

Tang Sect 56

Chapter 56.1: The Treasure Appreciation Auction

“The Treasure Appreciation Auction for the core disciples will commence tonight. Even though this Treasure Appreciation Auction of ours isn’t as good as the inner courtyard’s auction, I’ve heard that there are many good items there. For example, medicine pills, herbs and even custom-made soul rings! There are also soul tool-related items. In any case, all of the items there are all high quality goods. Are you going?”

Huo Yuhao let out a bitter laugh and said, “I’m not going. I barely have any money so what’s the use in going? Since there are only going to be good items there, they’re naturally going to be expensive. It would be okay if I didn’t fancy anything, but just in case I do fancy something, wouldn’t I just be bringing suffering upon myself?”

Wang Dong felt pleased as he replied, “I’m sure you don’t know this, but didn’t you mention a moment ago that not all of our seniors are rich? What meaning would this Treasure Appreciation Auction have then? The truth is that we can buy the items on credit. This is also the reason why the auction is not open to normal students.”

His curiosity peaked, Huo Yuhao asked, “Buying on credit? Tell me more about this.”

Wang Dong said, “Don’t look down on our identity as core disciples. The probability of a core disciple from the outer courtyard graduating is above 95 percent. Moreover, each and every student capable of graduating from the outer courtyard is an outstanding talent in extreme demand, regardless of country or industry. That’s because the main requirement in order to graduate from the outer courtyard is becoming a Soul Ancestor!”

“Therefore, what these businesses are doing is investing in us and our potential. They’ll arrange a date for us to sign an agreement with them. We would then repay them in yearly installments. We can even defer repaying them till after we graduate, but in that case they’ll collect a small amount of interest from us.”

“I know you don’t understand how they benefit from this, do you? First, since we are in their debt; if they have something to ask of you or if they encounter something problematic, how could you not help them? If they want to employ you, could you reject them? Taking a step back, there’s no harm in forming a good relationship with a powerful Soul Ancestor is there? In any case, at the very least they can boost the chances of you shopping in their store. You may not have money now but that doesn’t mean you’ll always be poor in the future.”

“These businesses are very shrewd and would never conduct transactions that would end in a loss for them. If we core disciples can enter the inner courtyard, the payment will increase further, and all the interest on the loan would be waived off. All we’d need to do is repay the capital within the deadline via one of the many repayment schemes.”

After his thorough explanation, Huo Yuhao finally saw the light, “There are actually so many ways of doing things here. Then does that mean we can also buy things on credit?”

Wang Dong nodded and said, "But of course! We're core disciples, after all! Moreover, you're a core disciple of two departments. If they heard about this, I'm sure they'd give you an even greater discount."

Huo Yuhao shook his head and replied, "There's no need for that. I'd have to return the favor if I accepted their discounts. We'd better not do that unless we had no other choice."

Wang Dong was excited, "Of course! Despite being in the academy for so long have you been to Shrek City?"

Huo Yuhao naturally hadn't been to Shrek City. From his point of view, the biggest hurdle was his first year in the academy. During that time, he knew that he could be expelled at any time. Other than giving it his all in cultivating, how could he have the time and energy to go window shopping?

"You've never been out there, right? We're going to start lessons very soon. It's such a rare occurrence that we've got free time, so let's take a stroll. Even if we don't buy anything, we can increase our knowledge. We can't always ignore what's going on in the world outside even if we want to."

Huo Yuhao saw how excited he looked and couldn't bring himself to say no to him. He felt slightly helpless as he replied, "It's tonight, right? Then before we finish eating, you have to accompany me in cultivation. You're not allowed to slack off."

Wang Dong smiled as he replied, "Deal!"

They then spent the remaining hours cultivating. Huo Yuhao had originally been under the assumption that his soul power was increasing rapidly and that he had already caught up to most of the other students. However, he started to panic when he heard Teacher Wang Yan and Dean Yan mention that the speed at which a person with an Ultimate marital soul could cultivate would decrease after Rank 30. Moreover, he was different from the other students. As per the academy's instructions, he had to momentarily maintain his position as a core disciple of two departments. He had to multitask and study in both departments at the same time. This wasn't an easy feat. Hence, he didn't dare to relax for a single moment despite having already established himself in the academy. On the contrary, he had to work even harder.

Huo Yuhao also had his own opinions on the situation. His plan of singlehandedly seeking revenge on the Duke's Residence was a pipe dream. Even if he had the ability to do so in the future, how many years would he have to wait? Twenty, thirty, or maybe even fifty years? At that time, things would remain the same, yet people would've changed. What would be the point of seeking revenge anymore? The target he gave himself to complete his revenge in was twenty years. This required him to be even stronger and even more powerful than he was currently. Shrek Academy was undoubtedly the best place for him to take flight. Thus, he had to do his best and learn as much as he could so while he was here so he could become stronger.

Time always passed very quickly when cultivating. The sky was already darkening by the time the two finished cultivating. After they finished eating a top-notch, scrumptious meal, they took the invitation letter and quietly left the school.

Naturally, they weren't the only two to receive the invitation letter. The core disciples in the outer courtyard were spread across all year groups. For example, Dai Huabin, Zhu Lu, Zhou Enchen and Chao

Jinxuan from their year had also received invitations. However they would all go at different times as they had been taking their exams for the past two days.

Huo Yuhao and Wang Dong set off considerably later than the others. As they walked out of the academy's gates, Huo Yuhao suddenly stopped in his tracks.

"What's wrong?" Wang Dong asked, puzzled.

Huo Yuhao answered, "Do you know how to get to the Treasure Assembly Pavilion? I've never been to Shrek City before. You've never been there either, right?"

Wang Dong raised his hand and knocked Huo Yuhao on his head. "Stupid, look at the back of your invitation letter."

As a core disciple, Huo Yuhao had naturally received his own invitation letter. He took it out and flipped it over. Sure enough, there was a detailed map stamped in gold which indicated the location of the Treasure Assembly Pavilion within Shrek City.

Although Shrek Academy was located within Shrek City, they weren't connected to one another. This also meant that there wasn't a back door connecting the academy to the city.

As a result of that, Huo Yuhao and Wang Dong had to walk out of the academy, head round to either the south or north gate of the city and then enter through that gate. The Treasure Appreciation Pavilion seemed to be closer to the north gate on the map, so they naturally headed to that gate.

Shrek City was very large so the duo started to run as soon as they left the academy. They only stepped through the north gate after running for close to an hour.

As one of the busiest cities and most integral cities on the Douluo Continent, Shrek City was the liveliest in the evening. Once they passed through the city gates, they were greeted by a noisy place that was bustling with activity. Huo Yuhao was shocked by what he saw since neither had he ever been to such a big city, nor had he seen so many people before in his life.

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Everything as far as the eye could see was filled with a densely packed stream of people entering or leaving the city. On top of that, the sounds of vendors peddling their goods made everything even more chaotic. **nove.Lb**-In

"There are so many people here!" Huo Yuhao said, astonished.

Wang Dong said, "That's obvious. As one of the most flourishing economic centers on the continent, Shrek City is extremely bustling. The city boasts a population of nearly five million people, that's almost as much as some empires. Hey, don't tell me that you've never been in a city before?"

Huo Yuhao nodded, "Yeah! This is the largest city I've ever been in."

While looking around curiously, Huo Yuhao and Wang Dong walked through the wide city gates. Shrek City's main roads were extremely wide and allowed eight carriages to ride through them at the same time. The vast atmosphere within the city made Huo Yuhao gasp in surprise as he felt his worldview widen.

“How about it? Our trip was not in vain was it?” Wang Dong smiled. He had a similar curious expression on his face; after all, this was also his first time entering Shrek City.

The descriptions of Shrek City on the map were extremely accurate and its roads were extremely orderly. As a result, it wasn't hard to navigate around the city. After walking for about fifteen minutes or so, they arrived at the Treasure Gathering Pavilion.

The Treasure Gathering Pavilion was a large store that dealt with items relating to soul masters and soul engineers. If looked upon from afar, one could see that it was an enormous four-floored building that was over twenty meters tall. The building itself took up a large amount of space. It was a dazzling sight to behold from the outside, as it resembled a cornucopia.

A building this luxurious had already exceeded Huo Yuhao's range of understanding. And so, he couldn't help but widen his eyes when he saw the four cheongsam-wearing girls standing beside the door to the Treasure Gathering Pavilion.

The girls who were in charge of receiving customers of the Treasure Gathering Hall were only seventeen or eighteen years old, they had sweet appearances and slender bodies. Their fair skins looked even more charming when contrasted with the dazzling Treasure Gathering Pavilion. Huo Yuhao was immediately flabbergasted.

“Ouch. Wang Dong, what're you pinching me before?” An acute sensation of pain brought Huo Yuhao back to his senses. He turned around and saw that Wang Dong was glaring at him fiercely.

“What're you looking at? Be careful of growing a sty if you look at something you're not supposed to.” Wang Dong said angrily.

Huo Yuhao put an innocent expression on his face as he looked into Wang Dong's large beautiful eyes. “Being attracted to someone beautiful is only human. I'm just taking a look. These older sisters are really pretty.”

“Hmph! Very pretty?” Wang Dong had a look of disdain on his face. He was somewhat hesitant to respond, but he managed to not say anything.

Huo Yuhao rubbed his aching waist and said helplessly, “Whatever, I won't look. You don't even like looking at pretty women, you're still such a child.”

Wang Dong ignored him and strode towards the Treasure Gathering Pavilion as Huo Yuhao hurriedly chased after him.

Before they could reach the door leading to the Treasure Gathering Pavilion, one of the eight girls who were standing by the door walked over to them with a faint smile on her face. “Are you two soul masters coming to participate in the Treasure Appreciation Auction?” she inquired respectfully,

Huo Yuhao and Wang Dong had both worn their Shrek Academy uniforms, which made them stand out in the crowd. As a result, they had received a large number of glances on their journey here.

The two of them took out their invitation letters and handed them over to her. The smile on the girl's face immediately became much more gentle when she saw their invitation letters, “Soul masters, please follow me.” she said as she led the way

Even among the core disciples of Shrek Academy, there were very few students around Huo Yuhao and Wang Dong's age who could attend the Treasure Appreciation Auction. Hence, they received curious looks as they walked past the group of girls beside the door.

Wang Dong was still fine, but Huo Yuhao's face was completely flushed.

After entering the Treasure Gathering Pavilion, a luxurious atmosphere immediately assaulted all of their senses. The golden hall was extremely extravagant and was illuminated by a crystal light that hung from the ceiling. The two sides of the hall were similarly lined with two rows of women.

When compared to the eight cheongsam-wearing girls who were on the outside, the young ladies within the hall who wore short golden skirts were even more eye-catching. These young ladies were slightly younger and the material used in their skirts was extremely thin, revealing their fair slender legs. All of their appearances were stunning and their bodies were extremely beautiful. A person would feel as if he had walked into heaven on earth after entering this golden hall.

"We welcome our distinguished guests." The young ladies in the hall bowed and greeted them, immediately startling Huo Yuhao and Wang Dong. They couldn't help but feel bewildered as they looked at the girls who were all bowing towards them.

Huo Yuhao was still young and didn't know much of the differences in terms of status and wealth that different people had. However, he began to slowly understand that concept. Would an ordinary person be granted entry to such a luxurious place?

At that moment, Huo Yuhao suddenly felt his vision go dark; his eyes had been covered. Wang Dong's voice rang out, "You're not allowed to look. I wouldn't have brought you here if I'd known that it was gonna be like this. I won't let you be corrupted by bad things like this."

Huo Yuhao was filled with helplessness. "Why would I be corrupted by the sights here? Aren't you seeing them as well? Doesn't that mean that you'll be corrupted too?"

Wang Dong subconsciously justified his actions, "I'm different, I..." He suddenly stopped and continued in a fierce voice, "In any case, you should just close your eyes and not look at anything here." With that, he moved his hands off Huo Yuhao's eyes.

As the two spoke, they passed the corridor filled with beautiful women. The white-clothed young lady guided them up a golden flight of stairs to the second floor of the Treasure Gathering Pavilion.

The second floor was much quieter than the first floor. It seemed extremely messy on the inside but everything was arranged in an extremely logical manner. Exhibition booths were all installed in the most eye-catching parts of the room and each booth was covered with an enormous piece of crystal-glass. Every booth had a wide variety of diverse and unique items.

The white-clothed lady stopped. "Greetings to the two distinguished guests who are attending the Treasure Appreciation Auction held within the Treasure Gathering Pavilion. Please head towards the western area to register yourselves. You can get a credit evaluation if you wish to buy things on credit. The results of this evaluation will determine the discounts available to you as well as your credit limits."

