retreat a few steps backwards before he was able to regain his footing.

Huo Yuhao was inwardly astonished. This Concentrated Soul Cannon's so powerful...it seems that I should make one for myself. Ye Canying had clearly sent out a shadow clone to block the blow in addition to his Class 2 Soul Shield, yet he'd still been sent flying. Furthermore, he'd unexpectedly fainted as soon as the proctor caught him. The might of this attack was comparable to the all-out blow of an assault-type Soul Elder.

Huo Yuhao was so astonished by the power of the attack that he hardly realized that the spectating students were all looking at him with flabbergasted expressions on their faces.

Just how had a twelve or thirteen-year-old student pulled this off? He was only a Soul Grandmaster, and he was still a Class 2 soul engineer. He wasn't even that much stronger than his opponents! However,

he'd still been able to defeat all three of them by himself. Not only had he won, he'd done it in a spectacular manner. The entire battle had gone smoothly, and he'd seemingly made no errors; this had clearly been a flawless victory.

Even Fan Yu hadn't expected Huo Yuhao to deliver such a perfect performance in his test.

In reality, a Class 2 soul engineer's participation in the advancement test was a mere formality. Their regular tests—in other words the creation of their soul tools—were more important to them. This was especially true for their achievements in the field of formation array carving.

It had been a 1v3 match, yet he'd achieved a flawless victory. He'd started the match off by using his Imitation to fake the activation of a stationary soul tool, had suppressed Ling Xue's Snow, then blocked the Soul Light Ray using the tyrannical Ice Empress' Pincer, before finally freezing and reflecting Ye Canying's Concentrated Soul Cannon back towards him. Regardless of whether it was his achievements in combat, his decision-making skills, or his usage of his martial soul and soul tools, Huo Yuhao was truly flawless. Furthermore, the soul tools that he'd fired from his arms had caused Fan Yu to smile slightly. When Huo Yuhao had first made it, he'd given Fan Yu a big surprise due to the brand-new philosophy of soul tool creation that he had created. The soul tools on his arms that resembled Soul Light Rays were actually miniature Stationary Soul Crossbows he'd made. The reason he'd been able to shatter a Class 2 Soul Shield was actually extremely simple: He'd used an attack that was half physical and half energy. This allowed him to fire them using his soul power. Because this had only been a note-comparing session, he'd fired ball bearings instead of crossbow bolts. The ball bearings that had been released by both crossbows had struck Ye Canying and Ling Xue's arms and released a gray mist that blocked their line of sight. This sort of move had absolutely reached the pinnacle of accuracy.

Huo Yuhao's reasoning was actually very simple. Why did a Stationary Soul Tool always have to release a powerful cannon shell? Doing it that way would indeed generate a powerful attack, but its production costs would be extremely high. If he could combine the creation techniques of soul tools and the Tang Sect's hidden weapons to create a Stationary Soul Crossbow, he'd be able to incorporate both the driving force of a soul tool and the mechanics of a crossbow into his attacks. Doing this would allow him to fuse material attacks and energy-based attacks together, and would let him use different arrows based on the situation. Wouldn't that make his attacks much more flexible?

His line of reasoning was extremely beneficial to the Soul Tool Department. This was also the reason that Fan Yu liked him so much, and was also the main reason why the Soul Tool Department was as adamant as they were on having him stay with them. He was simply too talented in the field of soul tool creation.

Chapter 55.3: A Soul Engineer! Huo Yuhao's True Strong Point

The biggest problem with the Tang Sect's hidden weapons didn't really lay in their power. There were some that truly had extremely powerful attacks. The main reason they'd declined over the course of time was their short attack range. However, if you were able to add the attack range of a soul tool to the attack pattern of a hidden weapon, wouldn't you create a brand-new soul tool? Huo Yuhao had designed this miniature Stationary Soul Crossbow based on this idea. It didn't consume too much soulforce, but it was still quite powerful. Like a Soul Light Ray, its attack range was a hundred meters. Furthermore, it could even break a Class 2 Soul Shield. But its might wasn't the main point; its biggest

advantage lay in its high flexibility. At the same time, just how many different kinds of soul tools could be researched with the help of this prototype? This was a world-shaking matter for Shrek Academy's Soul Tool Department. Of course, they obviously needed many more theoretical and practical experiments to further research this subject. But with this prototype, they at least knew which direction to go in!

Fan Yu gazed at Huo Yuhao, who'd arrived in front of him, and couldn't help but sincerely say, "Kid, you're truly the hope of the Soul Tool Department! Er, rather, I meant to say that the coordination between your soul tools and your martial soul were absolutely perfect. You pass the test."

