

Tang Sect 571

Chapter 571.1: The Terrifying Beast Lord Soul Engineer Legion

If their spirit fire wasn't completely extinguished, these spectral creatures wouldn't truly die. They could re-absorb power from the spectral demiplane and re-form their bodies.

However, a lot of energy had to be expended to reconstruct undead from spirit fire. The source of this energy was the spectral demiplane.

Through his understanding of spectral demiplanes over these past few years, Huo Yuhao had gradually come to understand that the spectral demiplane was a spatial dimension that Electrolux had opened on his own. It wasn't as stable as a main dimensional plane like the Douluo Continent. More simply put, the spectral demiplane was like a dimensional plane that was formed using pure energy. Everything inside it was made using energy.

During the process of creation, Electrolux must have used some kind of unknown method to pour in extremely stable energy. This stable power was enough to ensure self-sufficiency. Once the spectral creatures were released from inside to fight, this stable energy would be drained.

Of course, the energy was drained at an extremely slow speed.

However, if this persisted and the energy wasn't replenished, the energy in the demiplane would sooner or later be completely drained. When that happened, the entire demiplane would collapse.

Of course, such a situation wasn't realistic.

The more he understood necromancy, the more Huo Yuhao admired and respected Electrolux.

When Electrolux was creating the spectral demiplane, he didn't just make it stable. He even created a magical flow.

This flow was similar to photosynthesis after plants absorbed water.

If the spectral creatures in the demiplane died in the outside world, some of the energy in the demiplane would indeed be lost. However, this loss would be very little. In that case, how was the energy in the demiplane replenished? It was actually a very simple process – through the non-spectral creatures that went in and out of the demiplane.

Simply put, if Huo Yuhao opened his demiplane and walked in, all the energy in his body would receive some kind of special guidance and transformation within it. A part of his aura would cause a chemical reaction inside the demiplane, thereby increasing the amount of energy in the demiplane. This reaction would only stop after the internal energy of the demiplane was saturated.

What aura did Huo Yuhao bring in? It was light.

It was the aura of light from the outside world. The aura of light that came from sunlight and from one's heart were the sources of such energy.

As a result, if the inheritor of the demiplane possessed the aura of light in his body, and their abilities weren't evil in nature, there wasn't a very high risk that the demiplane would be drained of energy.

Huo Yuhao had brought in three soul engineer legions before! How strong was the power of light that came from three thousand people? As a result, the energy in the demiplane was in a saturated state.

Even so, Huo Yuhao wouldn't overly drain the energy in the demiplane. After all, these spectral creatures were the foundation of this demiplane. If he drained the energy of this plane too much, there would be problems. Moreover, their existence constituted an army for Huo Yuhao. Although it wasn't very convenient to use them on the battlefield, they were still very useful in special circumstances, such as now.

What did an army need? Apart from strength, it needed a marshal!

This was also the reason why Huo Yuhao let the spectral army take a break temporarily.

Although the goal of the spectral army was to expend the energy of these two soul engineer legions and not to defeat them, it was still very draining for them to do so. It was naturally best for them to conserve as much as possible.

Suddenly, low-pitched incantations could be heard from all directions. Liches started to straighten their bodies among the spectral creatures. They raised bone staffs. Right now, they were reciting the same incantations as Huo Yuhao.

A terrifying spectral aura quickly rose, and a dense greyish fog engulfed the entire forest. All living creatures in the forest quickly ran for their lives. They didn't dare to come into contact with the greyish fog.

A terrifying strength was brewing. Both the Imperial Dragon and Evileye Tyrant Soul Engineer Legions were under immense pressure right now. They unwittingly increased the strength of their protective soul barriers. This was because they didn't know how strong of an attack they were going to be subjected to next, and they also didn't know when it would come.

They were being drained physically and mentally.

Spectral creatures were naturally ugly and fierce. Any ordinary human's first reaction when facing spectral creatures would be fear and anxiety. Under such a circumstance, they would be mentally drained much faster than they would be in a normal fight. This was what Huo Yuhao was trying to achieve too.

Right now, the situation was like that. Even Huo Yuhao didn't expect that the spectral creatures would be able to drain these two soul engineer legions so much.

The recovery of their mental fatigue was even slower than the recovery of their soul power.

The two soul engineer legions had been consecutively attacked by Huo Yuhao and Tang Wutong. Many soul engineer lives were lost. Right now, they were all alarmed and scared. How could they not be fearful in the face of so many spectral creatures?

Xia Xuanchen and Xu Tianyuan's train of thought was very clear. In fact, they were well-aware that the enemy in hiding didn't have the intention of defeating two beast lord-ranked soul engineer legions using a spectral army. The enemy's true intention should have been to force them back into the sky.

Since this was the case, there must be some kind of trap in the air. If the enemy was an evil soul master, it was highly possible that he wasn't the only one.

This was why both legion commanders were very composed right now. They could only wait for the enemy to reveal himself. They weren't too concerned about the spectral army. However, they had neglected their soul engineers' psychological changes.

The incantations lasted for a minute. Following this, a greyish air current swept towards the linked defensive barrier formed by the two soul engineer legions.

Without any orders, all types of soul tools were immediately unleashed. They were used to dissipate the greyish air current that was surging towards them.

However, the two soul engineer legions were astonished to find that their attacks didn't have any effect on the greyish air current.

Yes, there wasn't any effect at all. It didn't even achieve the slightest effect.

How's this possible??The same thought appeared in everyone's mind.

After this, they found that the greyish air current stopped when it was some distance away from them. After this, it settled to the ground. It didn't invade their defensive formation.

Just as the soul engineers heaved a sigh of relief, their eyes opened wide at the next instant.

The bones and mangled corpses that were originally on the ground re-formed as they were nourished by the greyish air current. They turned into skeletons and vampires that crawled up from the ground.

It was important to know that there were many spectral creatures that had died on the battlefield under the hands of soul tools. Right now, the revival of these spectral creatures caused the entire place to be populated.

The more terrifying thing was that every soul engineer developed the belief that spectral creatures couldn't die any further. This was the scariest part.

In fact, spectral creatures could only remain 'alive' for a restricted period of time. However, these soul engineers didn't know that! They also didn't notice that these spectral creatures that were revived weren't as strong as the Abominations and Terror Knights. They were only skeletons and vampires, which were on the lower tiers among spectral creatures.

Humans could unleash terrifying strength in the face of fear. This was something not to be doubted.

As a result, the fighting strength of the two soul engineer legions was completely unleashed.

Dazzling lights struck the spectral army, causing many of the spectral creatures to be torn to pieces.

The skeletons and vampires took only a few steps before they were torn apart.

Countless soul engineers were roaring furiously. They were unleashing their strongest soul tools in the most maniacal way possible. They were attacking furiously.

An energy storm raged, and frightening soul rays and cannon shells caused this entire region to turn into a region of death.

There were no longer any corpses. When the spectral creatures collapsed this time, their bodies directly turned to dust. Even the ground started to cave in a little because of this intense clash between the spectral creatures and the two soul engineer legions.

From above, only a huge ball of light could be seen. Nothing else could be seen at all.

At the very start, Xu Tianyuan and Xia Xuanchen were very comforted by the offensive strength of their two soul engineer legions. However, they felt that something was amiss very soon. Their soul engineer legions were a little too fierce, and there seemed to be something wrong with their morale. It wasn't just at a high; there was something else.

Fear? Xia Xuanchen soon realized that his soul engineers were all fearful right now.

He had finally realized it. However, his realization came too late.

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Xia Xuanchen shouted almost without hesitation. He commanded everyone to stop attacking. However, every soul tool was currently being unleashed at full power as the hundreds of soul engineers did their best to muster the greatest of their offensive ability. How far could his voice travel? No one heard him. Everyone was frantically and furiously attacking. There was only one thought in their heads – decimate all the spectral creatures in front of them.

The situation was a little out of control right now.

Xia Xuanchen tried to knock a few soul engineers down. However, these soul engineers immediately jumped up after they were knocked down. After they jumped up, they continued attacking. Unless they were knocked out, they wouldn't stop at all.

Such a frantic attack only slowly ceased after five minutes, when there were not many spectral creatures left to kill.

Xia Xuanchen and Xu Tianyuan both looked very glum.

While soul engineers were well-respected in the army, they were still soldiers in the end. The duty of soldiers was to listen to orders. Once soldiers stopped listening to orders, it meant that the entire army was out of control. That was the most terrifying thing.

For the soul engineers that stopped, their fear slowly vanished as they were excited. They had completely killed all the spectral creatures. There was even no sight of any broken limbs on the ground.

However, all of them were very fatigued as their fear disappeared. Many of them dropped to the ground panting. This was the after-effect of over-excitement.

At this moment, they might not be physically exhausted, but they were certainly mentally exhausted!

Xia Xuanchen suddenly thought of something, and his figure flashed. He rushed towards the few soul engineers among the legion who were in charge of surveillance.

However, it was a pity that he was still a step too slow. A soul engineer who was in charge of surveillance subconsciously exclaimed, "Why, why are there still so many spectral creatures outside?"

Xia Xuanchen shut him up. However, he had already said something that he shouldn't have before Xia Xuanchen could cover his mouth.

The soul engineers who were both excited and fatigued right now were immediately stunned when they heard his words.

There's more? There's more of them??What about the hard work that they had put in earlier?

A deeper fear than before immediately swept over them at this point.

A few soul engineers who were weaker and greatly drained from earlier suffered mental breakdowns. They charged towards the outside of the protective soul barrier as they screamed frantically. They were trying to flee. All of their faces were contorted at this point.

"Bang, bang, bang, bang..."

Soul rays shot out accurately. Headshot!

The first six soul engineers who had charged out immediately collapsed into a pool of blood.

All the soul engineers subconsciously turned their attention to where the soul rays came from. They only saw the grim-looking Xu Tianyuan.

"Silence! Whoever dares to rebel shall be killed." Xu Tianyuan's cold voice could be heard by every soul engineer. This also roused their fear of military discipline.

Xu Tianyuan raised his right hand, and a completely jade-blue soul cannon shell appeared in his hand.

"What's there to be frantic about? All of you are useless. Have you forgotten who you are? Who are we? We are part of the Hand that Protects the Nation of the Sun Moon Empire. We are a beast lord-ranked soul engineer legion, a strength to behold. No matter what enemy we face, they can only submit to us. What's there to fear? Do you see this? Do you see what's in my hand? It's a Class 9 stationary soul cannon shell."

"So what if there's another attack like earlier, but only ten or hundred times stronger? We can easily destroy them. Are all of you scared just because they're ugly spectral creatures?"

"Observe, watch closely. See how many spectral creatures will survive this time." As he spoke, Xu Tianyuan's hand flashed with light again, and a giant cannon appeared on his shoulder. A vice-legion commander personally inserted the jade-blue shell into the cannon.

Xu Tianyuan didn't even deliberately aim. As a jade-blue light shone, the shell immediately shot out.

In the forest in the distance, a terrifying jade-blue light brightened the entire sky. A massive wave of energy swept over them, and it seemed like the entire world had turned jade-blue at this instant.

The detector in the observer's hand revealed that more than a third of the red spots had disappeared. No traces were left behind.

This was the strength of a top-grade shell!

The soul engineers' morale and sense of fear slowly returned to normal as the jade-blue light flashed. The soul engineers lowered their heads. They stood up and repented for their behavior earlier.

Xia Xuanchen silently heaved a sigh of relief, and gave a thumbs-up to Xu Tianyuan.

However, Xu Tianyuan knew things weren't all that smooth. Earlier, he shouldn't have used that Class 9 shell no matter what. Those spectral creatures were only summoned by evil soul masters. They weren't capable of finding the evil soul masters. The Class 9 shell would only serve to make their enemies more prudent, and therefore more difficult to deal with in the future.

However, did he have a choice? The morale of his troops had been very low, and they were about to carry out a mutiny. He couldn't think of a better way to react to the situation.

What he didn't know was that Huo Yuhao was a little unsettled right now. He hadn't expected the other party to use a Class 9 stationary soul cannon shell.

Fortunately, his Spiritual Detection covered the entire place. He felt that things weren't right when Xu Tianyuan took out the Class 9 shell. He immediately ordered his spectral army to divide into two files and retreat to the sides of the trajectory that the shell was moving in.

Even so, his spectral army still sustained heavy losses. Of course, both he and Tang Wutong managed to hide far away.

Although Huo Yuhao had gained the upper hand in this confrontation, his advantage was greatly reduced after the other party unleashed a Class 9 shell.

Of course, Huo Yuhao had a Class 9 shell with him too. However, he couldn't bear to use it. He would not touch it unless the situation was truly desperate. It was simply too valuable.

He's gone all-out by using a Class 9 shell. After a moment of temporary shock, Huo Yuhao quickly calmed himself down.

The enemy chose to use a Class 9 shell even when he wasn't supposed to use it no matter the circumstance. What did that signify? It meant that the enemy had lost a little control after being subjected to pressure by him.

The six soul engineer legions who had attempted to flee earlier were the best proof. Since this was the case, Huo Yuhao was bent on applying more pressure. Furthermore, he was going to try another method.

Under Huo Yuhao's orders, the spectral army quickly retreated. The destructiveness of a Class 9 shell was simply too terrifying. Any living creature would be decimated under such an attack. Even an Ultimate Douluo wouldn't dare to directly resist the strength of a Class 9 stationary soul cannon shell.

To prevent sustaining more losses, Huo Yuhao commanded his spectral army to cease attacking. After all, did he only have one strategy?

It was crucial to remember that he wasn't just a powerful Titled Douluo. He was also a Class 9 soul engineer. As a soul engineer, he was very familiar with the abilities of a soul engineer. For example, a linked defensive barrier might be able to isolate energy and spiritual attacks, but it couldn't isolate the effects of temperature.

While temperature was also a form of energy, the difference was that it could be conducted in many ways apart from air. It was almost impossible to completely isolate temperature changes. At least, it wasn't plausible based on current soul tool technology.

"They're gone. The spectral creatures have vanished."

Rapturous cheers sounded within the protective soul barrier.

Xu Tianyuan really heaved a sigh of relief this time. At the same time, he felt very proud of himself. The enemy had finally retreated after he used a Class 9 shell. Did this also mean that their attacks would cease? Yes! How many people could remain composed in the face of a Class 9 shell? If the shell killed a portion of their enemies earlier, it would be even more perfect.