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Huo Yuhao and Wang Dong glanced at each other when the white-haired girl had finished. Huo Yuhao then turned back towards her and asked, "Are there different credit limits? If so, what are the different limits?"

The white-clothed girl smiled. "If I'm not mistaken, this should be the first time you've visited the Treasure Appreciation Auction. It's like this: Our Treasure Gathering Pavilion will set different credit limits based on the personal situations of the distinguished guests who participate in the Treasure Appreciating Auction. We mainly judge your current cultivation, age, soul rank, and a few other factors in order to form a comprehensive evaluation. Don't worry, our Treasure Gathering Pavilion will maintain a level of secrecy over this information; we absolutely won't reveal any of your secrets. At the same time, we won't ask what your background is. Your credit limit is based off of your ability alone. As such, we have a set of detailed confidential measures. Since it's your first time coming to the auction, I recommend that you go and receive an evaluation first. That way, we'll be able to confirm your credit limits, and you'll also have a good estimate as to what you'll be able to buy inside our Treasure Appreciation Auction. If the two of you wish it, I can take you there right now."

Huo Yuhao glanced inquisitively towards Wang Dong, who nodded. "That's fine. It seems I'll have to trouble you to evaluate us."

As the white-clothed girl lead the two of them to the east, they were occasionally drawn to the exhibition booths near them.

Wang Dong suddenly tugged on Huo Yuhao's sleeve and pointed towards a booth; impressively, there was a soul bone within the booth. The soul bone was reddish-gold, and it was surprisingly floating within the booth. It looked to be an arm bone, its five delicate digits pointed upwards. Each of its fingertips released a faint, reddish-gold light. It wasn't just them; almost everyone who walked past it would find their gazes drawn to it. Furthermore, the booth that the soul bone was located within was at least twice the size that of the other booths. Furthermore, the enormous crystal cover on it caused its reddish-golden light to glisten and cover the entire room.

There was a sign underneath the soul bone with a few words on it, but the two of them couldn't clearly see what the words on it since they were were still walking.

Huo Yuhao turned to look towards Wang Dong, only to see an intense brilliance in the latter's eyes. Wang Dong was also looking at him, and he whispered, "I can sense that it suits me."

Huo Yuhao nodded. "However, its price..."

A resolute light flashed through Wang Dong's eyes. "We'll talk about it later."

Naturally, there wouldn't just be one good thing within the auction. Just like Wang Dong had seen the soul bone, Huo Yuhao had seen quite a few treasures that had filled his heart with thirst.

Wang Dong mainly paid attention to things that were related to a soul master's cultivation, but Huo Yuhao also cared about certain precious metals and things that were related to soul engineering. For example, he'd seen a set of schematics that had been created by a Class 7 soul engineer. Though he didn't know what kind of soul tool it was for, the words 'Class 7' were already sufficient.

Even though his teacher was a powerful Class 8 soul engineer who was as rare as phoenix feathers and qilin horns among soul engineers, the latter had told him that every single soul engineer had a different inclination within their research—every single soul engineer who'd reached Class 6 would definitely have their own specialties. It would be extremely beneficial for a low-ranked soul engineer to see the blueprints of a higher-ranked one. There were many commonalities between different blueprints, but no high-ranking soul engineer would easily let another person see his or her schematics. If they were to do so, it would become highly likely that certain features within their blueprints would be leaked. If that happened, the experience they'd gained after researching for many years would be free to study by other soul engineers. *novel*1n

For this reason, most high-ranking soul engineers would only rarely give their blueprints to someone that wasn't their inheriting disciple.

Unfortunately, Huo Yuhao didn't even need to ask to know that that set of schematics would very likely be comparable to a soul bone in price. That set of schematics wasn't just some basic one written by a Class 7 soul engineer—it was a carefully written one; it was a schematic for a self-created Class 7 soul tool.

A Class 7 soul engineer might not necessarily be able to create a Class 7 soul tool. Upon reaching Class 7, the restrictions that limited a soul engineer would increase dramatically. Oftentimes, a Class 7 soul engineer would only be able to create a set of blueprints for a Class 7 soul tool once in their entire lives.

A highly ranked soul tool would contain special characteristics of the soul engineer who'd created it, but to create a soul tool such as this was enormously difficult. For example, a soul tool created by a Class 9 soul engineer would typically be an existence ranked as a strategic weapon to any country. There was a chance that even its creator wouldn't be able to activate it. As such, the main reason soul engineers were still inferior to soul masters was because there were simply too few high-ranking soul engineers. Class 7, on the other hand, was the basic threshold required for a soul engineer to call himself a high-ranking one.

Though the two of them had already predicted that there would be relatively precious treasures here even before arriving, they realised that they'd still underestimated the power of the Treasure Gathering Pavilion once they saw the exhibitions present.

In reality, it wasn't easy for the Treasure Gathering Pavilion to gather so many items. However, they didn't know that. Though a Treasure Appreciation Auction on this level was still inferior to those that disciples of the inner courtyard could participate in, it wasn't too far off. The two items that they'd seen had previously appeared within a Treasure Appreciation Auction held within the inner courtyard, but the price of a treasure of this level was naturally high... Because of this, no one had been able to afford it, and it had thus appeared within this auction for them to admire.

After walking for nearly a hundred meters, they finally came to the end of the western area. There was a light groove under the long desks which flickered with a crystal-yellow light; the gentle rays of light coming from it weren't gaudy in the least, but filled with a sense of realism.

The white-clothed girl brought the two of them to the left side of the front desk, and a girl behind it rose to her feet immediately and said respectfully, "Greetings to the two soul masters. I'll have to trouble the

two of you to fill in this evaluation form. We'll be able to calculate your credit limit within a few minutes."

Two evaluation forms, along with delicate ink brushes, were given to them. The contents of the form weren't complicated in the least.

Name and surname, gender, age, soul rank, martial soul, and past achievements.

There were only these six simple items that were required; the age of their soul rings wasn't required at all.

Because of this, they felt much more at ease whilst filling in these forms. Huo Yuhao only gave his Spirit Eyes for the 'martial soul' field, and not his Ice Jade Empress Scorpion. Even in Shrek Academy, the number of people who knew that he possessed the Ice Empress were few in number.

After filling in their respective forms, they handed them in. Quickly, their evaluations were released.

The girl who was in charge of registration and calculating credit limits was somewhat stunned. The white-clothed girl who'd brought the two to the desk whispered to her, "Little Red, quickly."

The lady behind the desk had a round, charming face along with a pair of small eyes, but her facial features were cute, making her look seventeen or eighteen. The instant she was urged on by the white-clothed girl, she looked towards Huo Yuhao and Wang Dong with a completely different look in her eyes; a somewhat intense light had appeared in them.

Huo Yuhao had seen this kind of gaze in the past; he would frequently see the female students in the academy look towards Wang Dong with a look like this in their eyes. Just who made him more delicate and prettier than a girl? However, the girl called Little Red wasn't looking towards Wang Dong this time around; her intense gaze was unexpectedly directed towards the twelve-year-old Huo Yuhao.

She used an extremely respectful and gentle voice to speak to him, "Respected Sir Huo, I would like to welcome you to our Treasure Gathering Pavilion. I just did a quick investigation, and you do not have a credit limit within our auction."

"Ah?" Huo Yuhao was stunned, "Why?" He barely had any money himself, and if he couldn't use credit to purchase items here, he'd have to leave empty-handed.

Little Red could naturally see how he'd misunderstood her, and said hurriedly, "Mr Huo, please don't be worried. You've been upgraded to a top-ranked VIP in our Treasure Gathering Pavilion, so you don't need a limit. According to your current limit, you'll have the qualifications to take away a single item from the Treasure Appreciation Auction every year without paying anything."

"This..." Huo Yuhao was immediately stunned. He glanced towards Wang Dong, clueless as to what had just occurred.

The white-clothed girl also had a look of astonishment on her face. Little Red ignored her, and instead whispered a few words to the girl beside her. That girl, in turn, hurriedly rose to her feet and walked towards the back.

Little Red had already placed two cards on the table. One of them was red, and the other was purple.

Little Red handed the purple card to Wang Dong. “Mr Wang, your credit is a hundred thousand gold soul coins. You can only use it once this year, and you’ll have to go through another evaluation next year. At your current age, a purple evaluation is already the highest you can receive. You will receive a 10% discount on any items you purchase, and our prices here are cheaper than what you can find in the outside world, so they’re already extremely low.”

Wang Dong took the card and nodded, but he was still extremely stunned with regards to Huo Yuhao’s situation. According to common sense, even if the latter had performed extraordinarily after returning, he shouldn’t have a status that exceeded his own! After all, he was a control-type soul master. However, he could tell that that was precisely the case from the girl’s expression.

The red card had a golden streak on it, and Huo Yuhao unexpectedly felt a faint warmth come from it after receiving it. It was extremely comfortable to hold it.

This is...

Red Spirit-warming Jade? This is too extravagant!

Huo Yuhao had a look of astonishment on his face as he looked at the card in his hand. Only a small piece of Red Spirit-warming Jade was needed for a person to withstand the harsh winter. Naturally, this referred to ordinary winter, and not the one that existed within the Extreme North. More importantly, it was an extremely stable gem. Using it to carve a formation array was enough to withstand soul power of anyone below a Class 6 soul engineer. It was a relatively uncommon material that was used for formation arrays. Though the card wasn’t large, it was worth a hundred gold soul coins at the very least. Furthermore, there was only an extremely small quantity of Red Spirit-warming Jade in existence!

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The card had the words ‘Treasure Gathering Pavilion’ engraved on it, but it was otherwise unadorned.

Little Red gazed at the red card in Huo Yuhao’s hand with jealousy. She then said, “Mr Huo, this VIP card allows you a 40% discount within our Pavilion, which is the highest discount we can give anyone. Furthermore, you can also redeem any item you wish from our Treasure Appreciation Auction once a year with it.”

Wang Dong asked curiously, “How many cards like this does your pavilion have?”

Little Red shook her head. “I’m sorry, but I’m not very clear with regards to that. Every single person in possession of a top-ranked VIP card is an extremely honoured guest of our pavilion. Moreover, all VIP cards have slight differences. For example, this is the first time I’ve ever heard of something like Mr. Huo’s privilege, where he’s allowed to choose a single treasure for free every year.”

Suddenly, a warm voice rang out in Huo Yuhao and Wang Dong’s ears, “There’s no need for you to feel astonished. Go and pick what you need. The Treasure Gathering Pavilion is a part of the academy, thus it’s naturally aware of your situations. The academy was the one who chose to give Huo Yuhao a top-ranked VIP card. However, you two have to keep this a secret; you can’t reveal the relationship between the academy and the pavilion to others, nor can you reveal your VIP ranks. If you do, you’ll be stripped of your privilege to enter this place.”

This was the first time they'd ever heard this voice, yet they felt an immense sense of pressure as soon as they did. Just this person's voice had been nigh unbearable for the two of them. They naturally didn't dare to ask any more questions and hurriedly turned to leave the front desk.

A figure slowly appeared in front of the front desk soon after the two of them had left. The workers present all bowed respectfully when they saw him.

The newcomer was an old woman who had a head of white hair and a ruddy complexion. She'd recently attended the conference held in the Sea God's Pavilion. She was Elder Lin, who'd sat next to Xian Lin'er, and was also the Pavilion Master of the Treasure Gathering Pavilion.

She hadn't lied when she'd said that the Treasure Gathering Pavilion was a part of academy, as the Treasure Gathering Pavilion was still a business that belonged to Shrek Academy. However, she'd intentionally left out one thing: the Treasure Gathering Pavilion didn't belong to the academy itself; rather, this action was one of the points that had been discussed during the conference held at the Sea God's Pavilion. She would normally be the only person who would control everything within the pavilion.

It was of course normal for a student like Huo Yuhao—someone who could trigger a conference at the Sea God's Pavilion—to obtain a top-ranked VIP card from the Treasure Gathering Pavilion. This was also deluded by the conference. The academy didn't say anything on the surface, but they naturally hoped that Huo Yuhao would rapidly mature and be of use to the academy. The academy would absolutely not be miserly to a talent on this level. This was also a reason why Shrek Academy, not only had outstanding students, but a group of powerful elders and teachers. Practically all of them had gone through the same process that Huo Yuhao was now going through. Only, the treatments they'd received at his age weren't as high as this.