Ling Xue was still shivering in Fan Yu's embrace when he said this. Even though she'd only been in contact with the Ice Empress' Pincer for a short moment, the extreme cold had almost turned her into a block of ice. The ice crystals on her body made it impossible for her to move for the time being. She did her best to revolve her soulforce. With Fan Yu's help, she managed to regain her strength. She gazed towards Huo Yuhao, and besides curiosity, fear was present in her eyes. This was the first time she'd ever felt such a terrifying cold. She felt like her snow could almost be considered warm compared to it.

The Ice Empress' Pincer was a powerful soul skill that the Ice Jade Empress Scorpion had bestowed onto Huo Yuhao. Even though he couldn't display its full might, the special characteristics of the skill were still present.

The Ice Empress' Pincer's primary effect would strengthen both of his hands and forearms, making them as hard as a ten thousand-year-old block of thick ice. In addition to this, the diamond-like ice crystals on his body had a powerful refractive ability. The Ice Empress' Pincers themselves could be regarded as a powerful weapon. One need to realize that the strongest parts of the Ice Jade Empress Scorpion's body were her pincers and her tail! The Soul Light Ray hadn't been able to harm Huo Yuhao for this exact reason; it had been reflected by the crystals.

Besides making his body extremely sturdy, the skill also granted him great strength. The Ice Empress' Pincer also had the ability to increase Huo Yuhao's arm strength by an extremely large margin, to the point that it wasn't one whit inferior to Dai Huabin when he was under the influence of his White Tiger martial soul.

At the same time, these two skills were very similar to the Mysterious Jade Hands from the Tang Sect. As such, they could complement each other. Anybody that made the mistake of treating the Ice Empress' Pincers as a regular first-ring soul skill would end up exactly like Ling Xue and Ye Canying.

Aside from these two special characteristics, there was also the extreme cold. As an Ultimate ice martial soul, the Ice Jade Empress Scorpion had also bestowed an attribute of 'extreme cold' to every single skill Huo Yuhao possessed. This extreme cold had in-turn inherited the overbearingness of the Ice Jade Empress Scorpion. Moreover, its power would increase along with Huo Yuhao's cultivation and his body's capabilities.

Ling Xue also had an ice element martial soul. However, as it was incomparable to the Ice Empress' martial soul, it had immediately been suppressed. Huo Yuhao's Ice Empress' Pincer even had the ability to instantly freeze energy, which had allowed him to throw back the Concentrated Soul Cannon shot. It could be imagined what kind of power it held from this. If he'd wanted to, he could've broken Ling Xue's neck at that time.

After this battle, all of the students of the Martial Soul Department were extremely curious about Huo Yuhao. Was this really the power of a student with a mere ten year white soul ring? Moreover, from beginning to end, his soul tool had done nothing other than increase his speed!

Fan Yu looked towards the students and said, "All of you should've seen the fight just now. Ye Canying, Tang Suifeng and Ling Xue, even though the three of you lost, Huo Yuhao's circumstances are also a bit special. Therefore, you'll be given an opportunity to retake the test later, and your score will be reset. Now then, let me give you a brief introduction."

Fan Yu then pulled Huo Yuhao in front of him and continued, "His name is Huo Yuhao, and he's my personal disciple, just like He Caitou. Furthermore, he's exceptionally talented at creating soul tools. For this reason, he's also a core disciple of our Soul Tool Department. However, due to special circumstances, he'll still be studying at the Martial Soul Department for now. Yuhao, all of these students are the same as you, Class 2 soul engineers."

Huo Yuhao hurriedly bowed and greeted them, "Everyone, I'm pleased to meet you."

The students also greeted him one after another. Those that were jealous of him far surpassed those that admired him, mainly due to his young age. From the battle just now, they'd discovered that he was the strongest amongst all of the Class 2 soul engineers. Even a Soul Elder hadn't been his match.

This battle just now had also been a great inspiration for Huo Yuhao. Soul tools could greatly help him overcome his shortcomings. Deep in his heart, he thought that, if he had enough time to create some Class 2 soul tools, he wouldn't even need to be afraid of facing someone like Dai Huabin in a one-on-one battle.

At that moment, he'd also begun to realize the might of the four skills the Skydream Iceworm had bestowed upon him.

On first sight, the four spiritual-type skills he'd received seemed very ordinary. However as his cultivation rose, these skills had also begun to show their might. The easiest and most useful one was surely the Spiritual Detection, while next was the Spiritual Interference. A moment ago, he'd relied on his Spiritual Interference to avoid the enemy's crossfire when he'd been encircled by three of them. Two spiritual skills that could complement each other with soul tools; this was basically the best thing he could ask for! Furthermore, he could already use a Stationary Soul Tool with his current cultivated level. If he were to combine his Spiritual Detection with a Stationary Soul Tool, he was confident that he could hold his own against a soul master with four, or even five soul rings! Of course, that was only if he had enough ammunition and there was a great enough distance between them.