Xia Xuanchen also appeared much more relaxed. He came to Xu Tianyuan's side and whispered, "Brother Xu, let everyone rest first. We can't leave in such a state."

"Yes." Xu Tianyuan nodded. The earlier outburst had caused many of the soul engineers earlier to be greatly drained, whether it was in terms of their spiritual or soul power. They couldn't possibly leave without resting. At the same time, they needed to observe the situation further to determine whether their enemies had really retreated.

"Members of the Imperial Dragon Soul Engineer Legion are in charge of maintaining the protective soul barrier. Members of the Evileye Tyrant Soul Engineer Legion, take the time to rest." Xu Tianyuan immediately gave an order.

"Brother Xia, should we continue with our earlier plan?" Xu Tianyuan softly asked Xia Xuanchen.

Xia Xuanchen replied, "Even if we want to continue on with it, we still have to wait for some time. Let everyone recover first."

Xu Tianyuan was astonished as he said, "The Dou Ling Empire's weather is so weird. It's always so gloomy. Eh, it's snowing?"

It was already deep into autumn. The Dou Ling Empire was close to the north of the Douluo Continent, while its capital, Dou Ling City, was also close to the north of the empire. This was why its temperature was lower compared to other empires.

Snowflakes started to fall from the sky, and they drifted before they landed on the ground. It was only after a short while before the ground turned into a patch of white.

Normally, low temperatures weren't an issue for these soul masters. The soul engineers of the Imperial Dragon Soul Engineer were still chortling as they saw their protective soul barrier being engulfed by a layer of snow.

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The protective soul barrier didn't have any temperature on its own. However, the great number of soul rays and shells that had been used to attack earlier caused the temperature inside and outside the barrier to differ slightly.

This was why the snow quickly melted when it fell on the barrier. However, a layer of snow still formed on the barrier, as there was simply too much snow falling. From afar, it seemed like a giant white semicircular object. It was very interesting.

“The temperature in the Dou Ling Empire is really ridiculous. It’s really getting a little cold.” One soul engineer said softly. At the same time, he pulled his clothes closer to the center of his body.

Many soul engineers were sweating from their earlier outburst. As it snowed, the temperature fell drastically. Many of them started to pull their clothes closer to the center of their bodies as a means of keeping warm.

The snow gradually got heavier and heavier. On the surface of the barrier, the accumulated snow also started to thicken. The temperature didn’t fall further, but the soul engineers inside the barrier still felt cold.

Xu Tianyuan commanded a few people to start a fire to keep the rest warm. At the same time, they were also taking turns to eat.

Very soon, piping hot soup was sent to Xu Tianyuan and Xia Xuanchen. Both of them were still full of soul power. They didn’t need to meditate. After taking a few mouthfuls of soup, their bodies started to warm up. They also began to relax.

“Brother Xia! I didn’t expect things to be so successful at the front line and problematic at the back end for this mission.”

A cold light flashed in Xia Xuanchen’s eyes. He downed his soup and said, “When we return, we must not rest until we deal with the Holy Ghost Church. How dare they lay their hands on us? They must be sick of living.”

Xu Tianyuan squinted and exuded a killer aura. “Holy Ghost Church, bloody Holy Ghost Church. I wonder if they’re gone. Right now, I actually do wish they haven’t left. It’s a pity that our detectors can’t find their exact location. Otherwise, even if a Class 9 shell can’t kill them, it’ll still be enough to skin them. Since when have we become so passive?”

Xia Xuanchen said, “I really hate that fellow who can conceal himself. It’s our first time meeting such a soul master. He can conceal himself and prevent us from finding him. Otherwise, he’d be dead even if he were an Ultimate Douluo, given the combined strength of our two soul engineer legions.”

Xu Tianyuan said, “Let’s not talk about that for now. Let’s rest first. Later, we still need to carry out our plan.”

Xia Xuanchen stood up and said, “I’ll take a look at the detectors. We can’t see the outside because of the snow. We can only observe using our detectors. It’s best if we avoid any problems.”

Xu Tianyuan said, “Things should be fine for now. My shell would have hurt many of them. In my opinion, they would have escaped if they’re clever enough.”

Xia Xuanchen nodded, but he was very cautious, and therefore he still went to check.

He returned very quickly. Everything appeared to be fine outside. No enemies had appeared.

The temperature inside the barrier was rising due to the fire that had been lit. However, the temperature outside the barrier was very low due to the falling snow. Very soon, a layer of ice formed on the surface of the barrier due to the temperature difference between the inside and outside of the barrier. Furthermore, this layer of ice was thickening.

No discoveries were made by the Sun Moon Empire's detectors, but right now, there was one person silently standing outside the protective soul barrier.

This person's body temperature was exactly the same as the external air temperature. Thermal detectors were useless against him. Even the oscillations released by oscillation detectors couldn't manage to detect anything abnormal as they passed through his body. No one discovered any special changes that came from his body.

This person stood outside just like that. His left hand was still on that layer of ice.

The temperature outside was already below zero. The snowflakes in the sky were getting thicker and thicker as they drifted. It was just that the layer of ice blocked the view of those covered by the barrier.

No one realized that there were a few strange forces within that layer of ice. The undulations coming from these few forces weren't very strong, but they fused perfectly with ice. They also helped to isolate the temperature inside and outside the barrier.

Thermal detectors were used to detect external heat, but they couldn't judge external temperature. This was why the soul engineers within the barrier didn't know that the temperature in the outside world was dropping very rapidly.

Time passed second after second. The snow outside the barrier kept getting thicker and thicker along with the layer of ice.

After taking turns to rest and eat, the Imperial Dragon and Evileye Tyrant Soul Engineer Legions remained for another four hours. They were even taking turns to sleep and, used sleep to recover their minds.

Right now, all of them were feeling rather optimistic.

Xu Tianyuan was delighted as he commented, "There's no movement outside. It seems like they've really retreated. Otherwise, they wouldn't have let us fully recover." After four hours of rest, he and Xia Xuanchen were back in their peak condition.

However, he forgot that they had wasted four hours of time, even though they had managed to recover within these four hours. To some people, four hours was sufficient to do many things.

"Brother Xu, should we leave now?" Xia Xuanchen asked Xu Tianyuan.

Xu Tianyuan nodded and said, "The layer of ice and snow is already quite thick. We should leave soon and return. Let's be more wary of any enemies later."

Xia Xuanchen nodded and said, "Everyone, be alert. Every ten of you will form one team and unleash a linked defensive barrier. Keep a tight formation. We're preparing to leave."

All the soul engineers were excited as they discovered that they were about to leave. They had been in here for a long time. They had even fought earlier. They wanted to return and get some proper rest.

Protective soul barriers were formed, and the massive barrier that was covering everyone slowly weakened.

However, they were astonished to discover that there was still a semicircular barrier outside even though their own protective soul barrier had weakened. It was a barrier made out of ice and snow!

“All the snow has turned to ice!” The largest protective soul barrier had now completely disappeared, and was replaced by smaller protective soul barriers. The snow outside didn’t continue to fall. It was like they were in a house made of ice. It was very special.

“Try using soul rays.” Xia Xuanchen said.

Immediately, a soul engineer unleashed a soul ray. Suddenly, a hole appeared, revealing sunlight from outside. At the same time, a gust of chilly air rushed in from this hole.

“Haha, this is really interesting. I didn’t know that our protective soul barrier could still make a house.”

Xu Tianyuan and Xia Xuanchen were both astonished. It was also their first time encountering something like this. However, they couldn’t afford to remain here any longer. Xu Tianyuan immediately gave an order, “Every small team will be a unit. Every unit will fire a soul ray to get rid of this layer of ice. We’ll immediately rise into the air once we leave. We must remain close to one another. Begin.”

The row of soul engineers in front immediately raised their soul tools and fired at the layer of ice!

A series of cracking sounds were heard. The layer of ice was destroyed, revealing the outside world.

Gusts of indescribably chilly air immediately over swept them. These gusts of air struck the barriers that the soul engineers had formed earlier. While the air currents were blocked, the chill still engulfed everyone.

It was really a world of ice and snow outside. Only white could be seen. Snowflakes were dancing everywhere amidst raging winds. They were completely unaware that the outside world had become like that because the layer of ice had blocked their vision earlier.

Just as they were astonished, they also felt the chill invading their bodies.

The temperature dropped to below negative fifty degrees Celsius almost instantly. This was even after their protective soul barriers had isolated part of the cold.

Every soul engineer felt as if ice water had been poured on them. Their blood was about to freeze. Such a sudden change caused them to shudder. All of them subconsciously shuddered, and their movements also became a little stiff.

However, they were soul masters. They quickly circulated their soul power and tried to resist the chill that was invading their bodies. However, this didn’t seem to work at all.

“This is not good.” If Xu Tianyuan and Xia Xuanchen couldn’t tell that something was wrong at this point, they were not fit to be legion commanders.

This extreme level of chill was beyond their idea of ordinary. It was even getting worse, especially when the snowflakes made clanging noises as they scraped the surface of the protective soul barriers.

“Rush out! Rise into the sky.” Xia Xuanchen shouted without any hesitation.

Right now, rushing out was their main priority. Evidently, they had fallen into the enemies’ trap. They couldn’t think about how they did this at this point. However, such a soul skill couldn’t possibly engulf the entire world no matter how strong it was. Once they rushed out and rose into the sky, they would naturally escape the cold.

Xia Xuanchen reacted very quickly. He was also the first to rush out.

However, it was also at this moment that the snow dome that had left them in awe earlier blew apart without any warning.

“Boom boom boom!”

As tremendous booms rang out, countless blocks of Ultimate Ice blew apart. The terrifying explosive force instantly turned into extremely strong air currents that engulfed the protective soul barriers that the soul engineers had formed.

Earlier, ten people had been assigned to one protective soul barrier. This meant that there were many protective soul barriers subjected to this terrifying explosive force.

The combination of ten soul masters with cultivations between four rings and five rings was still quite strong. However, they didn’t stand a chance against a Titled Douluo. This was the difference in absolute strength.

Chapter 572.1: Perfect Surprise Attack

No one expected this explosion at all. This was because they couldn’t sense any soul power undulations coming from outside earlier. Given this, none of them were prepared. Furthermore, all of them were also affected by the extreme chill. They weren’t able to unleash their soul power to the greatest of their abilities.

When this huge explosion occurred, the weakest four soul engineer teams, who were also closest to the layer of ice, were instantly torn to pieces!

Forty soul engineers were blown apart just like that! Xia Xuanchen, who was about to rush out, was also flung back by the terrifying explosive force.

Suddenly, chaos ensued.

They unleashed their defense to their maximum capabilities!

Blinding golden light shone, and Xu Tianyuan shot out a beam of golden light from his chest. This beam of golden light turned into a barrier that attempted to resist the falling snowflakes. He quickly rushed to Xia Xuanchen’s side. Both of them joined forces to lift a protective soul barrier and rushed forward.

The explosion came too quickly, and it was terrifying. However, it also disappeared very quickly.

After the explosive force vanished, they found that three more out of the thirty-plus soul engineer small teams had their protective soul barriers crushed, as they weren't strong enough. Although they weren't directly blown apart, they all froze into ice statues due to the extremely low temperature.

The more frightening thing was that they blew apart just after they turned into ice statues, and the remnants of their corpses scattered across the ground. It was a complete mess.

Seventy soul engineers had turned into dust just like that. The protective soul barriers of a few small teams were also blown apart. However, they tried their best to summon their soul power, and managed to seal their barriers amidst the chaos. This was the reason why they managed to avert disaster.

As they rushed out from the ice and snow, the two Class 9 soul engineers unleashed their strongest attacks at the same time. They swept in all directions. Soul rays and cannons fired everywhere.

At this moment, the two beast lord-ranked soul engineer legions still demonstrated their quality even though they had suffered heavy losses. Every small team chose to rise into the sky at the first instant. In addition, they stuck very close to one another too.

Xu Tianyuan, Xia Xuanchen and the four vice-legion commanders were the last to fly up. They showed why they were the commanders, as they watched the retreat of their troops.

Just like Xia Xuanchen had predicted earlier, the chill in the air gradually disappeared after they rose five hundred meters into the air. Everything reverted to normal.

However, most of the soul engineers were also pale from being frozen.

Seventy out of the three hundred soul engineers had been lost. There were two soul engineer legions at the start, but now there was only one left.

Xia Xuanchen looked very grim. He was completely pale. The reason was very simple. Among the seven small teams that had been wiped out earlier, six of them had belonged to his Evileye Tyrant Soul Engineer Legion.

The Evileye Tyrant Soul Engineer Legion was the most adept at speed. However, there was still a gap between the Evileye Tyrant Soul Engineer Legion and the Imperial Dragon Soul Engineer Legion in terms of absolute ability. As a result, the Imperial Dragon Soul Engineer Legion fully demonstrated their advantage in terms of overall abilities right now. They sustained considerably fewer losses.

Xu Tianyuan scanned the area, and found out what the problem was. He tapped Xia Xuanchen's shoulder. "Old Xia, don't panic. When we return, we'll give you more men from the reserve regiment. We have to use our linked defensive formation. We must not let our enemies take advantage of us again."

This explosion came too abruptly, leaving them at a loss as to what to do. Xia Xuanchen and Xu Tianyuan thought that they were already being very cautious. However, who knew that they were still tricked. Even up until now, they didn't know where that explosion, which was as strong as a Class 8 stationary soul cannon shell, came from, and how those blocks of ice were blown apart.

They re-activated their linked defensive formation. For safety's sake, the soul engineers from the two soul engineer legions unleashed this formation together. The light that came from their protective soul barrier was also extremely pure.

"Come on, let's fly further first before speaking. For someone to have created that situation earlier, it must be some kind of domain-type ability. Such an ability is also very draining. Although we can't find those scoundrels, I believe it won't be easy for them to pursue us. Let's leave this place first."

The soul engineer legions quickly flew toward the west. It was very draining for two soul engineer legions to maintain a protective soul barrier and fly at the same time. They couldn't continue flying for too long. However, they couldn't be bothered about that at this point. It was paramount for them to leave this dangerous region.