Giving him help via the Sea God's Pavilion was equivalent to concealing everything from the other students within the academy. After all, only the top-level figures who could participate in the meeting held within the Sea God's Pavilion knew of the relationship between the Treasure Gathering Pavilion and Shrek Academy. This way, even if the academy tried to rope in and help Huo Yuhao, it wouldn't give rise to dissatisfaction from core disciples of the outer courtyard, or even students of the inner courtyard. Thus, why wouldn't they do it this way?

However, Shrek Academy wouldn't bet all of its resources on a single student. Regardless of how special a student was, he would only be a piece of trash if he lost his ambition and drive. Because of that, Huo Yuhao would only receive a single free item each year. Yet, he simply had too many treasures he needed as a person who dual-cultivated in the Martial Soul and Soul Tool Departments. The choice of this item would be left up to him, but he would have to rely on his own hard work if he wished to obtain any more items.

"Let's go and take a look at that soul bone." Without any hesitation at all, he headed towards the soul bone that Wang Dong had seen earlier.

Wang Dong hurriedly tugged at his sleeve. "Yuhao, you don't need to. I can buy it myself." He naturally understood Huo Yuhao's intentions. There was no doubt that he was going to use his privileges to help Wang Dong get that soul bone.

Huo Yuhao turned around and looked at Wang Dong in a very serious manner.

Wang Dong gradually felt somewhat awkward under his gaze. "What're you looking at me for?"

Huo Yuhao said, "Wang Dong, do you still remember when Teacher Zhou gave me that soul bone? I used it, but I didn't fuse with it. Instead, I used it as a medium to fuse with another high-ranked soul bone. I can't tell you how I got that soul bone, but I definitely wouldn't have been able to fuse with it without the use of the Secret Law Soul. Xiao Xiao and I already have soul bones, but the attack-type soul master in our team, you, doesn't have one. It's definitely in the team's best interests that you be our first choice when we get another one."

With that, he paused for a moment before continuing, "Moreover, the friendship between us definitely can't be measured using any benefits or money whatsoever. We're partners who can use a fusion skill! From another standpoint, the two of us are a single entity. If you get stronger, our strength as a whole will similarly increase. If you think of me as a brother, don't say anything else. Go."

As he spoke, he walked towards the soul bone while holding onto Wang Dong's hand.

The reddish-golden soul bone had attracted a lot of attention. Anyone who could participate in the Treasure Appreciation Auction was a core disciple of the outer courtyard, and there were many of them that the two of them recognized.

"Senior brother." Huo Yuhao immediately saw the gentle and cultured Bei Bei, but he didn't see Tang Ya beside him. Evidently, Tang Ya wasn't a core disciple of the academy. However, the person standing beside him was someone that they both recognised; it was Xu Sanshi, who possessed the Xuanwu Turtle. He was currently speaking to Bei Bei with a hand on his shoulder.

The two of them simultaneously looked up after hearing Huo Yuhao's cry. It turned out they weren't looking at the soul bone, but another item beside it.

"Juniors, you've come as well." Bei Bei walked up to them with a smile on his face.

Xu Sanshi's eyes immediately lit up after he saw Huo Yuhao. With a look of faux-anger on his face, he said, "Yuhao, I haven't eaten your roasted fish for a long time. I've heard that you've been shining extraordinarily for a while, and even Dean Yan wants you. But why'd you run over to the Soul Tool Department?"

Huo Yuhao chuckled. "Big Brother Xu, you ask too many questions. I don't know how to answer all this at once. In any case, nothing has changed; I'm training in both the Soul Tool Department and the Martial Soul Department.

Xu Sanshi said, "It's good that you two have come. Help give this guy some advice. I've just told Bei Bei that I'll definitely join the Tang Sect as long as you guys can get Jiang Nannan to join. How about it?"

The two of them were both astonished after hearing that. Like Bei Bei, Xu Sanshi was a core disciple. Moreover, Xu Sanshi was already a sixth year student who wasn't far away from Bei Bei in terms of cultivation. In reality, he was even younger than Bei Bei as a result of having entered the academy at a young age.

The Xuanwu Turtle was a top-ranked defensive martial soul, and though it wasn't as powerful as an Ultimate one, it could be considered at the peak of the defense system. Furthermore, Xu Sanshi definitely had some sort of background since he had been able to inherit a martial soul like this. All of this would definitely be of enormous use to the Tang Sect.

Yet, Bei Bei turned a blind eye to this. "What do you think the Tang Sect is? A tool to help you chase after girls? Go away."

Instead of becoming angry, Xu Sanshi laughed mischievously. "Who asked Nannan to be on such good terms with your Little Ya? Just go and ask Little Ya to get Nannan to come here. A person with Nannan's personality won't easily leave the Tang Sect after she enters it. At that time, I'll come in. Won't my chances be much better then?"

Bei Bei sighed lightly. "Although you're not a good fella, I have to admit that you're practically infatuated. For the sake of Jiang Nannan, you've actually stayed in Year 5 and refused to enter Year 6. If it weren't for the fact that you were a core disciple, you would've already been expelled from the academy."

Xu Sanshi made a long face. "I have no choice! Who asked her to be my first love? I'm willing to do anything for her."

Xu Sanshi had actually decided to stay behind for Jiang Nannan's sake? Shrek Academy actually had a person as strange as this.

"Even this is possible?" Huo Yuhao blurted.

Xu Sanshi smiled cunningly. "Why wouldn't it be possible? It was even Bei Bei who inspired me to do it. Why do you guys think he's in a year lower than mine even though he's older than me? Isn't it all for the sake of staying with Little Ya? Did you guys think he was praising me? He was clearly praising himself. That'll be good; Little Ya, Bei Bei, Nannan and I will all be in the same class. However, Bei Bei, your Little Ya isn't in a good position! Looking at her cultivation, she'll have some difficulty graduating from the outer courtyard, much less entering the inner courtyard."

Bei Bei sighed. "She's already been working hard these two years. But you know how hard it is to cultivate Bluesilver Grass. After all, she doesn't have the Bluesilver Emperor like the Tang Sect's Ancestor. She can only do her best. I've already thought it through; if Little Ya can't enter the inner courtyard, I won't enter either. I'll follow her travelling around the continent."

Xu Sanshi immediately felt nothing but respect for him. "Good! You're worthy of being called a man that I, Xu Sanshi, have witnessed it! You're righteous in your love."

"You... scram." Bei Bei said unhappily, and stamped his foot.

Bei Bei clearly hadn't used much force, but Xu Sanshi let out a miserable shriek, and he flew outwards fiercely. Just as Huo Yuhao and Wang Dong felt astonished, they saw Jiang Nannan appear in the direction that Xu Sanshi had flown towards.

Jiang Nannan wore the black uniform that fifth year students wore, making her beautiful curves even more moving. She was calm and composed as she looked at Xu Sanshi, who was suddenly flying towards

her. With an icy look on her face, she fiercely raised her right foot and smashed in down in a cutting motion towards him.

“Ah!” Xu Sanshi was truly sent flying this time around. His body directly moved five meters horizontally, and he flipped around and stabilised himself by placing his hands on the ground.

“Nannan, you’re really heartless! Didn’t you see Bei Bei kick me? It would have been fine if you didn’t help me, but you even kicked me.” Xu Sanshi had a mournful look on his face.

Chapter 57.3: The Golden Left Arm Bone

However, Jiang Nannan didn’t even spare him a glance. She walked directly towards Huo Yuhao’s group of three with a smile and nodded at them; it was as if Xu Sanshi didn’t even exist in her eyes.

Xu Sanshi also hurriedly made his way over. However, Jiang Nannan suddenly turned around, revealing a murderous look. “If you keep following me, I’ll leave Shrek Academy.”

“Ah...” Xu Sanshi immediately stopped. It seemed that he had really no chances of conquering Jiang Nannan.

Looking at Jiang Nannan’s disappearing silhouette, Bei Bei exclaimed, “Junior brother, you have a long way to go!”

Xu Sanshi had an ugly complexion as he said, “Bei Bei, you’re my senior brother. Can you teach this junior brother a few tricks? I’ve tried everything in my power, but she won’t give me a single chance.”

Bei Bei was also curious as he said, “I’m surprised too. If we consider looks, talent and strength, you’re actually quite good among the students. If Jiang Nannan wants to look for someone stronger than you in our grade, it won’t be easy! Of course, I’m an exception. And I’m already booked anyway. By the way, why is she so unwilling to talk to you? Looking at the two of you, you should have known each other before coming to the academy. And after all these years, you’re still like this. What exactly happened between the two of you before you came here?”

“Ah...” Xu Sanshi had an awkward expression. His face was still a bit red when he said, “I can’t say it, I absolutely can’t say it. I’m going to take a stroll now.” After saying these words, he quickly slipped away.

Bei Bei shook his head helplessly. He had always been curious about what had happened between Xu Sanshi and Jiang Nannan.

“Junior brothers, what are you going to buy? There are many good things at the Treasure Appreciation Auction. The two of you should take a look around, I’ll also go for a walk.” Saying this, he also left.

Wang Dong said heartily, “As I see it, Senior Brother Xu Sanshi is a very good person. He’s very dedicated and resolute when it comes to his feelings. I don’t understand what Senior Sister Jiang dislikes about him. You should learn from them.”

Huo Yuhao was dumbfounded. “Learn what? I don’t even know what happened between them.”

Wang Dong snorted as he said, “Except for cultivating, what can you even think of? You’re a complete blockhead.”

Huo Yuhao scratched his head. "We're students, what should we think of besides studying properly? Anyway, take a look at this soul bone and tell me if it's suitable for you or not."

As he spoke, he arrived beside the golden-red arm bone and inspected it earnestly.

Wang Dong kicked the air behind his back when he left. Then, he resentfully followed behind him.

The arm bone was completely enshrouded in its own reddish-gold radiance. Underneath it was a plate with a detailed description.

Golden Left Arm Bone.

This arm bone had come from a ten thousand year Golden Earth Dragon King that had an affinity with the light element. It was speculated that it could use light-type attacks. This bone was very suitable for soul master with an affinity for the light element. And the skill that came with it was likely to be an assault-type skill.

Although a bit diluted, the Golden Earth Dragon King still possessed the pure bloodline of the light dragon race. Moreover, that was now concentrated completely in this soul bone. This arm bone contained the essence of a ten thousand year Golden Earth Dragon King. The word 'pure' was the key here, because, although diluted, it had still inherited more characteristics of the light dragon race than those with mixed bloodlines. It was a pity that it had been killed when it was only ten thousand years old. Had it reached the hundred thousand year rank, it would have become an existence akin to a king of beasts.

The soul bone was priced at 9.5 million Gold Soul Coins.

When Huo Yuhao and Wang Dong saw this price, their pupils immediately shrank.

As time passed, the worth of Gold Soul Coins also kept increasing. For example, the expenses of a family of three amounted only to a few dozen Gold Soul Coins per year. So what could you do with 9.5 million Golden Soul Coins? You could take ten thousand cavalymen and arm them to the teeth, horses included.

As expected, soul bones were one of the most expensive things on the continent. Moreover, it wasn't even a hundred thousand year soul bone. Had it been a hundred thousand year soul bone, it wouldn't even have a price, because it would truly be a priceless treasure. However, a soul bone of that rank had never been auctioned or traded by anyone, because they were treasures that would attract even Titled Douluo. Even shops like the Treasure Gathering Pavilion, which dared to exhibit a ten thousand year soul bone, were extremely few in number. This was because they had confidence in being able to protect their goods.

Huo Yuhao smiled bitterly and said to Wang Dong, "Can you still afford it?"

"Why is it so expensive?" Wang Dong said, astonished, "From what I remember, although expensive, the price of a soul bone will rarely surpass 3 million Gold Soul Coins!"

Huo Yuhao said, "I reckon it's so expensive due to that 'pure' word. A soul bone with a pure dragon bloodline can't be cheap, right? The stuff here is really good, but the prices are also very high. I wonder

if I can get it through my VIP card. This soul bone is probably the most expensive thing in this Treasure Appreciation Auction. No wonder it's still here and no one's bought it, the price is just too high."

Wang Dong turned his head and looked to Huo Yuhao, "Yuhao, it's too expensive. I think I understand what the academy wants. The academy's giving you these privileges because you have great talent and an Ultimate martial soul. The more precious the thing you take from here is, the more you'll feel indebted to the academy. And in the future, you'll surely need a lot of these things. With that, you'll be tied down to the academy. Yuhao, if you want to be free, you can't take things from here as you wish."