The more he studied and used soul tools, the more Huo Yuhao could feel how much more advanced they were than the Tang Sect's hidden weapons.

If you were to compare them, one had the power of a purely mechanical device; it was precise and accurate, just like a piece of art. On the other hand, soul tools were powered by soulforce, which was a more advanced type of energy. Moreover, it could be used in conjunction with formation arrays.

No matter what materials were used, the power of a mechanical device would always be limited. However, soulforce was different, as soulforce would increase alongside the cultivation of the soul master. As such, the power of soul tools would also keep increasing. Furthermore, with the increase of

one's soulforce, the process involved in the design and creation of soul tools would also change accordingly, which would cause the power of the soul tool to become greater and greater. This was also one of the reasons that first-class soul engineers were such terrifying existences.

However, even if a Class 9 soul engineer could dominate a Rank 9 Titled Douluo in a long distance battle, the same couldn't be said of a short-range battle. At the same time, there had never been a Class 9 soul engineer who'd surmounted Rank 95. Because of this, soul masters were still recognized as the strongest existences on the continent. This was also one of the reasons that Shrek Academy had such a high status.

After introducing him, Fan Yu let Huo Yuhao go. He also gave him a day of rest. They would meet the day after tomorrow in the evening, where they would continue studying together in the Testing Area.

After bidding Fan Yu and He Caitou farewell, Huo Yuhao returned to his dorm room. As soon as he opened the door, he saw Wang Dong looking at something with a very excited look on his face.

"What's up? How come you're so happy?" Huo Yuhao moved closer.

Wang Dong raised his head and shot Yuhao a look. "Did you pass the Soul Tool Department's advancement test?"

Huo Yuhao giggled as he said, "Of course I did. In fact, I discovered that fighting with a soul tool is much easier than without one. The consumption of soulforce is also smaller compared to purely using soul skills. What're you looking at?"

He moved closer when he was done speaking, then snatched a bronze-like red paper from Wang Dong's hand.

"Treasure Appreciating Auction? What's that?" Huo Yuhao glanced over the red paper. On it, Huo Yuhao saw that Shrek Academy's core students were invited to the Treasure Appreciating Auction to take a look at the goods that would be on display.

Wang Dong smiled, then turned and sat down. He excitedly explained, "I did some research. This Treasure Appreciating Auction is something that was created for our Shrek Academy. However, it's been divided into different categories. For example, this section is specifically aimed towards us core disciples."

Huo Yuhao ill-humoredly replied, "Explain yourself clearly. I didn't understand anything you just said."

Wang Dong stared at him blankly and said, "That's because you're stupid. This Treasure Appreciating Auction is a run by a big merchant organization in Shrek City. Isn't our Shrek City a huge business center? It's not uncommon for merchants of different nations to come here to carry out transactions. When the merchants living in Shrek City get ahold of something good, they'll auction it at our Shrek Academy's Treasure Appreciating Auction. To put it bluntly, we get to choose first, and the leftovers will be auctioned off later on."

Huo Yuhao was surprised as he asked, "For real? Do those merchants even gain anything from this? It's not like everyone in our academy is rich."

Wang Dong snorted and replied, "Of course they gain something. They gain the academy's goodwill! Not everyone in the academy is rich, yet how do you think Shrek City came to exist? It was all thanks to our Shrek Academy. Our academy isn't only the number one academy on the continent—it also has a terrifying military force. As long as Shrek Academy is here, Shrek City will never fall. Even if all the nations on the continent were to wage war against each other, none of them would dare to wage war here. Because of this, building a good relationship with our Shrek Academy is in the best interest of those merchants."

Huo Yuhao's interest was aroused when he heard this. "So what kind of good things are auctioned at this Treasure Appreciating Auction?"

Wang Dong said, "The Treasure Appreciating Auction is mainly divided into three categories. The first one is directly reserved for the academy. For example, if your Soul Tool Department needs some rare metals, they can buy them directly from there. The same goes for the teaching articles of the Martial Soul Department. The academy can also order things such as precious ingredients. However, these are just a few examples. Aside from the things sold to the academy and the teachers, there won't be many other high quality goods."

"Afterwards, there are the other two categories. These categories are reserved for us, the students, and you can find several good things here. One of these categories is aimed at inner courtyard students, and the goods there are pretty high quality. According to the rumors, soul bones are sold there all the time. However, only inner courtyard students are qualified to enter that auction. There's not really anything we can do about it. After that, there's the place written on this invitation letter. Only the core disciples of the outer courtyard are allowed to enter."