Xu Tianyuan looked much better than Xia Xuanchen. At least his side didn't suffer as much. Xia Xuanchen might have felt a little better after being comforted by Xu Tianyuan, but he was still very grim. The difference between the reserve troops and the official troops was still very big. A lot of time was needed to nurture a qualified member of the Evileye Tyrant Soul Engineer Legion. This time, he had really incurred a huge loss! Almost two-thirds of the Evileye Tyrant Soul Engineer Legion was gone.

At this moment, an anxious voice sounded. "Commander, this comrade seems to be unable to hold on anymore."

Xu Tianyuan turned his head, and saw a soul engineer of the Imperial Soul Engineer Legion carrying another person not far behind him. The soul engineer that was being carried looked very pale. One of his arms and one of his legs were broken. He looked terrifyingly pale, as he had lost too much blood. Even his eyes were dim and lifeless.

Xu Tianyuan's face contorted a little. He also turned a little gloomy. He drifted to the side of this soul engineer and sighed, "Comrade, have a safe journey. When we return, I'll think of a way to avenge you."

As he spoke, he lifted his head and pressed it against that injured soul engineer's forehead.

This was a rule in the army. If an injured person couldn't be saved in time, his commander could help him die, and he would die as a hero on the battlefield. Not only would he be given a grand burial after he returned, but his family would also be given a generous pension. Even his commander had to personally extend his condolences to his family.

That soul engineer revealed a comforted look on his face. He shut his eyes and was ready to accept his imminent death.

Xu Tianyuan didn't use too much strength. He had originally planned to retract his soul power the moment he touched this soul engineer's forehead. Otherwise, he might destroy the soul engineer's corpse if he used too much strength. He was also a comrade. Xu Tianyuan couldn't bear to lay his hands on him.

Xia Xuanchen turned around. No matter who, he wouldn't be willing to see something like this. The rest of the soul engineers all lowered their heads.

At this moment, Xu Tianyuan's body shook. That injured soul engineer silently pressed his palm on his chest.

Xu Tianyuan had originally thought it was a subconscious action. However, an indescribable sense of crisis rose in his heart in the next moment.

He didn't even need to react before his automatic protective soul barrier and Invincible Barrier activated.

Blinding lights and intense soul power undulations alarmed everyone.

It was a pity that they reacted too late.

A deep-blue whirlpool had silently appeared on Xu Tianyuan's chest. He was a Class 9 soul engineer, but his protective soul barrier and Invincible Barrier were both torn to pieces by this whirlpool. That pale-white hand also pressed against Xu Tianyuan's chest at this point.

Following this, a terrifying Spiritual Blast exploded out from the center of the injured soul engineer's body.

The soul engineers that were closest to him were immediately blown apart. Even the vice-legion commanders were flung far away by the frightening impact of the spiritual power.

Xia Xuanchen was no exception. He was flung dozens of meters away.

His body stiffened in mid-air. His flying-type soul tool also immediately went out.

That injured soul engineer and the soul engineer who had reported earlier were instantly vaporized.

After this, the linked defensive barrier distorted slightly. Two figures also disappeared completely.

The linked defensive barrier only served to isolate external attacks. It couldn't defend against any attacks that came from within. The people inside could leave, but no one from the outside could enter.

Only the linked defensive barrier of a soul formation could be controlled to work both externally and internally.

It was only after those two figures disappeared that Xu Tianyuan knocked into the barrier just like the other soul engineers.

Xia Xuanchen rushed over instantly and tried to pull him back.

However, it was too late!

"Boom!" Xu Tianyuan's body instantly blew apart and turned into countless pieces, scattering all around.

Xia Xuanchen's protective soul barrier was immediately activated, which protected him from harm. However, many soul engineers around him were blown up or injured. Those two people had actually escaped without leaving any traces.

"Bastards! Bastards——!" Xia Xuanchen roared furiously. All the soul engineers from the Imperial Dragon Soul Engineer Legion were all reacting sorrowfully too.

Xu Tianyuan had commanded this soul engineer legion for a long time now. Now that he was dead, the impact on the entire Imperial Dragon Soul Engineer Legion was very great.

Who would have expected that a Class 9 soul engineer and a prince of the empire would die just like this? He couldn't resist his enemies at all.

Every soul engineer let out sorrowful cries. However, they didn't even see their enemies clearly. They didn't even know how their enemies had snuck in.

A few thousand meters away, Huo Yuhao slowly appeared as he held Tang Wutong's hand. Of course, only they could see each other. Those from the Sun Moon Empire couldn't see them at all.

Without a doubt, those two that had attacked Xu Tianyuan earlier were Huo Yuhao and Tang Wutong. More accurately speaking, it was a perfect surprise attack and assassination.

Chapter 572.2: Perfect Surprise Attack

If they had attacked with all their might earlier, it was likely that very few soul engineers within the protective soul barrier would have survived. The two soul engineer legions might even have been completely wiped out.

However, Huo Yuhao and Tang Wutong didn't do so. They had a more far-sighted plan. This plan was much more significant for destroying the entire Sun Moon Empire army.

Huo Yuhao had controlled the snow and used his Ice Explosion Technique. As for how he managed to force the soul engineers to rise into the sky, he had actually in fact only used a part of the strength of his Snowy Dance of Ultimate Ice.

If Huo Yuhao had really wanted to wipe them out, he would have fully unleashed his Snowy Dance of Ultimate Ice as the soul engineers rose into the sky. The soul engineers were in groups of ten. Very few of them would have been able to resist such a strong attack.

However, Huo Yuhao didn't do that. He only used his Ice Explosion Technique to destroy a few small teams. At the same time, he quickly snuck in as a few of the small teams revealed flaws. He killed two of them and used his Imitation and Spiritual Interference Domain to successfully blend in.

When the linked defensive barrier was fully unleashed, he had actually achieved his goal.

If Huo Yuhao were an ordinary Transcendent Douluo, it wouldn't be easy for him to kill a Class 9 soul engineer so easily. However, he already had his second soul core right now, his Ultimate Ice second soul core. This meant that he could directly tap into the strength of his second soul core. The deep-blue whirlpool earlier had been a physical manifestation of the strength of his second soul core.

His Ultimate Ice soul core combined with his Snowless Glacier!

All it took was one palm strike to kill.

Xu Tianyuan was killed almost instantly. Then, Huo Yuhao calmly fled with Tang Wutong. He used his Spiritual Blast instead of his Spiritual Tempest. He was already being very merciful. This was because he needed to conserve energy for them to return. They became one of the factors causing instability in the Sun Moon Empire.

Of course, he left something special before he left. This left a deeper impression in the minds of these Sun Moon Empire soul engineers.

The flying inside the protective soul barrier had stopped by now. The remaining soul engineers in the two soul engineer legions were only half their original number.

Xia Xuanchen's expression couldn't just be considered gloomy anymore. He was even in a bit of a daze. He had some understanding of Xu Tianyuan's abilities. As a Class 9 soul engineer, Xu Tianyuan was equipped with the best soul tools, even though he wasn't the strongest himself.

He had human-shaped soul tools, automatic defensive soul tools and the treasure of the Imperial Dragon Soul Engineer Legion on him. Wait a minute, where's the treasure?

Xia Xuanchen immediately realized an important problem. His eyes brightened, and he quickly searched for it inside the barrier.

Within the linked defensive barrier, Xu Tianyuan's belongings would still remain even if his body blew apart.

However, Xia Xuanchen immediately turned very grim when he couldn't find anything after searching for a long time.

It's gone? The treasure of the Imperial Dragon Soul Engineer Legion is gone. This means that our enemies have taken it. This also means that those who attacked us were here for the treasure, rather than to kill us.

Yes! Evil soul masters pursued such objectives!

At this moment, someone's heavy breathing jolted Xia Xuanchen awake. He subconsciously looked to his surroundings. He was stunned to find out that more than ten soul engineers had turned completely pale. However, their eyes were blood-red. Their auras were also very heavy.

"Not good. It's the ability of evil soul masters. They've been controlled. Kill them!" Xia Xuanchen shouted, and made a move first.

After a few more breaths, Xia Xuanchen's furious roars echoed in the barrier. "Bastards. Holy Ghost Church, I'll not let you off!"

In the distance, Tang Wutong sighed. "Yuhao, I feel a little uncomfortable inside."

Huo Yuhao hugged her slender waist. "I know. However, this is war. People die in wars. In fact, even though I meddled with their bodies, they should be able to recover on their own after some time. I can only try my best not to kill using necromancy. Do you think I've become crueler?"

Tang Wutong gently shook her head and said, "No, you're right. War is cruel. If our enemies don't die, you will be the one to die. If we kill one more soul engineer from the other party, we can save lives on our side."

Huo Yuhao sighed and revealed a glow on his face. He coldly said, "Ju Zi was right. I was too soft in the past. This is war. If we want to control and change it, we need to change these habits. However, fret not. I'll try to stay true to my heart."

"Furthermore, I've been misunderstanding in the past. Wutong, losing to Ju Zi on the battlefield is actually very normal. This is because our overall abilities are some way off from the Sun Moon Empire.

That's why we've always been led by the nose by Ju Zi. However, this doesn't mean that we don't stand a chance. If we can't succeed overtly, we can only scheme. We can only use other ways to defeat them if we can't beat them openly. This is what I can do as an Ultimate Soldier. Let's go. We should return and see how things are in Dou Ling City. I hope we can help them achieve stability and minimize any chaos."

"Alright." Tang Wutong nodded, and they turned around and flew in the direction of Dou Ling City.

They retreated, but the remaining members of the two soul engineer legions were still leaving slowly. They were all filled with rage, like a soul cannon shell. They could blow apart at any time!

Dou Ling City.

When Huo Yuhao and Tang Wutong returned to Dou Ling City, they were stunned to realize that smoke was not longer billowing from the city. Furthermore, the overall situation seemed to be rather stable too.

The sky had turned dark by now. There wasn't anyone on the streets, but there were many soldiers patrolling. Evidently, there was a curfew in the city.

Huo Yuhao secretly heaved a sigh of relief when he saw this. He led Tang Wutong as they silently entered the city. At the same time, he unleashed his Spiritual Detection to find his teammates.

The area his Spiritual Detection could cover was simply too big under the effect of his twin soul cores. Although it wasn't enough to cover the entire city, they were still able to quickly find traces of Xu Sanshi and the others, given their speed.

Finding them was also very easy. This was because Xu Sanshi and the others were close to the ruins of the imperial palace.

They had been there for ten hours.

Huo Yuhao directly communicated with Xu Sanshi using his Spiritual Detection. At the same time, he brought Tang Wutong towards them.

Lights flashed, and Huo Yuhao and Tang Wutong silently appeared beside Xu Sanshi, Jiang Nannan, Ye Guyi, Nan Qiuqiu and Ji Juechen.

They weren't the only five here right now. There were a lot of people standing in the ruins of the imperial palace. Many of them were still wearing armor.

When two people suddenly appeared, they reacted very agitatedly. Suddenly, soul power undulations surged, and many people unleashed their martial souls.

Xu Sanshi lifted his hand and said, "They're on our side. They're my juniors."

Huo Yuhao was astonished to discover that Xu Sanshi sounded very awe-inspiring. After hearing his words, the soldiers and soul masters calmed down. However, they were still shocked to see Huo Yuhao and Tang Wutong.

Yes!?How did these two get in? How did no one noticed them? What kind of powers do they possess?

Huo Yuhao seemed to be asking Xu Sanshi something with his eyes. Xu Sanshi also turned his head to look at him. When he saw Xu Sanshi's eyes, Huo Yuhao's heart sank. His eyes had turned red, and the whites of his eyes were filled with streaks of blood.

It was Huo Yuhao's first time seeing such a situation. Normally, Xu Sanshi was very happy-go-lucky. Among the members of Shrek's Seven Monsters, he was definitely the clown. He was very strong, but he shared a good relationship with everyone else. He was even like Jiang Nannan's punching bag.

But right now, Xu Sanshi released a strong killing intent from his body. His entire demeanor had changed.

"Little junior, how are those soul engineers?" Xu Sanshi asked. His voice also sounded very hoarse.

Huo Yuhao replied, "The two soul engineer legions were the Imperial Dragon and Evileye Tyrant Soul Engineer Legions. We killed half of them, including the legion commander of the Imperial Dragon Soul Engineer Legion. The rest fled. However, they don't know that we are the ones who ambushed them. Under my guise, they should have mistaken evil soul masters as the culprits."

"Okay, thanks Yuhao." Xu Sanshi nodded and turned his head again. Not only did his killing intent not go down, but it was even trending towards a rise.

Huo Yuhao shifted laterally. He came to Jiang Nannan's side and softly asked, "Fourth senior, what's wrong with third senior? What's with these soldiers too? How are things in Dou Ling City? Has the imperial family..."

Jiang Nannan shut him up using her eyes. After this, she transmitted to him, "Things aren't good. The Sun Moon Empire chose a very good time to attack. It was when the Dou Ling Empire's imperial family was gathering. That's why almost the entire imperial family has been killed. They were all bombed to death. Things are very chaotic in Dou Ling City. Even I didn't know that the royal blood of the Dou Ling Empire runs in Sanshi's body. He used some kind of token to enter the city. After that, he gradually curbed the troops and maintained order. This is the reason why the chaos has been suppressed. We were all gathered here now waiting for you to return. At the same time, we are discussing our next move."

Chapter 572.3: Perfect Surprise Attack

The Dou Ling Empire's imperial family has been wiped out? Everyone is dead?

Although he had figured out this was the likely result earlier, Huo Yuhao still couldn't help but turn grim when he heard it. The Sun Moon Empire is really too vicious. Ju Zi is too vicious!

Right now, he was a little regretful that he hadn't killed everyone from the two soul engineer legions to avenge the Dou Ling Empire.

However, Huo Yuhao was also shocked that Xu Sanshi was actually of royal blood. None of them were aware of it earlier! They really only found out by chance.

It was more useful for Xu Sanshi to exploit his royal identity rather than his identity as a student of Shrek Academy. No wonder he was able to maintain order in Dou Ling City within such a short period of time.

However, this was still not enough! The Dou Ling Empire needed a backbone right now.

“Your Highness, the imperial family is bare now. We need your leadership.” An old general who was about sixty years old took a few steps forward before he knelt on one knee.

Xu Sanshi’s expression changed unpredictably as he looked at him.