Huo Yuhao shook his head lightly as he said, "When I heard that voice just now, I was already clear about the situation. However, you also know that I don't have a choice. According to what Teacher Zhou said, no matter if it's a soul master or a soul engineer, the only way they have to get stronger is by relying on a huge amount of resources. Without enough money, how are you going to buy soul bones? How are you going to buy those precious materials to build soul tools? Even if a soul master can get stronger by himself, the road he'll have to walk will be more difficult, and he will have a greater chance of meeting hardships that will break his will. If I didn't have this enmity that I bear, perhaps I would have chosen that path. But the current me can only rely on the academy... Anyway, it's still better than relying on countries or powerful families. Also, I like our academy. For the first time after my mother died, I felt the warmth of home by staying here. Today, I'll receive something from the academy. But in the future, I'll be sure to repay it."

Wang Dong looked carefully at Huo Yuhao. He knew that this guy that seemed nothing more than a blockhead was actually more mature than his peers. Under that gentle face, he had a blazing heart.

Wang Dong finally gave up and replied, "Fine, I'll take this soul bone. You can go and make the exchange; I still want to take another look at it."

A smile immediately blossomed on Huo Yuhao's face. He patted his shoulder and walked toward the counter on the western side.

Wang Dong looked at his back, and his expression turned gentle. "What you said is right. Today, I'll receive something from you. But in the future, I'll be sure to repay it."

The deal was sealed more quickly than he had imagined. After a short while, Huo Yuhao returned to Wang Dong's side. He whispered in his ear, "Let's go! The Treasure Gathering Pavilion will keep the identity of the buyer secret. After a while, this soul bone will be picked up and delivered directly to the academy. It's not safe to take something so precious with us."

Wang Dong said, "Do you want to buy something? I can still buy things on credit. If you need something, I'll buy it for you."

Huo Yuhao was about to shake his head when he suddenly heard the cold voice of the Ice Empress. "You absolutely can't miss that thing on the third stand to your left."

Huo Yuhao was surprised. He said to Wang Dong, "Let's take a look around." With that, he moved toward the third stand on the left as the Ice Empress had told him.

The article displayed on this stand hadn't attracted their attention earlier because it was really too unremarkable. It was just a black crystal. Its surface was uneven, and the color was dim and lacked any

luster. Compared to that Golden Left Arm Bone from before, there was a difference between heaven and earth.

Above it, there was also a description, “Thousand Year Whale Rubber. Whale Rubber is a special material that is only produced in the brains of whale-type soul beasts. It’s a very good tonic for soul masters. It can strengthen the body, enhance the muscles and bones, and also increase the capacity of one’s meridians. This piece of Whale Rubber was bought by the pavilion in the past, and according to the seller, it came from a thousand year Devilwhale. Generally speaking, the Whale Rubber of a thousand year Devilwhale should be golden, and worth a lot. This amount of Whale Rubber is capable of thoroughly remoulding a soul master’s body. However, this piece of Whale Rubber is black. And according to the pavilion’s analysis, it decayed over time, and was partially ruined. It can still be used as before, but the effect might be somewhat weaker.”

The price of this Thousand Year Whale Rubber wasn’t high; it was only six thousand Gold Soul Coins.

Somewhat puzzled, Wang Dong said, “Yuhao, are you really interested in this thing? I’ve seen Thousand Year Whale Rubber before. It was bright gold, and looked like a golden crystal. That was some real high-quality Whale Rubber. Such a large piece of Whale Rubber should be worth at least fifty thousand Gold Soul Coins. If they’re selling this one for only six thousand, it shouldn’t be very high-quality.”

“Oh? You know about Whale Rubber?” Huo Yuhao asked curiously.

Wang Dong nodded and said, “Whale Rubber is a very precious material. However, you can only consume it after melting it over a flame with a very high temperature. Eating it will improve a soul master’s body. For example, right now, you can absorb at most the soul ring of a thousand year soul beast. However, if you eat a big piece of Whale Rubber, your body’s capacity for soul rings will increase by at least five hundred years. Or at least, that’s how it’s supposed to work. Whale Rubber is indeed beneficial for us soul masters, but there are some problems. After all, we can’t judge a soul beast’s cultivation with absolute precision, nor can we judge whether or not a particular product is suitable to absorb. Moreover, if you meet a soul beast that’s suitable for you, you’ll hardly check if its age is above the limit or not. Therefore, although good, Whale Rubber’s worth is somewhat inferior to its price. And I’m not even talking about this low-quality Whale Gel. If you eat this, you’d be lucky to not get diarrhea...”

Huo Yuhao was at a loss. However, he still hurriedly said, “Wang Dong, help me buy this piece of Whale Gel. Quick.”

Chapter 58.1: The Boundary Between Life and Death

“Do you really want to buy that Thousand Year Whale Rubber?” Wang Yan looked at Huo Yuhao, feeling puzzled by his decision.

Huo Yuhao leaned over and whispered in his ear, “Quickly. There won’t be a second chance. This definitely isn’t Thousand Year Whale Rubber, but Ten Thousand Year Whale Rubber. That’s why it’s black. Quickly, pay up! If someone else notices this item, we won’t have a chance to buy it anymore!”

Wang Dong was stunned. He naturally wouldn't question Huo Yuhao further with the mutual trust they both had with one another. He immediately turned around and paid up at the sales counter located at the western end of the room.

That's right, this Whale Rubber was ten thousand years old just as Huo Yuhao had said. Naturally, it was impossible for him to discern this with his own experience and knowledge. The Ice Empress was the one who had told him the answer.

Throughout the course of human history, Ten Thousand Year Whale Rubber had been extremely rare. Thus, it was no wonder that no one in the Treasure Appreciation Auction recognised this item.

The sea was another haven for soul beasts. Rumor had it that the number of soul beasts in the sea was more than ten times those on land. Moreover, the soul beasts in the sea were ranked as well and whale-type soul beasts were unquestionably one of the overlords among sea soul beasts.

When humans entered the sea, they were practically like meat on a chopping board. No human had dared venture into the depths of the sea. As a result of that, though it was still possible to kill a thousand year soul beast if one depended on a powerful soul master. The devilwhales were more than ten thousand years old and lived in the deep sea. On top of that, every single one of them was extremely powerful. Who would dare to make contact with their poisonous heads?

However, as luck would have it, this Whale Rubber came from a ten thousand year devilwhale. While normally Ten Thousand Year Whale Rubber was dark yellow, this one was black. The difference in color was due to long-term changes in the weather. That was why no one had recognised it for what it really was.

To Huo Yuhao, this Whale Rubber was practically the best thing he could have found here. His biggest problem now was his body's capacity to withstand more power from the Ice Jade Empress Scorpion and Skydream Iceworm.

Even though the Ice Jade Empress Scorpion couldn't completely transfer her hundreds of thousands of years of cultivation into Huo Yuhao's body, she had managed to compress and seal the most quintessential bit of her power in him. As long as Huo Yuhao's body had enough strength to withstand it, she could help Huo Yuhao accelerate his cultivation efforts.

The Ice Empress was anxiously looking forward to the day when Huo Yuhao became powerful, so she naturally couldn't let such a good item as this Ten Thousand Year Whale Rubber slip through her fingers.

Wang Dong quickly returned after paying, and only then did Huo Yuhao show a relaxed look on his face. The Whale Rubber was not as eye-catching as the soul bone. A member of the staff from the Treasure Appreciation Pavilion retrieved the Whale Rubber from the display stand and handed it to Wang Dong. When he got it, Wang Dong immediately shoved it into Huo Yuhao's hands.

"I hope we really didn't make a mistake with this." Wang Dong couldn't help but think that they'd lost out as he looked at that black goopy item. This black Whale Rubber wasn't fragrant at all. It was truly difficult for one to believe that it had come from a ten thousand year-old devilwhale.

Huo Yuhao laughed mischievously and said, "Let's go. We've already gotten the items we wanted. When I get back, I'll get Teacher Zhou to find a teacher with a fire attribute martial soul to help us. We'll automatically know whether it was worth it or not once we've eaten it."

Wang Dong shook his head. "If you want to eat it, you can do so yourself. I'm not going to eat such a sticky thing. I have eaten a lot of this when I was younger because I was forced to do so by my family. After I fused with a thousand year soul ring, I swore that I would never eat this sticky thing for the rest of my life."

Huo Yuhao felt a light bulb go off in his head and said, "It's no wonder your second soul ring is a thousand years old! Your family is really rich!"

The two chatted as they headed out. When they passed Bei Bei, they greeted their senior martial brother. Bei Bei asked them to head back first since he wanted to wait for Xu Sanshi who was still nagging Jiang Nannan in every possible way he could.

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Sea God's Island, Shrek Academy.

"What? It was that small guy, Huo Yuhao?" Ma Xiaotao looked at Yan Shaozhe with an incredulous look on her face.

Yan Shaozhe nodded and replied, "That's right. It is highly likely that the cold soul power shock you received at that time came from Huo Yuhao. However, it's also possible that he did so unconsciously. His second martial soul was still hidden at the time, so I reckon it protected its host of its own accord when it felt the attack from your Evil Phoenix Fire."

With excitement written all over her face, Ma Xiaotao said, "That's great! This is really great! Teacher, the demonic fire inside of me is driving me crazy. Xu Sanshi's Mysterious Martial Turtle is after all only water-attribute and not an ice-attribute technique, so the effects are naturally worsening. With Huo Yuhao's Ultimate ice-attribute, won't I be able to break free from my current predicament? If that's the case, I can represent the academy and attend the Continental Advanced Academy Soul Dueling Tournament, right?"

Yan Shaozhe nodded with a faint smile and said, "It just so happens that you're not yet over twenty years old. If you can stabilise your martial soul, you'll definitely be the winner in this year's academy competition. I have no doubt about it."

"That's great! I can finally participate! I must look for Huo Yuhao now and make him suppress the demonic fire inside my body." As she spoke, Ma Xiaotao turned around and ran outside.

Yan Shaozhe laughed and said, "You rascal, slow down. Huo Yuhao ought to have gone to Shrek City to attend the Treasure Appreciation Auction today."

"I know." Before her voice could be heard, Ma Xiaotao's silhouette had already disappeared into the night sky.

Yan Shaozhe shook his head as he felt a little helpless. "It really is impossible to change your impetuous temperament. Who's going to be daring enough to court her in the future?! There are so many

outstanding disciples in the inner courtyard and yet not a single one dares to woo her. Other than Le Xuan, Xiaotao is the most gifted student amongst the female students. I hope that Yuhao's Ultimate martial soul can gradually quell the demonic fire inside her body and allow her to become a true fire phoenix like her ancestors."

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Huo Yuhao and Wang Dong left Shrek City feeling rather pleased. Even though they didn't know what soul skill Wang Dong would get from the golden right arm bone, they could clearly see that this was an impressively powerful soul bone from its price!

It had cost them a whopping 9.5 million gold soul coins. Huo Yuhao had been somewhat nervous when he'd paid for it as he hadn't expected his transaction with the Treasure Gathering Pavilion would be this easy. The favor he owed them this time was too great. Even Wang Dong owed the academy a large favor now.

Huo Yuhao always made sure to clearly remember the favors and insults he received. He'd never forgotten for a second the debt he owed Shrek Academy.

"Fuse with that Whale Rubber tonight when you get back. I'll protect you when I get the soul bone tomorrow. With this soul bone, I'm now confident that I compete with Dai Huabin on even footing even if I were to face him alone." Wang Dong waved his fist as he spoke. Huo Yuhao couldn't help but smile when he saw Wang Dong in such high spirits.

Huo Yuhao, Wang Dong, and Xiao Xiao were all currently growing at an astonishing speed. Once Wang Dong fused with his soul bone, their collective strength would take another huge step forward. At that time, they would really deserve the title of being the strongest group in Year 2.

With regards to Dai Huabin, Huo Yuhao had already gradually buried his hatred towards the other party. Dai Huabin had been defeated twice and had been made to kowtow, acknowledging his defeat. That had gone a long way to liberating the stifling feeling he had in his heart.

At that moment, the Skydream Iceworm's voice rang out within Huo Yuhao's mind, warning him of danger. "Yuhao, there's a murderous aura directed towards you."

Even though Huo Yuhao was still young, he'd accumulated a considerable amount of combat experience. Hence, he didn't react in an obvious manner after he heard the Skydream Iceworm's warning. It was at times like these that he had to remain calm.

He didn't change his walking speed and even retained the smile he had on his face. The only difference was that he had already quietly spread his Spiritual Detection Sharing to Wang Dong.