Not far away, another elder who was roughly the same age and who was wearing an official uniform said, “No. We still need to consider his identity. How can we make a decision so hastily?”

The old general was furious. “Screw your nonsense. I’ve tolerated you for so long. If not for your hesitance, we would’ve come together to chase after those bastards. If you dare to spout further nonsense, I’ll kill you right now.”

“Commander Li, now is not the time to act rashly. Anything regarding the imperial family is of paramount importance!” That elder laughed bitterly.

The general who was addressed as ‘Commander Li’ said, “We’ve already seen what His Highness has done ever since he came. If not for the fact that he came in time to maintain order in the city, the city would have been in great chaos. It wouldn’t have hung on until now. Right now, the elites from the empire have gone to Shrek as reinforcements. If there’s internal chaos within Dou Ling City, the Sun Moon Empire will surely exploit the situation. His Highness has already proven with actions that his identity is real. He’s likely to be the sole survivor of the imperial family. If we don’t protect him, who else do we protect?”

That elder in the official uniform was the chief of all the officials in the Dou Ling Empire, and the current Premier. He appeared very grim, and he was also very hesitant. If the empire was without a leader, there would certainly be big problems. At such a time, the Dou Ling Empire would crack if such a problem appeared. It might even break apart.

However, how could the throne of an empire be passed on so easily? What if this person was a spy from the Sun Moon Empire? Even though he had a token with him, surely the Sun Moon Empire was capable of smuggling or stealing it through improper means if they wanted to, right?

This was why this Premier was very hesitant. He didn’t dare to agree to the suggestion.

At this moment, Xu Sanshi opened his mouth. He hoarsely said, “I’m not coveting the throne. However, the Dou Ling Empire has been subjected to such a great blow. Even if we want to find the other members of the imperial family, we’ll still need time. That’s why I need to temporarily assume control of the throne. Premier, I understand your concerns. Let me tell you about my background.”

When he said this, all the officials that were present were immediately drawn to him.

A man had to be capable of doing things. At such a moment, Xu Sanshi stepped up not because he wanted authority, but because he wanted to save the Dou Ling Empire.

“My surname is Xu, and my full name is Xu Sanshi. Honestly, I’m not proud to claim to be a member of the Dou Ling Empire’s imperial family. This is because my parents’ marriage wasn’t met with blessings from the imperial family, which caused them to elope.”

When he said this, a few of the older officials revealed pensive looks on their faces. This story appeared to be very familiar.

Xu Sanshi continued speaking, "Yes, my mother was called Xue Ying. The Emperor of the Dou Ling Empire was my biological uncle. My father is the master of the Mysterious Underworld Family. I'm sure everyone can recall this. I was still a kid when I last came to the Dou Ling Empire."

The Premier revealed an enlightened look on his face. "So you are actually the son of Princess Xue Ying? The token that you have belongs to her too?"

Xu Sanshi nodded silently.

The Premier said, "If that's the case, we can recognize you. Since you inherited the token from Her Highness, that also means that you are at least a Prince. Right now, you are the only remaining member of the imperial family. We can accept you as a Prince. However, you have to prove that your mother was Princess Xue Ying."

Xu Sanshi calmly said, "I inherited my father's martial soul, which doesn't belong to the imperial family. However, I believe that the martial soul of our Mysterious Underworld Family is still quite reputable in the continent. Everyone, please watch carefully."

As he spoke, Xu Sanshi lifted his hand. A pitch-black shield silently appeared in front of everyone.

A dim golden glow soon spread from this shield. Very soon, the surface of the shield turned golden. A small snake was slowly slithering on this turtle-shaped shield.

Xuanwu Shield!

Yes, Xu Sanshi's Shield of the Xuanwu Turtle had longed evolved into the Xuanwu Shield!

Commander Li was perplexed as he asked, "Oh? Isn't this the Shield of the Xuanwu Turtle? It's supposed to be black."

Xu Sanshi nodded and replied, "Yes, mine is no longer a pure Shield of the Xuanwu Turtle. The martial soul of my family possesses a certain blood lineage of a Xuanwu. I was lucky to have stimulated this blood lineage during my cultivation, causing my Shield of the Xuanwu Turtle to evolve into the Xuanwu Shield."

As he spoke, his soul rings slowly rose from his feet.

When everyone saw eight soul rings around his body, they were shocked. The entire place also descended into silence.

Most of the officials who knew Princess Xue Ying could roughly gauge how old he was. He's only twenty-plus years of age! He can't even be thirty yet. Does he actually have eight rings at this age? What does this mean? It means he's an absolute genius!

The Shield of the Xuanwu Turtle was already one of the strongest defensive-type martial souls. What about the Xuanwu Shield? It was even more legendary.

Who would have expected Xu Sanshi to possess such a legendary martial soul? He even had eight rings. It was really unbelievable.

The Premier was the most composed right now. He subconsciously asked, "Your Highness, how did your martial soul mutate? According to my knowledge, even the current master of the Mysterious Underworld Family didn't experience success with a mutation of his martial soul. I've not heard of anyone in the past few generations of the Mysterious Underworld Family who has managed to successfully evolve his martial soul into a Xuanwu Shield."

Although he was putting out his doubts, it was evident from his greeting that he had in fact recognized Xu Sanshi's identity.

Xu Sanshi nodded. He naturally knew that he would be posed this question.

"Everyone, I have another identity. I'm actually from Shrek Academy!" As he spoke, he retrieved a badge that only belonged to inner courtyard students in Shrek Academy and wore it in front of his chest.

"Regarding this, you can send someone to verify it with Shrek. As my teammates and I twice represented the academy in the Continental Advanced Soul Master Academy Soul Dueling Tournament and emerged as champions, we were given the title of 'Shrek Seven Monsters' for defending the glory of the academy."

"All of you should also know that we have another genius in the academy. He's also one of the members of Shrek Seven Monsters. He came up with a very special ability known as Spirits. He used Spirits to alleviate the need for soul masters to kill soul beasts, as soul masters can still obtain abilities that are similar to soul rings from Spirits. They are even stronger than soul rings. I'm also one of the beneficiaries of his invention. Currently, I have a hundred thousand year Spirit, a Golden Tortoise."

Yes, it was a hundred thousand year Spirit! In fact, everyone saw that his eighth soul ring was blood-red. This was why they were so astonished.

However, they were all stirred when Xu Sanshi unleashed his Golden Tortoise.

Of course the senior officials of the Dou Ling Empire knew about Spirits. Those who could obtain Spirits were among the minority. There were even fewer people who could obtain such a powerful Spirit.

Spirits had created a huge uproar in the world of soul masters. The Dou Ling Empire had even constructed its own Spirit Pagoda, and started to dig deeper into the mysteries of Spirits.

Right now, Xu Sanshi had unleashed his Spirit, which was extremely strong. How could everyone not be moved?

However, they were even more astonished after this.

"Earlier, Shrek Academy was threatened by the Sun Moon Empire's army. That's why we asked the Dou Ling and Star Luo Empires for help. However, the academy discovered that this might be a ploy. The Sun Moon Empire took this opportunity to lay its hands on the Dou Ling Empire. That's why we were sent over. Even though there's only seven of us here, I believe the tragedy might not have happened if we were here earlier. This is because there's someone else here too. He's currently the second strongest soul master in Shrek Academy, only inferior to the Master of the Sea God's Pavilion, Elder Xuan, who's an Ultimate Douluo. This person is also the future Master of the Sea God's Pavilion and the founder of the Spirit Pagoda, Huo Yuhao."

Chapter 573.1: Prince Xu Sanshi

The second strongest person in Shrek Academy! Even though he was only the second strongest, it was still equally shocking!

After all, Shrek Academy was not just any institution. Even the Sun Moon Empire had to admit that it was not one of the strongest academies, but the strongest academy in the world.

Even though the Holy Ghost Church had been building up reserves of power for thousands of years, they still did not dare to use the evil soul masters they had nurtured to launch an attack on Shrek Academy. They did not dare to challenge Shrek Academy even though they had two Ultimate Douluo. And that was because of the huge amount of reserves it had built up over tens of thousands of years.

Back when the soul beasts launched the beast wave against Shrek City, they were ultimately still unable to destroy Shrek City even though they had five of the Ten Great Savage Beasts among them. This showed exactly how powerful Shrek Academy was.

One could only imagine how powerful their second strongest cultivator was. On top of that, this person was rumored to be the founder of the Spirit Pagoda. This piece of information further shocked everyone from the Dou Ling Empire.

Huo Yuhao was not particularly pleased with his third senior brother's introduction of him. However, he knew he should not make him look bad in front of the Dou Ling Empire. Hence, he stepped forward and stood beside Xu Sanshi as he nodded towards the people whom Xu Sanshi was addressing.

When the higher-ups from the Dou Ling Empire saw how Huo Yuhao was even younger than Xu Sanshi, they seemed to be mildly amused..

Xu Sanshi immediately clarified, "I will urge everyone not to doubt his abilities just because of his tender age. He is, in fact, a talent which is only produced once in a thousand years from our Academy. He currently already possesses the ability of a Transcendent Douluo, and also has twin martial souls. Just now, he personally went after the two Sun Moon Empire soul engineer legions which attacked us, and has already confirmed their identities. They were the two beast-ranked soul engineer legions—the Imperial Dragon Soul Engineer Legion and the Evileye Tyrant Soul Engineer Legion. Yuhao and his beloved pursued the legions, and destroyed more than half of their soul engineers. On top of that, they were able to kill the legion commander of the Imperial Dragon Soul Engineer Legion. If they were not concerned about the situation at Dou Ling City, they would probably have killed every single enemy who had attacked our city."

Xu Sanshi's words were indeed a little exaggerated. He had merely said what he understood and guessed. Little did he know that his guesses were actually spot-on.

The old prime minister's jaw dropped as he looked at Huo Yuhao. "Are you really the pagoda master of the Spirit Pagoda?"

Huo Yuhao nodded gently and said, "Yes, I am. I know it's a little hard to believe it because of my age. In that case, let me try to provide some evidence to support these claims."

As he spoke, Huo Yuhao strode forward. At the next instant, an immensely powerful aura exploded from his body as his soul rings started to gradually rise from his feet.

When everyone saw how his first soul ring was white, they could not help but frown. Isn't a white soul ring a ten-year soul ring?

However, they soon noticed how the white soul ring was radiating a brilliant golden color. Following which, black rings started to rise from his feet. When it reached the sixth soul ring, they saw a rose gold soul ring. Afterward, the remaining soul rings were all red.

This meant that the colors of Huo Yuhao's nine soul rings were gold, black, black, black, black, rose gold, red, red, and red.

What kind of soul ring collection is this?!

However, this was not going to be the last thing which would startle them. Huo Yuhao squinted as he released his invincible spiritual power and enveloped the entire ruins of the palace.

Everyone could sense a gentle stream of spiritual power flowing into his or her spiritual sea. Following which, they could see more than half of Dou Ling City from their spiritual seas.

They were not only seeing the silhouette, but every single detail of the city.

It was important to note that there were close to a thousand people present before them! How much spiritual power did it require to share these images with so many people?

To be honest, Huo Yuhao's Spirit Eyes only had eight soul rings. His Ultimate Ice martial soul was the one with nine soul rings.

However, Huo Yuhao had used his Imitation to make some slight adjustments to his abilities to leave a deeper impression on the crowd. After all, his spiritual power was already on par with that of an Ultimate Douluo. It did not matter whether he was short a single soul skill.

Huo Yuhao was very clear about what he had to do right now. He needed to help his third senior brother stabilize the current situation. If possible, he wanted to help his third senior brother become Emperor.

The Dou Ling Empire needed stability more than anything right now. It was only possible to quell their fears by demonstrating strong power. This would then convince them to acknowledge his third senior brother's status and identity.

This also happened to be the first time Huo Yuhao had tried to perform Spiritual Detection Sharing on a few thousand people. It was not as simple as what he did when he was leading the soul engineer legion. He did not have to project the details of close to half a city to more than a thousand people back then!

The two soul cores within Huo Yuhao were rotating furiously as they tried to replenish the spiritual power he was expending. Even though his current Spiritual Detection Sharing was consuming a lot of spiritual power, he was definitely able to maintain it for an extended period of time.

After a couple of minutes, Huo Yuhao ended his Spiritual Detection Sharing and returned to Xu Sanshi's side. He said, "I believe everyone present was able to see the current situation of Dou Ling City. To be honest, the entire incident was very tragic. We had, in fact, already reached the Dou Ling Empire before the attack after receiving news that the Sun Moon Empire would definitely attack the Dou Ling Empire. However, we did not know where the enemy was, or how they would try to attack you. Hence, we focused our efforts on the borders, and wasted too much time there."

“Who would have known that the Sun Moon Empire would try to sneak in and head straight to Dou Ling City without anyone knowing? By the time we discovered what they were trying to do, it was already too late. We could not stop the tragedy from unfolding in time. Regardless of whether it is my third senior brother or my other peers from the Shrek Academy, we only have one objective, and that is to help the Dou Ling Empire. We are not here to wrest away any political power. I hope all of you can believe that we come in peace.”

Huo Yuhao’s words made the Dou Ling Empire’s military staff blush in embarrassment. His words meant that the entire Dou Ling Empire’s security troops were not even aware that the Sun Moon Empire’s two soul engineer legions had managed to sneak past the security at the borders and move towards the capital. If they wanted to push the blame on someone, the military staff and generals present should all have been put to death.

At this instant, a heavy silence fell upon the crowd. The strength Huo Yuhao had demonstrated had already convinced everyone of his power. His feat of using his own spiritual power to share the entire situation of the Dou Ling City with all of them was truly unheard of!

Xu Sanshi’s identity was more or less confirmed. At most, they would send some people over to Shrek Academy to verify it one last time.

So what was going to happen next?

The prime minister walked towards Xu Sanshi before kneeling on the ground with one knee. “Your Highness, the Dou Ling Empire is currently in an extremely precarious predicament. Now that we have verified your identity, can I get Your Highness to lead us and rebuild the palace? In addition, I hope that Your Highness can temporarily take over His Majesty’s position to provide some much-needed reassurance to our people.”