Wang Dong was slightly startled at first but immediately understood something was amiss due to the tacit understanding he had with Huo Yuhao. He stopped talking for a moment and glanced at Huo Yuhao.

Huo Yuhao quickly released his Spiritual Detection to its maximum range. Sure enough, he felt a hidden killing intent not far away from him. However, the range of his Spiritual Detection wasn't great enough and thus he wasn't able to accurately determine who his opponents were.

Huo Yuhao took the initiative and pulled Wang Dong's hand back. He tightly clasped Wang Dong's hand which was softer and more tender than that of a female's. When he did so, the Haodong Power immediately connected in their bodies.

Huo Yuhao's expression didn't change, but he spoke under his breath, "There are people in front who are waiting to ambush us. We are further from the academy than we are Shrek City, so when I count to three, we're going to turn around and run back towards Shrek City as fast as we can. Understand?"

Wang Dong spoke in a low tone, "Do you have any idea who they might be??"

"I don't know, but they're emitting a murderous aura. Let's hide in Shrek City first and discuss it later. Get ready."

The killing intent grew increasingly dense as they walked forward. Huo Yuhao carefully sent his Spiritual Detection towards the root of the killing intent and immediately increased the range of his detection. Two hundred meters away from them, a group of six people were quietly lying in wait. From the thick soul power on their bodies, Huo Yuhao could tell that they were opponents that the two of them could not go up against.

"One!" Huo Yuhao spoke in a low tone, but he didn't slow down. At this moment, he definitely couldn't let the enemy discover the changes in their movements.

"Two..."

"Three! Run!"

Huo Yuhao let out a low roar and abruptly carried Wang Dong as he ran in the opposite direction. At the same time, he quickly placed a metal plate on his back. A ball of dazzling white light lit up and Huo Yuhao and Wang Dong were immediately propelled forwards. They were just like a white shooting star as they made a beeline for the northern gate of Shrek City.

It was evident that the six people who had been fully prepared to ambush the duo had never expected the two of them to suddenly take a detour. Seeing their prey getting away, the six were taken aback. It was in this short time span that Huo Yuhao and Wang Dong dashed far into the distance with all their might. A gorgeous mixture of blue and gold from the Radiant Butterfly Goddess' wings burst forth in the sky. In that moment, the scene had already changed to one in which Huo Yuhao was hugging Wang Dong's legs.

Chapter 58.2: The Boundary Between Life and Death

However, the thruster he'd equipped was only a Class 1 soul tool. It instantly overheated when it was activated with their combined Haodong Power. Despite the thruster reaching its maximum possible speed, they were stuck in an embarrassing situation where it would explode after continued use. Huo Yuhao had no choice but to stop. Wang Dong, on the other hand, took the opportunity to unfurl his wings and fly into the air with the support of Huo Yuhao's soul power.

Their six assailants reacted, then broke cover. Soul rings lit up on all six of their bodies, and five of the six had five soul rings on them, while the sixth was actually a six-ringed Soul Emperor. Three of them instantly rose into the air, releasing their respective flying techniques, and all six of them rapidly chased after Wang Dong and Huo Yuhao.

The disparity in strength between the two parties was simply too great. Though the two of them had taken a sudden head start by taking advantage of their unawareness, the distance between the two parties rapidly closed as their assailants sped up.

Their Haodong Power was extremely powerful, but it could only allow their fused strength to reach the three-ringed level of strength at most. They simply had no chance of winning against their assailants in a direct confrontation.

Their three enemies that had taken flight were rapidly approaching, and all three of them were five-ringed Soul Kings. However, Wang Dong had already flown fifty or so meters into the air, so it wouldn't be easy for their enemies to attack them at this distance. Furthermore, Wang Dong's current speed wasn't much slower than that of the people who were chasing them on the ground.

They were currently several thousand meters from Shrek Academy's northern gate.

Huo Yuhao raised his hand, causing a ball of red light to soar several hundred of meters into the sky before exploding and turning into countless reddish-gold dots that spread through the sky.

The six-ringed Soul Emperor immediately had a change in expression. They were all dressed in black, and their faces were all covered. He couldn't help but let out a low roar after seeing this reddish-golden light. "Didn't he say they were just core disciples? This is clearly Shrek Academy's inner courtyard's distress signal. Quick, hurry up and kill them. We're leaving immediately!" His last roar was amplified by his soul power.

Though this was the outskirts of Shrek City, Shrek City's foundation was Shrek Academy!

Just who were in Shrek Academy? As long as a single one of those peak existences came out, they could easily crush them all to death. They simply had no time to waste here.

One of the three midair assailants immediately activated a powerful soul skill after hearing his roar.

Of his five soul rings, one was white, two were yellow, and two were purple. He'd activated his fourth soul ring, which was a thousand year purple soul ring.

A dense purple light shone from his wings, and he suddenly flapped them and sped up, charging towards Huo Yuhao and Wang Dong like a meteor.

He was confident in his ability to kill the two of them in one strike as long as he was able to catch up to them.

However, he was simply too overconfident. Huo Yuhao and Wang Dong were young, but they were still core disciples of Shrek Academy! Furthermore, the former was even a rarely-seen student who'd caused a meeting in Sea God's Pavilion.

The enemy was rapidly approaching them, but there was only a single person. In a situation like this, the two of them completely relied on their instincts to work together. Wang Dong continued flying forward at full speed, while Huo Yuhao continued to climb up his legs to his body. He used his left hand to hug Wang Dong tightly, while pointing his right towards their assailants.

They were simply in too great of a rush, and Huo Yuhao could only equip a miniature Stationary Soul Crossbow in time.

After he raised his right hand, the three tubes on its surface immediately came out. He poured his soul power into them, causing three bolts of lightning to shoot out.

These three crossbow bolts were pitch-black, and they wouldn't reflect light in this darkness. Furthermore, Fan Yu had specially taught him how to install a silencer during their creation. Because of that, they didn't make any noise as they flew through the dark night.

This was another advantage of a stationary soul tool. An ordinary soul tool would directly emit the light of soul power, which would practically be a lamppost in the dark night. Only a stationary soul tool could release a completely traceless attack.

However, it was evident that nobody else would be able to aim a stationary soul tool in a situation like this. Only Huo Yuhao, by relying on his Spiritual Detection, could do this.

Wang Dong's midair figure paused slightly; he'd completed the transfer of soul power between him and Huo Yuhao.

A purplish-gold light shot out from his eyes; for the sake of survival, he'd held nothing back in this attack. After releasing his attack, he immediately transferred his soul power back to Wang Dong, who continued speeding up.

Their assailant had clearly never predicted that the two of them would actually pause to release an attack at him. He'd reached the Soul King rank, but he wasn't a pinnacle Soul King like those that Shrek Academy produced. His strongest soul ring was merely a thousand year one, and he didn't have any outstanding points in the field of spiritual power.

When Huo Yuhao had been a one-ringed Soul Master, his combined Spiritual Shock with Wang Dong had even affected Ma Xiaotao for a brief period of time. However, their current strength had experienced a qualitative leap.

The accelerating Soul King felt his head collide with a rigid wall, and he immediately let out a muffled groan. He started bleeding from his nose and mouth, resulting in him being unable to control his flying body. The soul skill that had allowed him to accelerate was also interrupted.

At this exact instant, three pitch-black terrors arrived in front of him soundlessly. With a 'peng', they exploded simultaneously. Immediately, a wave of black mist covered him, blocking his entire line of sight.

Huo Yuhao knew that even if he were to strike a Soul King head-on, he would be unable to cause real damage with his Class 1 soul tool. Because of that, he had chosen to interfere with him.

The Soul King paused for a moment, causing the distance between the two parties to increase somewhat. Furthermore, Huo Yuhao had instructed Wang Dong to not only fly forwards, but upwards in order to increase the distance between them and the three experts on the ground. After all, there was a Soul Emperor commanding them down there.

However, their airborne assailants were still five-ringed Soul Kings! Even if their combination of soul rings was subpar, they were still at the Soul King rank. The two Soul Kings who had initially been left behind quickly caught up to the stunned Soul King, and the three of them accelerated together, decreasing the current distance between them and the duo to fifty meters.

“Wang Dong, fly straight up!” Huo Yuhao shouted. At the same time, his two soul rings transformed into a single one, and the enormous crystalline and green tattoo on his back slowly emerged with an incomparably tyrannical aura.

Wang Dong, who had the help of Huo Yuhao’s Spiritual Detection, could naturally sense the speed that their pursuers were moving at. He was already somewhat despairing.

After all, there was simply too large a gap between the two parties. They had one person with two soul rings, and another one with three. Even if they were even more talented than they already were, there was no chance they could go against three five-ringed experts. Moreover, they would immediately face even more enemies once they fell to the ground. The academy would send some men out after receiving his distress signal, but there was no way they could arrive in time at such short notice. At this moment, they were still two thousand meters from Shrek City.

It was precisely because he was completely blank, and because he trusted Huo Yuhao, that he unhesitatingly followed the latter’s words. He suddenly flapped his wings downwards, then shot straight into the air. For the sake of rising even higher, he aimed the Light of the Butterfly Goddess downwards in order to produce a thrusting force. At this exact moment, the cooldown of Huo Yuhao’s thruster had ended, and he instantly fired it downwards. The two of them moved simultaneously, causing their speed to instantaneously reach the level of their assailants. They flew straight up, resulting in them rising a hundred meters into the air in the blink of an eye.

At this moment, they had already risen more than three hundred meters into the air. From their current position, they could see a patch of light when they looked towards Shrek City.

However, Wang Dong was somewhat exhausted after breaking through the three hundred meter barrier. Huo Yuhao’s thruster had also overheated again, causing their speed to decrease dramatically.

“Unfurl your wings horizontally.” Huo Yuhao commanded Wang Dong.

Wang Dong was stunned. Won’t spreading my wings horizontally decrease my speed even further? I’ll only be able to float in the air!

The absolute confidence that the two of them had in each other finally showed its use at this moment. Though Wang Dong had some doubt in his heart, he still trusted Huo Yuhao’s words unconditionally. He unfurled his wings, causing the speed of his ascent to drop drastically. At this exact moment, the three Soul Kings below them were approaching quickly.

“Five, four, three, two, one...” Huo Yuhao inwardly counted to himself, and Wang Dong suddenly discovered that their fused Haodong Power was pouring towards the former at an incredible rate.

Nothing seemed strange on the surface, but Wang Dong could tell that the current Huo Yuhao was like a filled balloon that was compressing unceasingly.

What’s he doing?

Their three enemies were now only twenty meters away from them, and their soul rings had lit up.

Fifteen meters. Their soul skills were already locked and loaded, but the frequency and ways they attacked were all encapsulated within Huo Yuhao’s Spiritual Detection.

Just as the three Soul Kings were about to release their attacks, they suddenly felt something strange. The targets in front of them had suddenly lit up.

A jade-green light suddenly appeared within the pitch-black sky. This light took the form of a single line which instantly spread outwards, outlining the figure of a person, including his spine, ribs, and sternum, as well as all the bones within his torso.

The emerald jade-green light was enchanting, but this alluring sensation only lasted for an instant. Right after that, an eye-piercing jade-green light spread outwards, trapping them within it.

Chapter 58.3: The Boundary Between Life and Death

An extreme coldness.

The three Soul Kings instantly felt the terrifying effects of the Ultimate Ice element. For a moment, they felt as though the blood in their veins had frozen. They lost complete control over their bodies and were suspended midair in their previous positions as they tried to make their move.

However, they were suspended three hundred meters above the ground. And once airborne, if you don't go up, you fall down. Therefore, the three Soul Kings soon began to fall from the sky like meteors after remaining suspended for a bit.

The green light had only flickered through the sky for a moment, but as soon as it disappeared the Soul Kings began to fall. At the same time, Huo Yuhao and Wang Dong's expressions turned pale.

Even though the green light released from Huo Yuhao's body hadn't targeted Wang Dong, just being near it had caused Wang Dong to be afflicted with a terrifying feeling of coldness. He still felt his wings go somewhat numb despite not being in direct contact with it. Luckily, his wings were already wide open when he was hit by the terrifying coldness. As such, they kept flying straight.

On the other hand, Huo Yuhao's face had turned pale due to his excessive consumption of soul power. At the same time, his body had to withstand the burden of all that soul power. However, he couldn't relax yet. He knew that, even though it was strong, that attack just now was nowhere near enough to deal with someone as strong as a Soul King. Furthermore, a fall from their height wasn't enough to kill them either.

The thruster in his right hand turned jade green in color. Afterwards, it began to emit a dazzling red light as he poured his remaining soul power into it. When he did so, it released a streak of white flames and they were immediately propelled towards Shrek City from their current altitude of three hundred meters.

Huo Yuhao had begun to plan how to run away as soon as the Skydream Iceworm had told him about the enemies lying in ambush. Luckily he'd been warned ahead of time, thus he'd had a lot of time to think.

They would normally die for sure against people as powerful as their opponents. As such, fighting them head-on hadn't been an option. Thus, they could only rely on something out of the ordinary. n--

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Huo Yuhao's plan had started the moment they'd turned around to run away. He'd since done everything in his power to achieve their current state.

Now that they were flying at an altitude of three hundred meters, even a Soul Emperor —so long as they couldn't fly—wouldn't be able to easily reach them with an attack from the ground.

It wasn't that a high-ranked soul master couldn't fly, but one still needed to be at least a Soul Sage to do so. Only then would one be able to use their powerful soul power to fly for a short amount of time. As such, a Soul Emperor still fell short in this field.

Because of this, they would only be relatively safe at a high altitude. However, they still needed to be lucky; if that Soul Emperor also had a soul skill that enabled him to fly, they wouldn't stand a chance. However, at this critical moment, the goddess of luck had favored them.

Just as Huo Yuhao had predicted, the three Soul Kings that fell from the sky were only able to recover from their frozen state once they'd descended over a hundred meters. They opened their wings with great difficulty and slowed their fall. Even though they were flustered, they'd still been able to regain their composure before they hit the ground. However, they were now unable to reach their two targets that were still soaring through the sky.

The Soul Emperor, who was in hot pursuit, suddenly increased his speed and headed towards the place where Huo Yuhao and Wang Dong would land. At this point, he knew that his chances of success were already quite low; his mission would end in failure if he couldn't catch and kill them before they entered Shrek City. However, he still wanted to make one final attempt. If he wasn't able to succeed after this, he would have to flee as fast as possible.

The speed that a Soul Emperor could achieve wasn't something that Huo Yuhao and Wang Dong could even imagine with their shallow cultivations. Furthermore, the sixth soul ring of this Soul Emperor was an awe-inspiring ten thousand year black soul ring.

The Soul Emperor ran as fast as he could until he reached the Shrek City's northern gate. Huo Yuhao and Wang Dong were still around two hundred meters from the city walls when he reached the gate. As soon as he reached the gate, he put the tip of his foot into the city wall and began to climb it at an astonishing speed. It only took him an instant to reach the top.

Huo Yuhao and Wang Dong had consumed most of their soul power by this point. Furthermore, Wang Dong's wings were still under the effect of the green light that Huo Yuhao had released a while ago, and Wang Dong definitely wasn't a Soul King! Most of his qi and blood had been frozen, thus he couldn't release any more power to fly upwards. Thus, they could only helplessly watch as the Soul Emperor standing atop the city walls soared into the sky and charged directly towards them.

The Soul Emperor suddenly lifted his right hand in midair; he was pointing a broadsword enshrouded in pitch-black flames at them. The pitch-black flames seemed to originate from his ten thousand year soul ring. There was no doubt that it would be impossible for Huo Yuhao and Wang Dong to defend against this kind of attack.

At this time, three forms were running at an incredible speed atop the city's walls. The one in front was Bei Bei; his body was already covered with dragon scales, and his Blue Lightning Tyrant Dragon martial soul was on full display. Following him were Xu Sanshi and Jiang Nannan.

The number of soul rings on Bei Bei and Xu Sanshi's bodies wasn't three, but four. Two of their soul rings were yellow, while the other two were purple. This clearly meant that they had both already become Soul Ancestors.

However, even when the pair saw them, Wang Dong felt that they were so close, and yet so far. They wouldn't make it in time...

"Wang Dong!"

Huo Yuhao suddenly shouted. Afterwards, he hugged Wang Dong tightly in his arms. His Spiritual Detection Sharing had also suddenly disappeared. Wang Dong was immediately startled awake, as the Haodong Power in their bodies had begun seething with excitement.

The area ten meters around them then began to light up, as it had been permeated with a very peculiar radiance from their bodies.

This radiance was extremely strange. It varied between blue, purple, and gold in color. Moreover, many strange and different fluctuations of soul power were blending inside of the intense light.

A huge form appeared behind Wang Dong's back: It was a complete and absolutely magnificent Radiant Butterfly Goddess.

On the other hand, the image of a large, vertically-pupiled eye appeared behind Huo Yuhao's body. The eye was pale gold, but its pupil emitted a faint purple radiance.

Those two huge forms then proceeded to overlap in midair. As soon as they did, they began to merge together.

The manifestation of Huo Yuhao's Spirit Eyes was becoming more and more profound. It had become a purplish-blue color, while the golden color it had previously had had completely disappeared.

On the other hand, Wang Dong's Radiant Butterfly Goddess manifestation began to burn with goldish-blue flames as it approached Huo Yuhao's Spirit Eye.

As it burned, the Radiant Butterfly Goddess opened her beautiful wings and slowly wrapped them around manifestation of the Spirit Eyes. Huo Yuhao and Wang Dong were also held together and protected in its embrace.

The huge Spirit Eye seemed extremely mysterious; if you were to look into it, it would almost seem as if there were an endless world inside. As soon as the Soul Emperor got within thirty meters of them, blue, purple, and golden bolts of lightning shot toward him.

These streaks of light seemed almost illusory; the places that the light passed through were illuminated by a radiance that seemed to have come from ancient times. It left a dim and twisted, yet dazzling luster behind.

Both the Soul Emperor and Soul Kings were shocked when they saw this. Even the rapidly approaching Bei Bei, Xu Sanshi, and Jiang Nannan were shocked.

The scene in front of them was just too magnificent! The illusory radiance had left a golden road in the sky.

The skill displayed just now had been Huo Yuhao and Wang Dong's mighty martial soul fusion, and was also their final trump card.

The Golden Road Amidst Withering Resplendence!

The last time they'd displayed this skill, Huo Yuhao had had one ring, while Wang Dong had had two. But now, they both had two and three rings respectively. Both their cultivation and the strength of their bodies were much stronger than last time. When they'd displayed their martial soul fusion skill, they'd thought that the soul power inside of their bodies was depleted. However, they still managed to squeeze out some latent energy and finally execute their strongest move.

The pitch-black flames on the Soul Emperor's warblade began to burn even more fervently now. He wasn't blind, and he could easily tell their cultivation from their soul rings. Even if the scene before his eyes was magnificent, in his mind, one hit from his sword would be enough to put an end to this light, Huo Yuhao, and Wang Dong.

However, he quickly realized his mistake. As soon as his black sword came into contact with the dazzling light, the Soul Emperor's mind went blank.

The feeling he got was marvelous; he didn't feel any pain. In fact, he felt like someone dirty stepping into the bathroom and then being thrown into a pool after they'd been stripped naked.

It seemed like everything in his possession had disappeared. His powerful soul rings, sword, and soul skills were all gone. The only thing left was his body, which now resembled a golden statue. However, it immediately fell from the sky towards the city walls.

Nevertheless, the Soul Emperor could still move. However, he felt as if his surroundings were suddenly covered in a golden hue. His soul power was normal, but he felt a burning sensation all over his body, as if he were about to melt. Moreover, he'd unexpectedly lost contact with his martial soul.

Actually, he should consider himself lucky, as he was the first enemy that had withstood the power of an all-out Golden Road.

The power of the Golden Road wasn't enough to kill a Soul Emperor. However, its terrifying restrictive ability had still been able to momentarily stop him. In fact, this restrictive ability was actually the deprivation of his martial soul.

However, Huo Yuhao and Wang Dong's remaining strength had also been completely consumed when they launched this final attack. Their soul power wasn't even enough to maintain their soul rings. Having lost the support of the Radiant Butterfly Goddess, they also fell from the sky towards the walls of the city.

However, a fiery red figure suddenly dashed towards them from a very distant place. Its speed was so fast that it left dozens of afterimages in the sky. It arrived and seized the two of them before Huo Yuhao and Wang Dong could reach the ground, and before the Soul Kings could catch up to them. As soon as it did, it threw the two of them towards Bei Bei, Xu Sanshi, and Jiang Nannan, who'd just jumped down from the city walls.

"I really want to see who's so bold as to attack the students of my Shrek Academy!" A fierce voice suddenly echoed outwards from the red figure. Ma Xiaotao was wreathed in flames and resembled a

fire goddess as two phoenix wings stretched behind her back. She looked on with disdain towards the crowd of enemies before her.

Chapter 59.1: The Berserk Flamedevil Ma Xiaotao!

Right, Ma Xiaotao had arrived. She'd left the academy from Shrek City's northern gate the moment she saw Huo Yuhao release the inner courtyard disciple distress signal. With her level of speed, she was able to make it just in time to save Huo Yuhao and Wang Dong.

Though there were a total of six enemies, Ma Xiaotao wasn't afraid in the least. Despite being a girl, she gave off the air of a general as she stood there.

Bei Bei caught Huo Yuhao while the speedier Jiang Nannan caught Wang Dong. The latter was actually a four-ringed Soul Ancestor making her cultivation no less than Bei Bei's and Xu Sanshi's. This surprised Huo Yuhao somewhat. No wonder she was a core disciple of the outer courtyard.

"Junior disciple, are you okay?" Bei Bei asked in a low voice.

This was the first time Huo Yuhao saw a fierce killing intent in his senior brother's eyes; there was a true fire in his eyes. If Ma Xiaotao hadn't made it in time when they'd fallen from the sky earlier, they would've suffered severe injuries, if not died.

"We're fine senior brother. We just overexerted ourselves a little." Huo Yuhao whispered.

Bei Bei nodded and gently placed him on the ground. Over on the other side, Jiang Nannan was also putting Wang Dong down.

Their six opponents were all gathered together. The golden light on the Soul Emperor who'd been struck by the Golden Road had finally disappeared by now but his clothes were burnt apart and his facial expression was extremely unsightly.

Within the blink of an eye, he was forced to waste over thirty percent of his soul power in order to take on the Golden Road. He was a Soul Emperor! He'd actually been put into such an embarrassing position by the teamwork of a Soul Grandmaster and a Soul Elder. How could he not be angry?

Hidden within his anger, however, was fear. A deep sense of fear.

Sure enough, they're worthy of being called core disciples of Shrek Academy! A Soul Elder and a Soul Grandmaster were actually able to escape with their lives from an encirclement consisting of a Soul Emperor and five Soul Kings. If this were to be leaked out publically, who'd believe it? That golden light is probably a mysterious fusion skill.

Although he was inwardly furious, the Soul Emperor already had thoughts of retreating. Ma Xiaotao and the other students behind her wouldn't be able to take them on, but at the end of the day they were still students of Shrek Academy. It wouldn't be possible to defeat all of them within a short period of time. On top of that, Shrek Academy was so close to them and in the event one of their experts came...

With that, the commander made a prompt decision. He suddenly waved his right hand, turned around and ran off with his subordinates.

“You want to run? If I let even one of you escape, this momma can’t be called the Berserk Flamedevil Ma Xiaotao!” The moment she noticed that they were about to flee, Ma Xiaotao immediately flew into a rage. In the past hundred years, nobody had been presumptuous enough to kill a disciple of Shrek Academy while being this close to Shrek City. As a disciple of the academy’s inner courtyard, her sense of pride towards the academy was extremely intense. Moreover, she had wanted to find Huo Yuhao to help her do something in the first place, so it was natural that she would spare nothing to help her underclassmen.

Ma Xiaotao shouted, “Xu Sanshi, protect these two students! Bei Bei and Jiang Nannan, you two flank me on the right! If we let even a single one escape, I’ll hold you personally accountable!”

With that, the six soul rings around Ma Xiaotao’s body shone with a bright light. Of these, her second and third soul rings lit up simultaneously. An intense golden-red flame exploded out from her body like a geyser as she flapped the wings behind her fiercely, which then propelled her body towards the six like a fiery meteor.

She was clearly trying to take on six enemies by herself!

Was this fierce? Yes, this was definitely fierce! However, this was also a symbol of strength.

They were both Soul Emperor-ranked experts, but Ma Xiaotao’s six soul rings weren’t ordinary! Two yellow rings, two purple rings, and two black rings, this was the optimum combination for a soul master. On the other hand, her opponent had three yellow rings, two purple rings, and one black ring. This was a relatively decent combination among normal soul masters but he was still completely outclassed by the inner courtyard disciple Ma Xiaotao.