Xu Sanshi nodded gently. He no longer had any reservations at this point. Usually, he would never have chosen to stay here to become a Prince, or take on any kind of high-level administrative position. However, now that the Dou Ling Empire was on the verge of crumbling, he had no choice, especially when his mother was the Princess of this empire. He could not allow the Dou Ling Empire to fall before his eyes.

There would be a huge political problem within the Dou Ling Empire if the royal family had no descendants to take the throne. The entire empire would become fragmented as everyone would try to seize political power and set up their own government. And when that happened, the empire would collapse by itself. How would the Star Luo Empire then protect itself against the Sun Moon Empire without support from the Dou Ling Empire?

Hence, it was undeniable that the Sun Moon Empire’s mission had been very successful. If not for Xu Sanshi’s unexpected appearance, it would still have been very successful even if the two beast lord-leveled soul engineer legions were all killed.

Huo Yuhao sighed in despair. Right now, the only thing he could do was support Xu Sanshi.

The surrounding ministers and staff started to kneel down before Xu Sanshi after the prime minister and Commander Li had done so. All of them started to pay their respects.

From the looks of the current situation, Xu Sanshi was definitely the aptest successor to the throne. It was most important for the Dou Ling Empire to stabilize the hearts of its people and its military.

Xu Sanshi got both the prime minister and Commander Li to stay behind as the three of them held an emergency meeting to make three important decisions. The first decision was to make sure that news of the attack on the palace was kept secret.

The second decision was that Xu Sanshi would continue to chair the court meetings as the prince regent, since he was the only possible successor from the royal family.

The third decision was to prioritize providing reassurance to the people within Dou Ling City. After all, they could not afford to lose the confidence of their people. They would announce to the citizens that the palace did not sustain heavy losses, and that the majority of the royal family was only hurt. Only a few of them were dead because of the explosion. The prince regent would take over the duty of ruling the empire only because His Majesty was currently injured.

They would definitely not allow the elite troops at Shrek City to hear of this news. The worst thing that could happen to the Dou Ling Empire was chaos! It would be a huge tragedy if their army at the front line were to mutiny. It would also be terrible if the people in their empire started to lose confidence in the royal family and decided to overthrow them.

Besides, it was not the right time to get the elite troops to return. It was vital for them to stabilize the capital before discussing what their next move should be.

It was hence expected that Xu Sanshi would temporarily stay in Dou Ling City.

After discussing with Xu Sanshi, Huo Yuhao decided to allow Jiang Nannan, Ji Juechen, Ye Guyi, and Nan Qiuqiu to stay behind and assist him. After all, it would be too much for him to handle alone. In the meantime, Huo Yuhao and Tang Wutong would speedily return to Shrek City and relay what had happened to the Academy. They needed to change their strategy and act when the opportunity arose.

After all, Huo Yuhao's plan for both the Imperial Dragon Soul Engineer Legion and the Evil Tyrant Soul Engineer Legion was far from over. In order to control how the following events would turn out, he needed to understand the current situation of the two legions.

Chapter 573.2: Prince Xu Sanshi

"Third senior brother, good luck with your work here." Huo Yuhao hugged Xu Sanshi and gave him a pat on the back.

Xu Sanshi sighed before saying, "I never expected something like this to happen. I'll pen a letter right away and get my family members and my mother to come here. I really hope my mother won't do something foolish after seeing..."

As he spoke, he became even more depressed, After all, the royal family of the Dou Ling Empire was his family! Now that they had been wiped out, how could he not be depressed?

"Yuhao, I'll settle things over here. Even though I don't have much experience in governing an empire, I'll do my best to make sure everything stays stable. I'll need your help to take care of matters at the

Academy, as well as the Dou Ling Empire troops at the front line. The Dou Ling Empire cannot afford to take another hit like this.”

Huo Yuhao nodded and said, “Third senior brother, try your best to stabilize things here as soon as possible. It would also be good if you could start on the reconstruction of the palace immediately. I will try to delay your army’s return while you settle these things. The war has only just begun, and I have no idea what the future will hold for all of us. However, regardless of how things might turn out, we will all do our best to defend our land against the Sun Moon Empire.”

After bidding goodbye to Xu Sanshi and the other people from Dou Ling Empire, Huo Yuhao and Tang Wutong flew back to Shrek City overnight.

Reality proved Huo Yuhao’s prediction correct. Of course, it was not entirely his own prediction when Ju Zi had already informed him personally. Even though she had not lied to him about her plan, Huo Yuhao took a little too long to fully grasp her plan.

While the two of them were flying across the night sky, Huo Yuhao revealed a solemn expression, while Tang Wutong could not help but frown.

Yes, the war had only just begun. The Sun Moon Empire’s army was still at Shrek City. Now, the entire continent was becoming increasingly chaotic. The Sun Moon Empire had undeniably gotten the upper hand. If things were to continue this way, no one could be sure when they would suddenly launch an all-out attack on them.

This time around, even though they had managed to take out what was equivalent to a beast-ranked soul engineer legion, the entire royal family of the Dou Ling Empire had been wiped out. This meant that internal problems within the Dou Ling Empire would start to surface, and the Dou Ling Empire’s fighting power would definitely decrease.

The next target for the Sun Moon Empire would definitely not be Dou Ling Empire. They would go for the Star Luo Empire. Once the Star Luo Empire was out of the picture, taking down Dou Ling Empire would be a piece of cake. It seemed like Huo Yuhao would have no choice but to fight alongside that man.

When he thought about this, Huo Yuhao could not help but reveal an awkward expression.

After going through so much, the hatred in his heart was a lot less intense than before. This was especially true after seeing what had happened to Ju Zi. She had given up on too many things because of the hatred in her heart. Even though she was now the War God Empress, she was not leading a blissful life!

Perhaps, the right time for Huo Yuhao to settle his relationship with that man was coming soon.

As this thought surfaced in his mind, Huo Yuhao could not help but feel a little apprehensive about meeting him again. He was not very willing to face that man—the person whom he had once hated unconditionally but had now started to gain some respect from Huo Yuhao.

By the time Huo Yuhao and Tang Wutong returned to Shrek City, it was almost dawn. Shrek City was very quiet, but the belligerence in the air was palpable.

After Shrek City was rebuilt, it was a lot larger than before. It was almost as big as the entire Radiant City. Right now, Shrek City was housing hundreds of thousands of troops, which were elite troops from the Star Luo and Dou Ling empires. They seemed to be ready to decide victory once and for all with the Sun Moon Empire's army. Of course, the remaining troops of the Heavenly Soul Empire were also within Shrek City.

The current Heavenly Soul Empire army had about seventy thousand people. Even though they had lost a lot of their elite troops, those who were able to survive were truly the cream of the crop from the Heavenly Soul Empire. In fact, some of the survivors were members of the Body Sect.

However, the fact was that both the Heavenly Soul Empire and the Body Sect had already been destroyed by the Sun Moon Empire. They were now a long way from what they were in the past. Whenever Huo Yuhao thought about Princess Wei Na's pale face and soulless eyes, he could not help but sigh. Wars were truly cruel things.

After flying straight into the academy and across Sea God's Lake, they landed on Sea God's Island. There was no time for them to rest. After all, every new piece of information could decide the outcome of the war.

Even though Huo Yuhao and Tang Wutong were already Titled Douluo, they would still feel tired like normal people. However, now was definitely not the time for them to catch up on any form of rest.

Both of them sped into the Sea God's Pavilion. As usual, Huo Yuhao prayed before the Golden Tree before stepping into the pavilion.

They did not try to conceal their auras, and their arrival awakened the Elders from their meditation.

Huo Yuhao and Tang Wutong stood silently as they waited in the hall.

Tang Wutong squeezed Huo Yuhao's hand and whispered, "Yuhao, be careful with your words later. Don't mess it up."

Huo Yuhao naturally understood what she meant as he nodded.

It did not take too long before the Elders of the Sea God's Pavilion started to come down the staircase. After seeing how disheveled they looked, the Elders revealed a look of surprise. They had thought that both Huo Yuhao and Tang Wutong were still in Tang Sect. Elder Xuan had given an alternative explanation for their absence from the conference for the past few days. He had told them that Huo Yuhao had chosen to stay in the Tang Sect to consolidate his currently unstable powers after making his breakthrough. n--Ove**l**1n

When Elder Xuan saw the frustration written on Huo Yuhao's face, he was already able to make an educated guess as to what had probably happened. He gradually headed over to his seat as he waved towards Huo Yuhao and Tang Wutong. "Yuhao, Wutong, take a seat."

However, Huo Yuhao shook his head and said, "I am sorry, Elder Xuan. I don't think I can get myself to sit down. I would prefer to stand."

Elder Xuan took a deep breath as a light flashed in his eyes. He saw the determined look in Huo Yuhao's eyes.

He nodded and said, "Okay then. I believe both of you must have something to say. If not, you would not have come here to wake us up with your spiritual auras before dawn."

Huo Yuhao nodded before bowing before the Elders with Tang Wutong. After straightening his back, he said, "I have just returned from the Dou Ling Empire with Wutong."

"The Dou Ling Empire?" After hearing what he had said, the Elders present could not help but gasp in surprise.

Elder Song couldn't help but ask, "What were you doing in Dou Ling Empire?"

Huo Yuhao closed his eyes as a look of pain formed on his face. "I went to Dou Ling Empire to witness the death of their entire royal family."

"What?" After hearing his words, everyone's eyes widened in disbelief. Even Elder Xuan lost his composure as he stood up and glared at Huo Yuhao. "Yuhao, you must take responsibility for your words!"

Yuhao complained, "Responsibility? Sure, I can take responsibility for everything. However, no matter how responsible I am, can I resurrect the thousands of lives of the royal family who have perished? Just a while ago, Dou Ling City was attacked by two beast-ranked soul engineer legions dispatched by the Sun Moon Empire. The capital of the Dou Ling Empire was bombed by a Class 9 stationary soul cannon shell. The entire palace was reduced to rubble, and no one from the royal family was found alive after the explosion. This was because the entire royal family was attending a gathering in the palace. Hence, no one was spared from the explosion. By the time I arrived, the entire city was already enshrouded in smoke."

Following which, he elaborated on how he had brought his peers from Tang Sect to the Dou Ling Empire, and how he had guessed the method of operation the Sun Moon Empire had planned to take. Afterward, he moved on to share what had happened at the palace, as well as how he handled the two soul engineer legions.

Huo Yuhao spoke with an unnaturally low voice. The pain and desperation in his voice were obvious.

"No matter how many Sun Moon Empire soul engineers I kill, I can never reverse what has happened to the royal family! The Sun Moon Empire has employed methods which are extremely vicious, and it has already calculated how Dou Ling Empire will crumble because of this attack. In the meantime, the elite troops from the Dou Ling Empire are waiting for an improbable battle within our city walls."

A heavy silence fell upon the hall in the Sea God's Pavilion. Following which, the Elders' breathing became more intense.

In their eyes, it was unimaginable that the palace of the Dou King Empire would be attacked.

Elder Zhuang couldn't help but ask angrily, "What was the army stationed in the Dou Ling Empire doing? How could they not know when two entire soul engineer legions infiltrated their land?"

Huo Yuhao shook his head and said, "Even if it was the Star Luo Empire, the outcome would not have been much different. The Sun Moon Empire definitely has a technological advantage which grants them the ability to sneak a few hundred soul engineers in without being detected. After all, all the empires

have an incredibly long border. The main problem is that the elite troops from the Dou Ling Empire were not present. They had all been dispatched to reinforce Shrek City. The Sun Moon Empire struck them when the capital was at its most vulnerable state. Otherwise, would they have fallen so easily?"

One of the Elders apparently took Huo Yuhao's words very personally as he said coldly, "In that case, are you blaming us for this unfortunate event? Are you blaming us for not listening to your suggestion? Do you expect us to give up on defending Shrek City? Do you think they would stop sending reinforcements if we told them to do so?"

Huo Yuhao went silent. Of course, he knew he could not blame the Elders for this tragedy. Everyone present here had the Academy's interest at heart.

He shook his head and apologized, "I am sorry for losing control of my emotions earlier. I just can't forget the image of the palace turning into ruins before my eyes. I am really sorry. I don't think I am suitable to remain as a member of the Sea God's Pavilion anymore. I hereby request that the Elders remove my appointment."

As he spoke, Huo Yuhao pulled Tang Wutong backward as they bowed politely before the Elders before turning around to leave.

"Stop!" Elder Song exclaimed furiously as he called out to Huo Yuhao.

Chapter 573.3: Prince Xu Sanshi

At this moment, not every Elder from the Sea God's Pavilion was present. Yan Shaozhe, Cai Mei'er, Xian Lin'er, Qian Duoduo, and Zhang Lexuan were absent from the current conversation. As the younger members of the Sea God's Pavilion, they had all set off for the front line, ready to take on the Sun Moon Empire's forces.

Hence, the Elders who stayed behind at the Sea God's Pavilion were the older ones.

Huo Yuhao stopped walking, but his head remained lowered.

Elder Song scolded, "This is the Sea God's Pavilion—not your Tang Sect. Do you think you can come and go as you please? Do you think you can just quit as you wish?"

Huo Yuhao's head remained lowered as he kept quiet.

Elder Song stared coldly at him before continuing, "I know what you're thinking. You must be thinking that our decision was wrong. You must be blaming the attack on Dou Ling Empire and the deaths of the royal family on our request for help! Am I right?"

Huo Yuhao shook his head and said, "Elder Song, that's not true. It's just that sometimes, I feel that the Academy is weighed down by too many responsibilities. Our heritage, which is over ten thousand years old, is both the foundation of our strength and an immense burden on our shoulders. This burden stops us from analyzing our situation rationally. In fact, it makes us overly conservative about everything we do. I just want to say that I am not blaming the Academy for everything that has happened. I am just feeling a little down. However, this war is far from over. Right after this, I intend to head to the battlefield and continue fighting."

“If we were to fight the Sun Moon Empire head-on, there’s absolutely no chance of us winning. Hence, I can only rely on unorthodox methods. In other words, I might need to rely on what is seemingly unscrupulous to weaken their forces. This is the only way that we might stand a chance against them. I cannot allow the Academy to be shamed because of what I plan to do. Hence...”

“What?” After hearing his explanation, the Elders present seemed to have lost their rage as a look of surprise formed on their faces.

They had all thought that Huo Yuhao wanted to leave the Sea God’s Pavilion because he had lost his temper. Little did they expect him to want to leave because of a mature consideration.