Her six opponents were very quick but Ma Xiaotao was still quicker than them after using her second soul skill, Phoenix Baptism, and her third skill, Soaring Phoenix. Furthermore, she’d activated another soul skill the instant she’d flown out to intercept her opponents. Although it was more accurate to say that they were two soul skills but not skills that came from a soul ring.

Ma Xiaotao’s legs lit up and reddish-golden patterns started to revolve around them. Following which, reddish-golden flames shot out from her legs.

Due to her rapid acceleration, a series of explosions and whistles erupted behind her as she moved.

Although Huo Yuhao and Wang Dong were somewhat tired, they were still extremely clear-headed and couldn’t help but widen their eyes at this scene.

They naturally knew that disciples of the inner courtyard were strong, but now they finally understood just how strong they were from this battle. She’d actually used four soul skills in a row to chase after an opponent. The speed she’d reached wasn’t something they even dared to think about. Even seven or eight-ringed experts wouldn’t be able to compare with her current speed. Furthermore, the last two skills she’d unleashed had come from her soul bones. In other words, she had fused her legs with soul bones. To be precise, an identical set of soul bones.

The whistling and rumbling Ma Xiaotao shot viciously into her enemies like an artillery shell. Only two or three seconds had passed since she’d activated her Phoenix Baptism and Soaring Phoenix to speed up

and her soul bone's skills to explosively accelerate. She instantly into their formation and didn't leave them any time to react, causing them to be caught completely off guard.

Ma Xiaotao's target was the enormous warblade-wielding Soul Emperor and she shot straight towards him.

The Soul Emperor's perception naturally exceeded that of the Soul Kings beside him. But at that moment he felt something off and turned around to find that Ma Xiaotao was already in front of him.

When facing a life-and-death crisis, the first reaction of an overwhelmingly large majority of people would be self-preservation and this Soul Emperor wasn't an exception to that rule. He tried his best to lean to the side while he charged forward in order to dodge Ma Xiaotao's attack.

The spectacular aura coming from her attack simply wasn't something he could take head-on.

However, it no longer mattered if he dodged or not since Ma Xiaotao had already forcefully entered the nucleus of their formation.

"Hong"

Huo Yuhao and Wang Dong only saw Ma Xiaotao charge into the enemy formation and release a terrifying explosion. Her golden-reddish flames formed an enormous pillar of flame that was over ten meters high and released a sonorous phoenix cry. The figure of a fiery phoenix circled around that enormous pillar of flame.

Four figures simultaneously flew out in four different directions. The instant the pillar of flame vanished, only these four of their six opponents remained.

Huo Yuhao swallowed a mouthful of saliva and mumbled, "Wang Dong, I'm very suspicious as to how we escaped from this senior sister of ours at that time..."

Wang Dong couldn't even reply.

Xu Sanshi, who was responsible for them, smiled bitterly. "That's because senior Xiaotao's been suppressing the demonic fire within her, so she won't use all of her strength in a normal situation. Today, however, she's truly enraged. That's why she's using all of her strength. Senior Xiaotao's a girl, but where'd you think the title of 'Berserk Flamedevil' came from..."

During the short period of time in which their conversation occurred, Ma Xiaotao's figure reappeared. Her four soul skills hadn't been used just to allow her to chase after her opponents but had the added purpose of raising her strength to to its limits. Her previous attack was already comparable to that of a seven-ringed Soul Sage.

As a student of Shrek Academy, she not only possessed enormous strength but also an extremely refined amount of control over her soul skills. There were many different ways of using soul skills that were secrets of Shrek Academy and only students who'd signed confidentiality agreements would be able to learn them.

The four enemies who'd been sent flying including the Soul Emperor all had reddish-golden flames enshrouding their bodies. Their bodies swayed and collapsed to the ground as they had all been similarly affected by her attack.

Ma Xiaotao didn't immediately follow up since her previous attack had drained her soul power by a large amount. She looked towards the sky and then spread her arms and wings wide.

She took a deep breath as a large number of faint red dots of light immediately began to gather towards her at a noticeable rate. She was actually recovering her soul power during battle.

At this moment, Bei Bei and Jiang Nannan had just caught up to her. The two of them simultaneously made a move, taking on an enemy Soul King each.

The higher one's cultivation was, the faster one's rate of recovery would be. The enemy Soul Emperor was already filled with astonishment, was she even human? A single Soul Emperor had instantly obtained an overwhelming advantage against six opponents. He no longer dared to even try to resist the terrifyingly hot flames that surrounded her body and soul power.

Without even daring to waste any more time, he turned around and fled. At this moment, he no longer cared about his teammates. He knew that Shrek Academy students were very powerful but had never expected them to be this strong. All of them hadn't even been able to face a single Soul Emperor.

Ma Xiaotao's eyes had by now turned a fiery red. A trace of disdain appeared at the corners of her mouth as she saw the fleeing Soul Emperor. She flapped her wings once more, causing her body to move horizontally. Her target wasn't the Soul Emperor but the other living Soul King who Bei Bei and Jiang Nannan hadn't taken on.

Chapter 59.2: The Berserk Flamedevil Ma Xiaotao!

The Soul King was astonished and spared no cost to activate a soul skill in order to block Ma Xiaotao. However, her fiery wings suddenly vanished and were replaced by a red light that severed the sky before vanishing without a trace. Suddenly both the Soul King's body and his soul skill froze in midair.

Ma Xiaotao didn't even spare him a glance. Her slender body rose into the air while a sonorous phoenix cry rang out. A countless number of magnificent feathers had appeared on her body before forming a beam of red light with an incomparably beautiful tail that shot towards the Soul Emperor as it left behind dots of reddish-golden starlight in the sky.

At that moment, her last black soul ring finally lit up with a dazzling light,

The golden-reddish light devoured everything and the Soul Emperor and his falling comrades were no exception. He was unable to put up a fight against Ma Xiaotao despite them both being Soul Emperors.

Over on the other side, Bei Bei and Jiang Nannan hadn't disappointed her.

When a Soul Ancestor fought against a Soul King, the former would normally be suppressed by the latter. However, the two of them were both core disciples of Shrek Academy. It would be hard to determine the victor even if the two parties were at their peak conditions, let alone when the two Soul Kings had already been injured by Ma Xiaotao's attack. When Bei Bei and Jiang Nannan rushed over, the Soul Kings hadn't even recovered their strength yet.

Bei Bei was an explosive assault-type soul master while Jiang Nannan was an explosive agility-type soul master. The results of their respective matches were obvious.

By the time Ma Xiaotao finished her match, one of the two Soul Kings had been electrocuted till he was a block of coal while the other had been sent flying ten meters into the air by Jiang Nannan's attack before being stomped on in midair. nOvE.Lb.1n

Only a minute had passed since Ma Xiaotao had started her onslaught when it ended; all six of their enemies had fallen in this short period of time.

When she realized that all of them had been killed, Ma Xiaotao scratched her head somewhat embarrassedly. "I forgot to leave someone alive..."

Bei Bei and Jiang Nannan could only stare at her helplessly. Knowing how fierce she was, Bei Bei and Jiang Nannan naturally had to go all-out the moment she said that she 'wouldn't let a single one escape'. Their opponents were Soul Kings, so they naturally had to be vicious.

"Whatever. I'll let the academy's guardian team examine their corpses once we're back. I'm sure they'll be able to find a few hints." Ma Xiaotao waved her hand and brushed off her mistake.

Huo Yuhao and Wang Dong's eyes were filled with nothing but admiration towards Ma Xiaotao; Ma Xiaotao's earlier performance could only be described using the phrase 'as swift as wind, as aggressive as fire'.

Even though they were both soul masters, Ma Xiaotao's six soul rings seemed to have come alive. They'd flickered one after another, and whenever she'd alternated between them, she'd always used the soul skill most suitable to the situation. Huo Yuhao and the rest could barely use their soul skills this quickly with a single soul ring, yet she'd seemed entirely uninhibited by the number of soul rings she had!

This was the main reason that her opponent had had no chance against her, despite them both being Soul Emperors.

Of course, Ma Xiaotao was also an extraordinarily talented soul master who possessed the Evil Phoenix. Her powerful martial soul and soul bones already made her much stronger than an ordinary six-ringed Soul Emperor.

By this point, seven or eight prominent figures had appeared atop Shrek City's city walls, and a large number of soldiers stood behind them respectfully.

Elder Lin and Yan Shaozhe were included in this group of seven or eight people.

The distress signal of an inner courtyard disciple was an extremely important matter to Shrek Academy. In truth, they'd already arrived earlier on; with their cultivation levels, it was natural that they'd arrive earlier than Ma Xiaotao.

However, as teachers, they hadn't instantly made a move, as they wanted to see what their students were capable of.

And their students hadn't disappointed them. The word 'remarkable' could be used to describe everything that had happened, regardless of whether it was Huo Yuhao and Wang Dong's escape, or if it was Ma Xiaotao, Bei Bei, Jiang Nannan, and Xu Sanshi's timely rescue. The intruders had all fallen, with their only mistake being that they hadn't left anyone alive.

Yan Shaozhe was somewhat speechless. “This Xiaotao girl is too explosive. She becomes an entirely different person the moment she enters combat.”

Elder Lin smiled slightly. “Though that’s mainly dictated by her temperament, it’s also because of her martial soul. However, this child’s cultivation has increased by quite a large amount. In fact, I reckon that she’ll be able to break through the seven-ringed stage within three years.”

Yan Shaozhe chuckled. “Elder Lin. I didn’t have any assurance of my plan back then. However, it seems that I can now give a definite answer to your question because of Huo Yuhao’s appearance. Haven’t you sensed that the most astonishing part of this entire event was their escapade?”

They naturally hadn’t seen everything that had occurred. However, the person who’d been closest to the battle had been Elder Lin. The instant she’d appeared atop the city walls after discovering the distress signal had been the same instant that Huo Yuhao had unleashed the jade-green light that had caused the three Soul Kings to lose their ability to move.

Even though Yan Shaozhe had been somewhat late, he didn’t arrive from the city. Because of this, his line of sight hadn’t been obstructed, which had allowed him to vaguely witness that scene. The level of speed that these consummate-level experts had couldn’t be compared to that of ordinary soul masters. Their escape however, combined with the stunning Golden Road that they’d fired off, had given these two members of the academy’s upper echelon—and the experts beside them—a deep impression.

Ma Xiaotao’s performance had admittedly been outstanding, but she was already a disciple of the inner courtyard. Thus, there simply hadn’t been any suspense in her victory over her six-ringed opponent. However, it was a different case for Huo Yuhao and Wang Dong. A Soul Grandmaster and a Soul Elder had actually managed to escape from a formation of five Soul Kings and a Soul Emperor. This was enough to illustrate the doubts they had.

If Ma Xiaotao hadn’t made it in time, though they still would’ve been bruised from their fall, the possibility of their death was extremely small. At that time, Bei Bei, Xu Sanshi, and Jiang Nannan had already arrived, at which point temporarily staying alive would’ve posed no problem to them. It could be said that their escape had been entirely successful.

Yan Shaozhe and Elder Lin were both members of the Sea God’s Pavilion, yet they couldn’t find any faults with Huo Yuhao and Wang Dong’s earlier performance.

“Shaozhe, were you able to see what skill Huo Yuhao used when he was being chased in the air?” Elder Lin smiled slightly.

Yan Shaozhe was still somewhat stunned by what he’d seen, thus he shook his head. “I was too far away from them, thus I wasn’t able to see it clearly. Elder Lin, you must’ve seen it. Just what sort of soul skill did he use? It was actually able to cause three Soul Kings to lose their ability to fly.”

Elder Lin smiled. “My heart was still aching after those two fellas took away a precious soul bone from my pavilion, but I now think that it was extremely worth it now that I’ve seen this skill. If I’m not mistaken, he used a domain-type skill, which should’ve come from his soul bone. Perhaps this soul bone of his is related to the awakening of his second martial soul.”

Yan Shaozhe was flabbergasted. “Elder Lin, are you sure that it was a domain-type skill?!”

Elder Lin glanced at him, but didn't reply. She turned around and walked into the city as she unhurriedly said, "Someone had a lot of guts. To think that he'd bully one of our students all the way until they reached the academy... do as you wish."

Yan Shaozhe knew that it was a slip of the tongue. He bowed towards Elder Lin, then stood back up, his eyes filled with killing intent. He turned towards someone beside him and said, "Take all of the corpses back to the academy. Spare no expenses; discover just who dared to attack one of our students in Shrek Academy's territory."

"Yes."

Within the city.

"Thank you, senior sister." Even though Huo Yuhao and Wang Dong had overdrafted their soul power, there wasn't anything wrong with their physical bodies. They respectfully bowed towards Ma Xiaotao, their eyes full of admiration.

Ma Xiaotao waved them off. "You don't need to thank me. These fellas must've been tired of living. To think they'd dare to cause a ruckus in our Shrek Academy... have you offended anyone recently?"

"No!" The moment Huo Yuhao said this, however, he suddenly thought of something, and immediately turned towards Wang Dong.

Wang Dong was also looking at him. Both of them felt a sense of chilliness in their hearts when their gazes met.

There was only a single person that they could have offended recently: Dai Huabin. Dai Huabin had lost to them twice in a row, which had resulted in him having to kowtow to them. He was from the White Tiger Duke's Mansion, and was therefore capable of mobilising several people to serve him. A Soul Emperor and five Soul Kings weren't forces that ordinary powers would possess.

Before Huo Yuhao could even speak, Bei Bei walked up to him. "Two junior brothers, this place isn't safe. Let's head back to the academy before we continue this conversation."

In reality, there was no way they could be in danger anymore. Huo Yuhao's distress signal had directly summoned the top powers of Shrek Academy. After a brief moment, even Fan Yu arrived.

There was no doubt that Huo Yuhao's distress signal had been given to him by Fan Yu, who'd added something special to the signal flare so that he'd also know to immediately rush over the moment Huo Yuhao released it.

Because of this, even though only Huo Yuhao and Wang Dong had originally gone to the auction, their returning party turned was much larger. The corpses left behind were all taken away by Yan Shaozhe's men.

Huo Yuhao and Wang Dong weren't able to sleep well that night. They were only allowed to return to their dorms early in the morning after the academy's unceasing interrogation. Although the academy hadn't given them a definite answer, they clearly had their own conjectures.

Huo Yuhao wasn't worried about how the academy would deal with this matter. He and Wang Dong had truly been too careless this time. They'd never thought that Dai Huabin would use a tactic like this in an area so close to Shrek Academy.

The corpses gave them no leads. They had indeed been sent over by Dai Huabin, but they'd wiped away all traces of their identities before going to ambush Huo Yuhao and Wang Dong. This wasn't done just to avoid anything troublesome for Dai Huabin, but also to prevent any suspicion falling upon the White Tiger Duke's Mansion!

Chapter 59.3: The Berserk Flamedevil Ma Xiaotao!

The fury of Shrek Academy was something that even the White Tiger Duke's Mansion, who controlled over ten thousand men in the Star Luo Empire, couldn't endure.

The academy didn't escalate the situation due to the lack of proof, but they were only suppressing their anger for the time being.

The next morning, Dai Huabin's expression greatly changed when he saw the somewhat dispirited Huo Yuhao and Wang Dong come to class, but he was still a son of the White Tiger Duke. Though he was greatly astonished, he quickly masked any overt changes on his face.

He hadn't received any information as to what had occurred last night and had hoped that the final outcome wouldn't be too messy. As long as his men hadn't been injured, all would be fine. Otherwise, he wouldn't even be able to explain himself to his father!

Cold sweat imperceptibly began to drench the back of Dai Huabin's shirt. A Soul Emperor and five Soul Kings together were not enough to kill the two of them. Remorse began to blossom in the depths of his heart.

"Dai Huabin." Huo Yuhao's eyesight was extremely good, and thus he was able to instantly see Dai Huabin, who had been staring at them with a bewildered look in his eyes. He then pulled Wang Dong along with him and took large strides towards him.

Dai Huabin's face was somewhat pale. At the end of the day, he was only a youth around the age of ten and thus couldn't conceal his emotions very well.

Wang Dong's eyes turned cold as he saw Dai Huabin and was just about to charge straight towards him when Huo Yuhao hurriedly held onto him.

"What do you want?" Dai Huabin asked coldly.

As he tightly held onto Wang Dong so as to not let him fly into a rage, Huo Yuhao spoke in a deep voice. "Didn't you lose that bet we made the other day? Come on, fulfill your promise now."

It was now time for students to go to class, and so there was an endless stream of students walking past their classroom. They were all second year students and were naturally aware of the grudges between Huo Yuhao, Wang Dong, and Dai Huabin. A large number of students had already stopped by the side to watch the proceedings.

Dai Huabin gritted his teeth and clenched his fists tightly, making the veins on his forehead pop out.

Zhu Lu walked out from Class 2 and stood in front of Dai Huabin as she yelled, “Huo Yuhao and Wang Dong, don’t be too excessive!”

Wang Dong replied icily, “We’re being excessive? Go ask him what he did last night. I’m just not sure whether or not he’ll have the guts to reveal what he did.”

Dai Huabin gritted his teeth as he responded, “I don’t know what you’re talking about.”

Wang Dong snorted disdainfully. “I knew you were a scaredy-cat. Regardless of whether or not you admit to what you did. You have to kowtow towards us now since you lost, man up and admit your loss.”

Zhu Lu was about to confront them but she was shoved from behind by the flustered Dai Huabin. He didn’t dare to confirm whether or not his men had been exposed. This matter was simply too important and was even related to the White Tiger Duke’s Mansion. No matter what, he absolutely couldn’t reveal that he was guilty. Otherwise, it would affect the relationship between Shrek Academy and the White Tiger Duke’s Mansion and might even cause hostility between the former and the Star Luo Empire.

He took a deep breath as shoved the rancor and humiliation he felt into the depths of his heart. He abruptly dropped to his knees and kowtowed three times towards Huo Yuhao and Wang Dong while shouting, “I was wrong.” Following which, he stood up and returned to his class.

The rancor in Zhu Lu’s eyes was no less than in Dai Huabin’s. After all, the person who’d been humiliated was her future boyfriend! She pointed her slightly trembling finger towards Huo Yuhao and Wang Dong, “You just wait, just wait...”

Huo Yuhao acted as if he’d heard nothing as then turned back to Class 1 along with Wang Dong. Right now, he wasn’t feeling elated but vigilant. He’d made Dai Huabin kowtow in front of so many students but the latter still hadn’t flown into a rage. An enemy like this was much more terrifying, especially so given Dai Huabin’s relatively astonishing growth. Unfortunately, he didn’t suffer any sort of punishment after the ambush he’d planned.

What Huo Yuhao didn’t know, however, was the fact that Dai Huabin had been put on the academy’s blacklist due to the ambush he’d set up. Though they didn’t have any concrete proof, just who was Shrek Academy have? From the mere scraps they had, they were able to deduce a lot of things. However, they were still afraid of the consequences of their actions; making the Star Luo Empire an enemy for the sake of two students was clearly an unwise decision. Furthermore, when all was said and done, this was something that’d been organised by Dai Huabin alone. Because of this, the extraordinarily talented Dai Huabin was destined to not enter the inner courtyard the instant he failed to kill Huo Yuhao and Wang Dong.

The advancement test had already ended, and every single person who could continue going to class had passed it. Students who hadn’t passed could retake the test three days later but they would be forced to leave the academy if they failed that test too.

The class that Wang Yan and Zhou Yi taught, Class 1, had an astonishing 95% pass rate. The facts had shown that putting the two of them together was extremely effective.

Zhou Yi could manage her students well while Wang Yan had a vast amount of knowledge and a warm teaching style. Combined with the truly outstanding batch of students that came this year, there were only a few people who weren't able to pass the advancement test. Moreover, they still had the chance to retake the exam.

Comparatively, there were far more students from the other classes who had been eliminated.

"Yuhao, why didn't you let me settle my grudges with him?" Wang Dong asked Huo Yuhao furiously.

Huo Yuhao said, "The academy didn't deliver a verdict, so what can we do ourselves? We're all in the academy so there won't be a conclusion to this matter even if we try to settle our grudges with him. Let's just stay quiet and keep a watch on him. It's still more important for us to work hard and increase our strength. When we can reach senior sister Xiaotao's level of strength, we won't need to be afraid of any ambushes anymore."

The battle yesterday had stimulated him greatly, but it clearly wasn't possible for him to increase his cultivation by a large amount within a short period of time. However, soul tools could increase his survivability. Thus, he had already planned to use the next few days to modify his set of soul tools. At the very least, he wanted to make sure that all of them were Class 2 tools. If he and Wang Dong had possessed a Class 2 thruster when they were ambushed, they wouldn't have been left in such a miserable state.

"Wah, I really can't help but think about it!" Wang Dong stared at the classroom door.

Huo Yuhao subconsciously followed his gaze to see a red-clothed Ma Xiaotao standing outside the classroom and waving to him.

Ma Xiaotao's physical state didn't seem right. Her charming face was flushed red and there was even a faint red light shining from her body.

Huo Yuhao questioningly pointed towards himself and Ma Xiaotao nodded before turning around and leaving.

There was still some time before class began so Huo Yuhao hurriedly turned towards Wang Dong, "If I come back late, help me out. I'm going to see why senior sister Xiaotao's looking for me."

"Oh." Wang Dong also felt that something about Ma Xiaotao wasn't quite right. If this was before yesterday, he definitely wouldn't have allowed Huo Yuhao to go alone. However, he wasn't wary towards Ma Xiaotao since she had saved them yesterday.

Huo Yuhao quickly left the class. The moment he walked out of the door, he felt a wave of red light surge towards him. Regardless of how precise his Spiritual Detection was, he wasn't able to dodge it at all. A wave of heat immediately engulfed his entire body.

The source of that heat was Ma Xiaotao's body.

The twenty-or-so-year-old Ma Xiaotao was at the most beautiful period of her life, and she was also extremely beautiful from the start. At this moment, her flushed cheeks made her even more of a radiant beauty.

She let out a sweet moan as she hugged Huo Yuhao,, “Huo Yuhao, I can’t... I can’t hold it anymore. Quickly.”

Her voice was relatively loud and not only did the students who were passing by hear her but even the students from Class 1 did as well. Furthermore, Huo Yuhao was currently in front of the classroom door. As he was hugged by the fiery Ma Xiaotao, it was absolutely impossible for him to struggle free.

A red light flickered and Ma Xiaotao suddenly accelerated and disappeared from the end of the corridor with Huo Yuhao in tow.

Wang Dong immediately felt that something was off. He hastily ran outside, but he could only see the back of Ma Xiaotao’s body by the time he got there.

There were still a few students in the corridor who were looking at each other.

Wang Dong’s expression became pale. He was just about to chase after them, but an arm suddenly stopped him the moment he took a step forward.

“Unhand me!” Wang Dong flew into a rage. However, he was immediately sent into a daze when he turned around. The person who’d grabbed him was Zhou Yi.

“What’s the matter? Why’re you being so impatient?” Zhou Yi spoke in a low voice. Though she liked the two of them, in accordance with her philosophy of teaching, she definitely wouldn’t allow her students to go against her.

Wang Dong said urgently, “Teacher Zhou, Huo Yuhao has been taken away by Ma Xiaotao. Please go rescue him quickly! I feel that there’s something wrong with her. In the event he’s harmed by her...”

Zhou Yi pulled him back to the classroom, “Don’t worry. Nothing will happen. Dean Yan has already notified me of this. Ma Xiaotao’s martial soul is rather special, and Yuhao’s second martial soul can help her cultivation. Furthermore, this will be somewhat useful for him. Go back to your seat, we’re about to start class.”

With that, Zhou Yi shut the door to the classroom.

Wang Dong’s sense of urgency didn’t subside as a result of Zhou Yi’s explanation. On the contrary, it became even more intense. He naturally knew that Huo Yuhao wouldn’t be injured by Ma Xiaotao but the worry he felt intensified exponentially when he saw the image of Ma Xiaotao hugging Huo Yuhao in his mind.

At that moment, Huo Yuhao’s mind was blank. He naturally knew that Ma Xiaotao wouldn’t hurt him, and moreover, he had seen her berserk appearance before. Only, he was somewhat embarrassed due to the big beauty hugging him out of the blue.

Ma Xiaotao didn’t have any perfume on her, but she nonetheless smelled rather refreshing. She smelled like sun-dried blankets, relaxing and clean. Unfortunately, she wasn’t warm like a blanket but somewhat scalding instead.

Ma Xiaotao was extremely slender and she continued to run as she hugged Huo Yuhao. The latter only saw the scenery around him alternating unceasingly while the blank feeling he felt in his heart only grew stronger.

Within the blink of an eye, they'd left the school building. Ma Xiaotao rushed towards Sea God's Lake with Huo Yuhao in tow where she finally took a breather. "Yu... Hao... quickly... help me. I... can't hold it anymore... I need... your Ice element... help... me suppress... my Evil Fire... Quickly..." she stammered.