Elder Xuan said, “Yuhao, do you really think that we can’t tolerate any scheming ploys or some unscrupulous methods? Even though the Academy’s reputation is extremely important, it should not be allowed to become a burden to our strategies. You are right to say that our Academy’s heritage is sometimes a burden. However, it is a burden that we need to take on and be responsible for. I admit that we need to accept partial responsibility for the death of the Dou Ling Empire’s royal family. However, Shrek City cannot afford to fall at all costs. This is something that cannot be debated.”

Huo Yuhao said, “I am sorry, Elder Xuan. In order to go up against the Sun Moon Empire, I might even utilize abilities which are similar to those of evil soul masters. This is something the Academy has never allowed. I cannot allow the Academy to lose its reputation because of my actions. I can imagine how the Sun Moon Empire would use this reason to attack the Academy in the future. I can only avoid shaming the Academy by leaving all of you.”

Elder Xuan spoke plainly, “Foolish lad, you’re thinking too much. What’s wrong with that?”

“Huh?” Huo Yuhao’s jaw dropped. How could it be fine for people to spread news that Shrek Academy had produced evil soul masters?

“Even though evil soul masters are our enemies, there is no power in the world that is objectively right or wrong. There are only evil people who harbor ill intentions against other humans. Powerful abilities when utilized in times of war are commonly considered evil abilities. But when they are used in other areas in beneficial ways, they are usually considered good abilities. This is the same for the abilities of evil soul masters. Do you really think we don’t know how you once utilized that power to help the Academy when the beast wave attacked us previously? If you remember correctly, none of us reprimanded you for that.”

“On top of that, the Academy’s ten thousand years of heritage has indeed given us a huge responsibility. However, at the same time, it has given us a reputation which will not be easily shaken by the Sun Moon Empire’s rumors. Do you know why the Sun Moon Empire’s army doesn’t dare to make a move on us? Other than you as a personal reason, they fear that they might lose the support of their soldiers and soul engineers if they were to attack us.”

“After all, our Academy is the number one academy in the entire world. It is where every soul master in the world dreams of joining. No soul master would treat us lightly, and the soul masters and soul engineers from the Sun Moon Empire are no exception.”

“As for what happened to the Dou Ling Empire, we are all very sorry to hear about their tragic fate. However, we can’t change what has already happened. All we can do is help the Dou Ling Empire

stabilize their empire. At the same time, we can help protect them from the Sun Moon Empire's army. Yuhao, just go ahead and do whatever you had in mind. The only thing which we, the old fellows, can do is stay within Shrek City and ensure that the bulk of their army stays here."

Elder Song slowly walked towards Huo Yuhao. She was a lot shorter than him, and hence could only tilt her head upwards in order to look him in the eyes.

"Young one, sometimes, when it comes to certain things, we just have to change the way we look at them. Even if the Star Luo Empire and Dou Ling Empire were to fall, as long as their elites remain alive within Shrek City, there will still be hope."

"Our Academy has already released all our soul tool research findings, as well as the information regarding martial souls in our library, to all the elite soul masters from the three empires currently staying within Shrek City. We might not be a country, and might not be the best when it comes to war, but our strength lies in passing on knowledge and tradition!"

After hearing Elder Song's words, Huo Yuhao was startled! He had never expected the Academy to be using this method to counter the Sun Moon Empire's schemes.

The Heavenly Soul Empire, Dou Ling Empire and the Star Luo Empire's elite troops largely consisted of soul masters! There were more than ten thousand soul masters currently in Shrek City. That was almost a third of the total number of soul masters within the entire continent. It was probably close to half of the total number of soul masters within the three original empires of the Douluo Continent. *noVE-lb*)In

Shrek Academy was actually choosing to release all the research findings they had on soul tools, as well as the cultivation methods they had developed over their ten thousand years of history, to all these soul masters. This meant that all of these soul masters were, to a certain extent, being nurtured by Shrek Academy. Even if the war turned out to be a disaster for all three empires, as long as these soul masters were to inherit the spirit and learnings of Shrek Academy, they would always have a chance at restoring the three original empires of the Douluo Continent.

It seemed like the Academy had its own unique way of handling its responsibilities. It was, in fact, protecting the three original empires in its own way. This selfless spirit transformed the doubt in Huo Yuhao's heart into guilt.

The look in Elder Song's eyes turned softer as she gently patted Huo Yuhao's shoulder. "Young man, it is good that you have a kind and brave heart. But you must remember that the Academy will never become your burden or your sole responsibility at any point in time. As long as we old fellows are still around, we won't allow you to take on every responsibility out there. It is only after all of us have passed away when your generation will take the baton from us. And before that happens, the Academy will only be a supportive force behind you. We already chose to believe in you unconditionally the moment you became a member of the Sea God's Pavilion. So go ahead and do what you want to do."

"Elder Song..." Huo Yuhao's voice started to tremble. In fact, tears were starting to well up in Tang Wutong's eyes.

Elder Xuan stood up and walked to Elder Song's side as he revealed a solemn expression. "Elder Song is right. As long as we are alive, we will bear this heavy responsibility. But you are also not wrong to say that we have been overly conservative and protective of what the Academy has achieved. Indeed, we

are lacking the mentality and courage to do what is ultimately right. You have already matured and grown a lot. Now, you possess the ability to protect yourself. So run along and do what you think needs to be done. I believe that the two of you will be able to turn the tables. And while you're working on that, Shrek City will never fall into the hands of our enemies when all of us present here are still alive."

Huo Yuhao suddenly took a few steps backward before he kneeled down with a loud thud. He lowered his torso to pay his respects to every single Elder present. After doing so thrice, he stood up again and left the hall with Tang Wutong.

As Elder Xuan watched him leave, he revealed a heartening smile on his face. "This lad has really matured. I really admire Elder Mu for having such a great disciple. As long as he is around, the spirit of Shrek Academy will never be extinguished. I'm really curious as to what he can achieve in the future."

Elder Song gazed into the distance as she said, "This lad is right. We've been bundling too many responsibilities onto ourselves. I really hope that the continent can tide through this difficult period together."

Elder Xuan asked, "What do you think this lad's next move will be?"

Elder Zhuang stood up and said, "I don't think I can guess what he's up to next. But judging from the look on his face, it should probably be something that will be extremely shocking to the rest of the world. If not, he would never have chosen to leave the Sea God's Pavilion at this juncture with the character he has."

Elder Xuan started to frown. It seemed as though he might have an inkling of what Huo Yuhao was about to do.

After leaving the Sea God's Pavilion, Huo Yuhao held onto Tang Wutong's hand as they left Shrek Academy for the Tang Sect.

Bei Bei had not taken his rest. In fact, no one from Tang Sect had rested at all.

Since the Sun Moon Empire's army had camped outside Shrek City, the entire Tang Sect had been working like a machine. The reason was that only the Tang Sect's Soul Tool Hall was capable of producing the powerful soul tools that could strengthen the defensive capabilities of Shrek Academy.

This time around, the Star Luo Empire and Dou Ling Empire did not only sent their elite soul masters and troops, but they had also brought large amounts of rare metals with them.

Now that Shrek Academy had shared its research findings with everyone, the different empires no longer cared about personal interests as they pooled their resources to protect each other's empires. The Heavenly Soul Empire's fall was an important reminder for them to unite and fight off their common enemy!

With sufficient materials, the soul engineers within Shrek Academy could begin their work. Averaging only four hours of rest every day, the soul engineers invested the rest of their time working on soul tools.

Even though Bei Bei did not know how to build soul tools, as the eldest senior brother of the Tang Sect, he helped to delegate the work along with Tang Ya. Some of the soul masters from the Star Luo Empire

and Dou Ling Empire who had the gifts to become soul engineers even volunteered to help out under their instruction.

This was not only a learning process for them, as they tried their best to help alleviate the manpower shortage problem in the Tang Sect.

Hence, the Tang Sect had been running with a heavy toll on its manpower.

“Little junior brother.” A tired Bei Bei’s heart sank after seeing the unpleasant expression on Huo Yuhao and Tang Wutong’s faces.

The first thought that hit him was that something wrong must have happened. “Where are Sanshi and the rest? Did they get...” Bei Bei gasped.

Chapter 574: I’ve Come!

Tang Ya wasn’t far away, and she hurried over when she heard his voice. Even though she still hadn’t fused with the Bluesilver Emperor, her martial soul was recovering, and she had recovered her strength as an eight-ringed soul master in this time.

The evil soul masters had hurt her badly, but she had managed to keep her strength and improvements. She had recovered her martial soul, and her prowess was increasing linearly. She was now considered one of the stronger ones within the Tang Sect.

Huo Yuhao hurriedly said, “They’re fine. Don’t worry, eldest senior brother. But the Dou Ling Empire is in trouble.”

There were many people around them, so the four of them went into a silent room as Huo Yuhao recounted the entire journey.

Bei Bei’s expression turned black as he listened to his words. An entire country’s royal palace was flattened just like that! If not for the fact that Xu Sanshi had the Dou Ling Empire’s royal blood in his veins, their problem would be much bigger than this, and the Dou Ling Empire would probably crumble and implode.

Bei Bei heaved a sigh and said, “The continent’s situation is no longer something we can control. We can only do all we can now, and hope for the best. Do you have any suggestions, little junior brother?”

Huo Yuhao lowered his voice and said, “The academy has too much responsibility because they have to protect themselves. The academy cannot abandon Shrek City’s defenses, even though they’re aware that our enemy will not attack. The Dou Ling Empire and the Star Luo Empire’s elites are also inside Shrek City. If this continues, when the Sun Moon Empire’s great army launches an all-out attack, neither country will be able to stop the Sun Moon Empire no matter who they choose to target. The academy has preserved the two empire’s elites, but we cannot allow the Sun Moon Empire to destroy the Dou Ling Empire and the Star Luo Empire just like that. Therefore, our top priority is to draw the Sun Moon Empire’s army away from Shrek City. At least, their target will become a lot more evident after retreating. When that happens, we will have it easier, whether we are trying to hold them back or fighting against them. At the very least, we will not be dragged by our noses.”

“The Sun Moon Empire’s army is like a bone stuck in our throats. Shrek City’s position has tied up the Star Luo and Dou Ling empire, and they’re not having a good time.”

Bei Bei said, “But what can we do so that the Sun Moon Empire will retreat? That’s almost impossible. They got away with destroying the Dou Ling Empire’s royal palace this time, and that manner can even be replicated.”

“I have an idea,” Huo Yuhao suddenly said.

“Ah?” Tang Wutong was astonished when she heard his words, not to mention Bei Bei or Tang Ya.

“You have an idea? What’s your idea?” Bei Bei said in surprise.

Huo Yuhao clenched his fists subconsciously. “The only way to deal with the Sun Moon Empire’s overt scheme is to surprise them! And I am the surprise factor. I’m going for a rest, eldest senior brother, Teacher Xiao Ya.”

Huo Yuhao turned to leave as he finished his statement without even explaining things properly.

Bei Bei frowned, but he didn’t chase after Huo Yuhao and allowed him to leave. Tang Wutong hurriedly followed behind him.

Tang Ya nudged Bei Bei and asked, “Why aren’t you asking him what he intends to do?”

Bei Bei shook his head and replied, “I trust him, so I’m not going to ask. Yuhao has grown much more than we have over the past few years, and his personality has become increasingly stable and mature. If somebody else were to go through this matter, that person would probably have panicked a long time ago, and wouldn’t know what to do at all. But he’s not panicking, can’t you see? His eyes are determined, and it’s clear that he’s had a plan all along. Since that’s the case, why should I ask? All we must do is deal with our own matters adequately. Our operation can continue once the Sun Moon Empire retreats.”

Tang Ya nodded and said, “Alright, let’s go do some work.”

Huo Yuhao returned to his room, and Tang Wutong followed him inside.

“What’s your solution?” Bei Bei didn’t ask, but that didn’t mean that Tang Wutong wouldn’t. She also trusted Huo Yuhao, but she was much more worried about him at the same time!

Huo Yuhao didn’t tell Bei Bei about how he had tried to resign at the Sea God’s Pavilion before this. Even though he wasn’t successful, Tang Wutong could tell from his mannerisms what he was about to do.

Huo Yuhao exhaled deeply, and he contemplated for a few moments before he pulled Tang Wutong over and whispered something into her ear.

“What? You... but will they agree?”

Huo Yuhao smiled plainly and said, “I will make them agree. This plan has more than one goal.”

Tang Wutong was worried. “But you...”

Huo Yuhao smiled. “What? Do you not trust my strength?”

“Then I’ll go with you!” Tang Wutong retorted.

Huo Yuhao shook his head. “No, my plan cannot be completed like that. Furthermore, we can’t fuse our martial souls because martial soul fusion skills consume too much energy, and are not suitable for prolonged battles. Don’t worry, you can sit back and watch my enemies, and you can watch your husband massacre everyone!”

“I haven’t married you yet!” Tang Wutong snapped unhappily.

“Yes, my dear. When is my father-in-law coming back? I can’t wait any longer. Come, let me give you a kiss. My skin is quite thick anyway.”

“.....”

The sun was already high in the sky as it shone over the great earth.

A new day had begun, and the Sun Moon Empire’s deadline for Shrek City was here.

However, strangely, the Sun Moon Empire wasn’t doing anything at all. They weren’t even pushing forward. They just stayed forty-five kilometers from Shrek City.

This distance wasn’t considered close, but it wasn’t considered very far either. Soul engineers would only need about fifteen minutes of flying at full speed before they could launch an onslaught against Shrek City.

Shrek City had been wary and vigilant over the past few days. Now time was up, and nobody knew whether the Sun Moon Empire would make their move. Every soul engineer in the city was nervously prepared for battle with their soul tools, and there were quite a few stronger soul masters patrolling outside the city.

Shrek City’s surveillance soul tools were inferior to the Sun Moon Empire’s, but Shrek City had a lot more soul masters than they did.

Simply put, if the Sun Moon Empire didn’t have their formidable soul tool fronts and linked soul tools, Shrek City might not lose if they fought head-on!

The atmosphere between both parties was a little tense, and an epic battle could occur at any moment.

The quieter the Sun Moon Empire was, the stronger the feeling of pressure before a rainstorm.

Right in this moment, a single person appeared soundlessly on Shrek City’s battlements. No, he wasn’t the only one. Someone else stepped out after that person appeared, her long, pinkish-blue hair draped behind her back as she stood next to him.

Huo Yuhao gazed into the distance. Even though the Sun Moon Empire was forty-five kilometers away, the weather was good, and he could still roughly see what was going on with his vision.

The Sun Moon Empire’s great army was still over there.

Tang Wutong stood beside him quietly, and she pulled over her long hair from behind her back and began to comb it.

Combing hair on Shrek City's battlements wasn't something that just anyone would do.

The commanders on top of Shrek's city walls responsible for patrolling stood near him as they looked on silently with respectful expressions on their faces.

Everyone knew what Huo Yuhao looked like. Ever since that day when he had bravely challenged the Beast God, Shrek City's soul masters and the two empires' soul masters could all recognize him.

Huo Yuhao did lose that day, but he managed to survive after the Beast God had attacked him at full strength. That proved how powerful he was. The Beast God, Di Tian was the strongest individual on the continent, stronger than even an Ultimate Douluo!

Therefore, Huo Yuhao didn't waste any words at all as he stood on the battlements. Furthermore, the main defensive force which was on the city walls was the Heavy Artillery Soul Engineer Legion, and Huo Yuhao was their commander anyway.

He just stood there in silence and continued to watch. Tang Wutong finished styling her hair as braids fell down to her hips, and extended to the top of her head. Her hair was tied into a scorpion braid.

"You should still stay here," Huo Yuhao glanced at his lover exasperatedly.

Tang Wutong shook her head. "I don't have to participate, but I have to be beside you."

Huo Yuhao caressed her head as he came up next to her cheek and kissed her gently. "You smell good."

Tang Wutong was embarrassed. "Everyone is looking."

"Let them look, I'm kissing my wife. Let's go, we don't have much time." Huo Yuhao held Tang Wutong's hand as he spoke, and they soared into the sky as everyone looked on. Nobody saw them use flying-type soul tools as they flew toward the Sun Moon Empire just like that.

"They've... they've flown away?" Shrek's city defense army looked on with widened eyes and slack jaws. What's happening? They're flying away just like that? Why... why are they flying toward the Sun Moon Empire? What are they trying to do?

"Quick, report to the academy. Tell them that Huo Yuhao and Tang Wutong have gone toward the Sun Moon Empire camp." They thought about the Sun Moon Empire's demand for Shrek City to hand Huo Yuhao over, and the city defense army's general began to sweat. Who knew what they were doing? Were they handing themselves over?

Faint light flickered as a dash of ice-cold light flashed across Huo Yuhao's face. He flew through the air as his spiritual power surged forth like a tidal wave. However, his spiritual power went up into the sky instead of toward the Sun Moon Empire's camp.

Huo Yuhao's terrifying Spiritual Detection covered a vast area as aerial surveillance soul tools appeared one after another within his senses.

Shrek Academy had many powerful individuals, and that was the reason why the Sun Moon Empire didn't dare to allow their aerial surveillance soul tools to fly too close to Shrek City to avoid any losses. But these aerial surveillance soul tools had nowhere to hide in front of Huo Yuhao's formidable spiritual power.

But they had already discovered his presence at this point, and they immediately retreated towards the Sun Moon Empire's camp like a wave.

Huo Yuhao and Tang Wutong didn't hide themselves. Huo Yuhao had an "excellent" reputation in the Sun Moon Empire. Besides his prowess, Huo Yuhao had destroyed the greatest number of the Sun Moon Empire's aerial surveillance soul tools. Therefore, once the soul engineers who were controlling the aerial surveillance soul tools discovered him and immediately reported to their superiors, they hurriedly withdrew their surveillance soul tools.

Huo Yuhao withdrew his consciousness in the next moment. He wanted this outcome. The Sun Moon Empire had given them pressure all this time, but this time, it was his turn to give them some pressure. This was the only way that his plan could continue.

They quickly covered the remaining distance to the camp, and it didn't take long before the Sun Moon Empire's camp appeared clearly in Huo Yuhao and Tang Wutong's vision.

Huo Yuhao squinted slightly, his expression as cold and solemn as ever. Huo Yuhao was as calm as he could be under such circumstances.

Dense energy waves appeared from the Sun Moon Empire. Huo Yuhao and Tang Wutong could evidently feel the concentrating energy from the ground even though they were in the sky, as soul tool fronts began operating one after another as they locked onto Huo Yuhao and Tang Wutong.

A single person could do nothing against these soul tool fronts no matter how formidable that person was. The Sun Moon Empire had already proved that fact with the Beast God. Even though the Beast God had also destroyed a soul tool front, the Sun Moon Empire had managed to force him away to the point where evil soul masters took that opportunity to hurt him.

Huo Yuhao was strong, but he was still just a single person.

However, the soul engineers who were locking onto Huo Yuhao didn't have that thought for a long time before something happened.

Huo Yuhao vanished.

Huo Yuhao and Tang Wutong vanished at almost the same time in midair. They didn't leave any traces at all, so all the waves that were locking onto them immediately became useless.

Huo Yuhao was strong enough to conceal himself even before he became a Titled Douluo, not to mention now. Shaking off those surveillance soul tools was simply too easy. The difference between Huo Yuhao and Di Tian was that Di Tian could manipulate spatial power, but Huo Yuhao relied on his martial soul's strength to integrate himself into his surroundings. Furthermore, Huo Yuhao could imitate any kind of energy wave with his formidable spiritual senses. Even a few Ultimate Douluo probably wouldn't be entirely certain of finding him under such circumstances, let alone these surveillance soul tools. At least, these soul tools couldn't do that with their current technological standard.

Huo Yuhao and Tang Wutong vanished, but the Sun Moon Empire's camp didn't loosen up because of that. The soul engineers were very clear, no matter what Class they were, about what would happen to them if a Transcendent Douluo managed to infiltrate their soul tool front, or if one came close to them.

Huo Yuhao's clash with Di Tian gave them a deep impression and lesson. There were still traces of the frightening fusion of darkness and ice on the ground, and those traces weren't something that could be dispelled within a short period of time.

A sigh could be heard from the sky before Huo Yuhao's voice traveled far into the distance.

"Didn't you guys want Shrek City to hand me over? I'm here now. Who's coming to receive me?"

Chapter 575.1: I've Come!

Huo Yuhao's voice was very plain and monotonous, but it travelled far into the distance as it covered the Sun Moon Empire's entire camp. However, not a single surveillance soul tool could detect his exact location, and the tense atmosphere became even more intense.

Ju Zi could naturally hear his voice from her commander's tent. Furthermore, several messengers were already reporting what was happening outside to her.

Ju Zi was still feeling a little melancholic. The reason for that was that she had just received news about the Evileye Tyrant Soul Engineer Legion's commander, Xia Xuanchen, through their transmission soul tools.

The Evileye Tyrant and Imperial Dragon Legions had been successful in their ambush against Ling Dou City, and they had successfully destroyed Dou Ling City's royal palace. But just as they were prepared to retreat, many evil soul masters appeared to ambush them, which resulted in the two legions sustaining heavy losses. Even the Imperial Dragon Legion's commander, Xu Tianyuan, had perished.

Ju Zi's first reaction was to restrict this news when she received it. At least, she had to do it before Xia Xuanchen and the others got back.

Evil soul masters ambushing two beast-ranked soul engineer legions was big news, and she couldn't hush this matter up even with her reputation as the War God Empress.

What did beast-ranked soul engineer legions represent? They represented the military, not to mention that the Imperial Dragon Legion was involved. The Imperial Dragon Legion represented the royal family.

Xu Tianran himself would have to deal with this matter carefully even if he were here himself, because this matter involved both the military and the royal family, let alone Ju Zi.

And the evil soul masters? They represented the Holy Ghost Church, who had two Ultimate Douluo! Furthermore, the Holy Ghost Church's supreme leader, Zhongli Wu, was supervisor to their army right now.

Ju Zi didn't understand why the Holy Ghost Church would suddenly ambush two beast-ranked soul engineer legions, but she believed Xia Xuanchen.

From her perspective, Xia Xuanchen was the weakest among the four beast-ranked soul engineer legions' commanders. However, he had the clearest mind, and that was the reason why she gave him that heavy responsibility.

Xia Xuanchen had analyzed the Holy Ghost Church's aim in detail in his transmission. The Holy Ghost Church was antagonizing the military, and they were going after the soul engineer legions' strength. At

the same time, they went after the Imperial Dragon Soul Engineer Legion's commander, Xu Tianyuan. The storage-type soul tool that Xu Tianyuan was carrying on his body had disappeared during the attack, and there were likely to be several Class 9 stationary soul cannon shells in that storage soul tool. They didn't know how many there were exactly.

Was that reason enough? That reason wasn't enough for normal people. Attacking two beast-ranked legions was big news, after all! But for the Holy Ghost Church, who had always been selfish, and who had only cared about themselves to the point where they didn't care about innocent lives, this reason couldn't be any more normal.

Ju Zi was very clear what the Holy Ghost Church's true leader, Ye Xishui, used to charge her Death God.

Not long ago, the Holy Ghost Church had used several tens of thousands of spirits from soldiers who had perished to attack the Beast God. Furthermore, Zhongli Wu had personally led a team to chase down and kill Di Tian.

Zhongli Wu and the others had returned. There had been more than ten evil soul masters when they had left, but a third of them had disappeared when they returned. Zhongli Wu's expression had been stern and solemn, and it was evident that their plan wasn't successful. The Beast God wasn't that easily assassinated, and this outcome also benefited Ju Zi. This was what she had hoped to see.

However, there was an uproar within the army when Zhongli Wu and the others used the souls of dead soldiers for that purpose.

The Holy Ghost Church's powerful individuals got away with it, but Ju Zi had to take a lot of pressure.

There was a reason for the army's fury. Soldiers sacrificed their lives for the country, and they were already heroes, but their souls after their passing ended up being used by Holy Ghost Church's evil soul masters. They were even converted into avenging spirits, and that was a fact that the army couldn't tolerate at all. The conflict between the Holy Ghost Church and the military was continuously building up. Under such circumstances, it wasn't hard to imagine that the news that Xia Xuanchen had brought back wouldn't just be lighting a fuse. That news would cause a violent conflict between the army and the Holy Ghost Church.

Ju Zi wasn't that afraid of the Holy Ghost Church. The military had many formidable individuals, and there were quite a number of Class 9 soul engineers. The army even had several beast-ranked soul engineer legions supporting them.

But what about Radiant City? There were two evil soul masters there, and one of them was the Death God Douluo, Ye Xishui. The Holy Ghost Church's foundations were also at Radiant City. If something happened here, the Holy Ghost Church would make a move in their capital. nDvE-1B(In

She didn't care about Xu Tianran's life, but she cared about her son's life! Furthermore, the Sun Moon Empire was in an excellent position. She couldn't afford for it to fall into disarray.

Ju Zi was even more conflicted under such circumstances, and she found it difficult to make a decision despite her intelligence and calibre. She could only temporarily suppress the army's fury. At least, she couldn't let a conflict happen between the army and the Holy Ghost Church before her setup was complete. That wasn't beneficial for her.

Furthermore, Ju Zi felt a little strange. Who did the Holy Ghost Church deploy to ambush the two beast-ranked soul engineer legions?

Ju Zi had a rough estimate of the Holy Ghost Church's soul masters. The Sun Moon Empire had also thoroughly investigated that matter before.

Ju Zi was very aware of those two soul engineer legions' capabilities. Even if they were more relaxed after their successful attack on Dou Ling City, anybody who wanted to ambush them had to be extremely powerful.

Undead creatures? Many undead creatures. That does sound like the Holy Ghost Church's methods. But there were a few doubts in Xia Xuanchen's report that attracted her attention.

Their enemies could hide themselves. That fact alone made Ju Zi's heart skip a beat.

There were soul masters who knew how to conceal themselves, and there were also evil soul masters who could do the same. But she knew of only one person who was adept at hiding himself and fighting battles alone! Furthermore, Xia Xuanchen also told her that there was somebody who possessed incredible abilities of ice and snow among the evil soul masters who had attacked them. The evil soul masters had relied on a kind of domain-type ability of ice and snow to create a death trap and besiege them.

Ice and snow? Stealth capabilities?

Ju Zi wouldn't be fit to be known as the War God Empress if she still didn't suspect him when these two capabilities existed at the same time.

Ju Zi could only force a laugh when she thought about that person.

Ju Zi finally had a taste of her own medicine, and how awkward the situation was. She knew what her opponent was doing, but there was nothing she could do to stop it. She couldn't even expose her opponent's identity.

Wasn't that right? She was positive that Huo Yuhao was likely the perpetrator who had ambushed the two beast-ranked soul engineer legions, and the Tang Sect's other members had probably assisted him as well. But she couldn't reveal that. Why couldn't she? Because she also wanted to deal with the Holy Ghost Church! Huo Yuhao had crushed two of the Sun Moon Empire's beast-ranked soul engineer legions and framed the Holy Ghost Church. In some sense, he was helping her.

But the timing wasn't right, was it? Furthermore, Huo Yuhao had also killed Xu Tianyuan. Xu Tianyuan was a prince who held the highest authority! His death meant the royal family's strength and authority would be reshuffled once more, and she had had a decent relationship with Xu Tianyuan.

Huo Yuhao's act messed everything up, but she simply couldn't reveal his identity.

She would waste her past efforts if she did that. If the army and the Holy Ghost Church's relationship was bridged, and if both the army and the Holy Ghost Church wanted to attack Shrek City, then that would be worse for her.

Ju Zi had made use of Shrek Academy's responsibility to defend themselves many times, while Huo Yuhao was the one who was using her in this moment. Ju Zi had to admit that she shouldn't have told

Huo Yuhao back then that she was targeting the Dou Ling Empire, because that fellow was just too smart.

But Ju Zi didn't feel like she had lost. Dou Ling City's royal palace was laid to ruin, and even if both beast-ranked soul engineer legions were massacred in the end, she would still be the ultimate victor. Reality proved that Huo Yuhao and the others were too late after all.

The situation was very messy, and that forced Ju Zi to divide her mind to deal with all sorts of problems. She was still very busy with work when she heard Huo Yuhao's voice from outside.

Ju Zi's first reaction when she heard Huo Yuhao's voice was, "So the person who ambushed the two legions wasn't him?"

Yes! If he was the one who did it, why would he be back so quickly? And what is he trying to do? Does he really think that I wish to capture him? Or is he trying to use our relationship to stump me? No, that's not how he does things.

Ju Zi was a little taken aback, and her mind felt a little blank. Just as Huo Yuhao himself had said, he had to give Ju Zi a surprise to deal with her. He had succeeded for the moment.

Xia Xuanchen's report meant that the two legions' remaining soldiers would only return to the army at night.

That was because they had to cover a lot of ground, and another reason was that they had become extremely tense and alarmed after Huo Yuhao ambushed them continuously. They had no choice but to be careful! Furthermore, their previous exploits made them extremely fatigued. They were already trying their best to reach their camp by nightfall.

Therefore, Ju Zi immediately realized after her momentary blankness that Huo Yuhao was probably still using her.

A smart person who wished to trump another had to think more meticulously. If Huo Yuhao had precisely calculated the time that these two legions needed to return, what was he doing, exactly?

"Pass my order. The Fire Phoenix Soul Engineer Legion is to be mobilized, and they will escort me to take a look at what that fellow is doing. All soul tool fronts, prepare linked defenses but hold fire. Notify all soul engineers Class 8 and above to gather in the sky and prepare for battle."

Ju Zi gave a series of orders before she walked out of her tent.

Chapter 575.2: I've Come!

Ju Zi wasn't concerned about her own safety at all, but Huo Yuhao was the one who was provoking her! She didn't believe that he could take her life no matter how they fought each other. Otherwise, she wouldn't have returned alive from that mystical demiplane.

Faint light flickered in the air, and every soul engineer from the Sun Moon Empire pulled long faces. They couldn't lock onto their enemy. What was happening? This meant that this fellow could enter their camp as and when he wanted!

“Safety first, commander. We don’t know where that person is.” Ju Zi had just stepped out from her tent when several Class 9 soul engineers surrounded her. Furthermore, they released a linked defensive barrier and contained her within it.

Ju Zi smiled faintly and waved her hand. “It’s alright. He doesn’t dare to venture too deeply into our camp. He won’t be able to escape if he comes in. Let’s go and see what he’s doing.”

These words were simply intended for those around her. Ju Zi was very clear about how strong Huo Yuhao’s survival abilities were after finding out about his demiplane.

“Commander, the Fire Phoenix Legion has been assembled.”

Ju Zi nodded. “The Fire Phoenix Legion shall follow me into the air. Activate the legion’s linked defensive barrier.”

Huo Yuhao and Tang Wutong were still in the sky, but they were concealed with Imitation, and nobody could see where they were.

Light continued to flicker as a single sphere of light glowed in the sky. A fiery-red sphere slowly rose from the Sun Moon Empire’s camp in the next moment.

The sphere was translucent, and what was happening inside could be faintly observed. The Fire Phoenix Legion’s soul engineers were all wearing fiery-red soul tools, and their equipment was especially glaring.

The Fire Phoenix Legion’s status among the four beast-ranked soul engineer legions was initially second only to the Imperial Dragon Legion. Ever since Ju Zi took over and after she received Xu Tianran’s adamant support, along with her rising reputation as the War God Empress, the Fire Phoenix Legion’s status was growing increasingly comparable to the Imperial Dragon Legion’s status.

Beams of light flared one after another in the sky. The air was clearly twisting and contorting a little due to the Fire Phoenix Legion’s linked defensive barrier. This was a phenomenon due to high temperatures, as the Fire Phoenix Legion’s soul tools were mainly fire-type weapons.

Ju Zi was hovering inside the sphere. She was wearing a magnificent human-shaped soul tool that was golden-red in color which perfectly protected her body. Brilliant and flowing light coursed around this human-shaped soul tool, and this soul tool was different from the Sun Moon Empire’s other human-shaped soul tools that Huo Yuhao had seen. Even though he was only observing from afar, Huo Yuhao could faintly feel that this human-shaped soul tool’s capabilities were comparable to that of his Icy War God’s Armor. This set was possibly even superior in some respects. For instance, Ju Zi could use this human-shaped soul tool which was conspicuously at the pinnacle of Class 9 soul tools even with her cultivation rank. This meant that her human-shaped soul tool could reduce its demand for using it. This characteristic was something that the Icy War God’s Armor didn’t have.

Of course, it also depended on who was wearing this human-shaped soul tool. Ju Zi was wearing this human-shaped soul tool more for her personal protection than anything else.

Huo Yuhao reappeared in midair with a solemn look on his face. Many soul tools beneath him locked onto him once more as he revealed himself.

However, the soul engineers responsible for locking onto his position quickly realized to their astonishment that they seemed to be locking onto nothingness. They couldn't detect any living presence at all.

Huo Yuhao was now a veteran, so he wouldn't put himself in danger. What he was doing was actually very simple: he used Spiritual Interference Domain and created a hologram a hundred meters away from him. The soul engineers could lock onto that as much as they wished, but they still wouldn't find his precise location. Furthermore, Huo Yuhao's Spiritual Detection covered the entire place. As long as it didn't touch any spiritual barriers, any soul tool that was about to fire would appear within his detection range, hence he wouldn't have any problem dodging attacks.

"You're the Sun Moon Empire's War God Empress?" Huo Yuhao's icy-cold voice travelled into the distance. However, his tone seemed to change a little when he was uttering the last few syllables.

There was no way his tone couldn't change. There was a small hand pinching his waist and twisting his flesh a hundred and eighty degrees.

Keep pretending! Tang Wutong thought to herself resentfully.

Ju Zi stared at Huo Yuhao coldly as she lowered her voice and replied, "Yes, I am the Sun Moon Empire's Empress. I am also this army's commander. I didn't expect you to show yourself. Since you're here, then don't resist capture. Seems like Shrek City can't protect you after all!"

Their eyes were both very cold. They were so far apart, and there was also a protective barrier around her, so they couldn't see each other's eyes clearly. But strange sensations appeared in their hearts in this moment.

This wasn't the first time that they were encountering each other on the battlefield. However, this was the first time that they were facing each other with their initial identities as everybody else looked on, and as enemies.

Ju Zi wasn't careless because Huo Yuhao was her opponent. On the contrary, she felt a lot more alert and wary because Huo Yuhao was the one who was hovering in the sky opposite her.

It didn't matter that she had gained the upper hand during their previous few encounters. She was very clear with her understanding of Huo Yuhao about how terrifying an opponent he could be if he unleashed his potential. Reality also proved this fact, because the damage that Huo Yuhao had singlehandedly dealt to the Sun Moon Empire rivaled that of the entire Heavenly Soul Empire. How many surveillance soul tools had he destroyed, not to mention soul engineers, soul tool fronts, and whatnot?

Ju Zi stared at Huo Yuhao in the distance, and she was already very certain that Huo Yuhao was the perpetrator who had ambushed the two beast-ranked soul engineer legions. It has to be him!

Huo Yuhao said plainly, "I'm responsible for my own actions. You've asked for me, and so I am here. I have already detached myself from Shrek City at the same time. Right now, I represent only myself. Catch me if you can. Whoever isn't convinced can come get me."

Ju Zi grunted coldly and retorted, “You seem very confident of yourself. Do you really think that you can fight against my army of a hundred thousand men all by yourself? You only have two choices: submit to us or die!”

Huo Yuhao laughed. “You want me to submit? Dream on. Who are you to ask me to surrender? Because of those soul tools that you have beneath you? If you understand me, then you should know that those soul tools are useless against me. I’m here today to tell you that I will be a plague to your army from today onward. I will follow you wherever you go. Perhaps killing you will not be easy, but I am confident of killing your subordinates. Your linked defensive barriers cannot be activated continuously, and they can’t cover your entire army, can they?”

Huo Yuhao’s voice was projected into the distance with his spiritual power, and every one of the Sun Moon Empire’s generals’ expressions changed drastically when he said those words.

They had all seen Huo Yuhao’s prowess before. Even though they didn’t know what rank he was at exactly, he could take a hit from the Beast God and survive. He had to be a Titled Douluo, at the very least.

Normal Titled Douluo weren’t a big deal, because they couldn’t hide from the Sun Moon Empire’s various surveillance soul tools. They would be blown into bits before they could come near the empire’s army.

But this fellow was different! Even though they didn’t know how he was doing what he did, they knew that could use his abilities to hide from all of their surveillance soul tools. If a formidable individual like him was determined to massacre and assassinate everyone without any care for his identity, and could not be detected, then everyone would be in danger.

Naturally, he wouldn’t target the normal soldiers. Instead, generals and soul engineers would undoubtedly become his targets.

They would probably be fine for one or two days, but what if this was done over a long period of time? How many people would he kill? Nobody knew.

Of course, they weren’t completely helpless, but dealing with somebody like that wasn’t an easy task at all!

The entire Sun Moon Empire’s atmosphere became a little tense and down.

Ju Zi’s expression turned dark as she said coldly, “Since when have Shrek Academy’s graduates become so shameless?”

Huo Yuhao smiled faintly. “This is war, and there is only victory or defeat. The winner becomes king, and the loser becomes an outlaw. You must know this, Empress, don’t you? Yes, we are no match for you on an open battlefield, and Shrek Academy has already expelled me because of you. Now, I am independent, and I have nothing left to lose. I don’t even have a place to eat. Why can’t I have my catharsis? And you, those who have taken away my livelihood, shall be my targets.”

Ju Zi rolled her eyes. “Since when has he become so shameless? n-)o-)V//E./U/(b--1-.n

"I can give you your livelihood. If you join the Sun Moon Empire, I can decide to forgive everything that you've done. Furthermore, I can appoint you as one of the royal family's Worshipped. We can give you everything you require."

Huo Yuhao laughed, and his laughter was extremely exaggerated. "Really? If that's the case, I can think about it! My demands aren't that high. I've heard that the War God Empress is quite pretty. I already have a wife, so I can't take you as my wife, but surely you can be my concubine. You can just be my concubine."

"You..." Ju Zi appeared furious. The Sun Moon Empire's army beneath them fell into an uproar. What was that? That was plain humiliation!

Ju Zi had a glorious reputation within the Sun Moon Empire's military. She was known as a goddess of war, and she was a military genius that the world could only come across once in a blue moon. In this moment, she was being humiliated by her opponent on the battlefield. Furthermore, Xu Tianran only had this one Empress since she became the Sun Moon Empire's Empress, and he didn't have any mistresses or concubines. Huo Yuhao's words were equivalent to humiliating the entire Sun Moon Empire.

The Fire Phoenix Legion's soul engineers all felt indignant at the injustice. If not for Ju Zi's dignity her authority, they would have lashed out a long time ago.

Chapter 575.3: I've Come!

But no matter how furious the Sun Moon Empire's generals and soul engineers were, they would never expect that their War God Empress was feeling very conflicted in this moment.

Bastard! You're such a bastard. How can you say such things in front of everyone? You have to tell me such things in private. Who knows, I might even agree. Do you know that I think of that every passing day, and I would rather be your concubine than this empress!

Ju Zi's heart was trembling faintly, and her breathing wasn't very balanced. The Fire Phoenix Legion's formidable individuals beside her thought that she was boiling with fury, and nobody dared to utter a word. They were all waiting for her to give the order.

"You're asking to die, Huo Yuhao!" Ju Zi's words were almost squeezed out from between her teeth.

But she didn't know that Huo Yuhao, who was still in the shadows, didn't feel very good in this moment. Tang Wutong was punishing him angrily.

Huo Yuhao used his consciousness to continuously explain to her that he was doing this to infuriate the Sun Moon Empire's powerful individuals so that he could execute the next step in his plan. Unfortunately, Tang Wutong was just a jealous woman right now.

"What? Do you not agree, empress? So what you said about giving me whatever I want means nothing? In that case, I know how to say meaningless words too."

"Do you really think that we can't do anything to you?" Ju Zi said coldly, "Huo Yuhao, do you believe that I can't give the order right now to attack Shrek City and massacre the entire city? I will annihilate your

academy's ten thousand years of foundations, and I will remove Shrek Academy from the face of the earth for eternity."

Huo Yuhao replied coldly, "If you dare to do that, I will do all I can to murder every single person from the Sun Moon Empire, including the empire's citizens, even if that takes my whole life and my last breath. I will not make any exceptions. I will do that until the Sun Moon Empire's blood no longer runs through this world."

"What?" The Sun Moon Empire wasn't the only one who was astonished when Huo Yuhao said those words. Shrek Academy's senior members who had flown into the air in the distance were also in shock.

They finally understood why Huo Yuhao would go to the Sea God's Pavilion last night to resign, which appeared a little impulsive. He probably wasn't impulsive at all when that happened, and he already had a plan in his mind.

What was he saying? He was a Titled Douluo, and he was threatening to make a move against innocent civilians, even though he was targeting the Sun Moon Empire. What did that mean? This meant that he would become a machine of slaughter and murder, and he would become the entire continent's enemy. He would become an assassin.

Not even evil soul masters dared to say something like this. Huo Yuhao would become a public enemy to the entire world of soul masters, and everyone would be against him. Not even the Star Luo Empire or the Dou Ling Empire would protect him, because what he had threatened to do was forbidden. This was absolutely forbidden! This was something that couldn't be tolerated at all in the world of soul masters, and also in the world of soul engineers.

The strong wouldn't prey upon innocent civilians. This was an unspoken rule that applied especially to Titled Douluo.

A Titled Douluo's destructive power was incredible, and killing ten thousand normal civilians within a day wasn't difficult at all. Apocalypse would descend upon the world, and rivers would run with blood!

Therefore, Huo Yuhao wasn't just opposing the Sun Moon Empire when he said those words. He placed himself on opposite ends with the entire continent. He was going against humanity!

Elder Xuan was hovering in the air as his facial muscles suddenly twitched conspicuously.

Elder Song stared at Elder Xuan with a stunned look on her face. "Is he really going to do that?"

Elder Xuan forced a laugh and answered, "The question now is whether or not he will do this. He's thrown his reputation out the window with his words. I don't know what he wants to do. It's no wonder that he wants to relinquish everything he has in Shrek Academy! This child never fails to surprise us."

"I'm proud!" Qian Duoduo suddenly chimed in from the side.

Xian Lin'er slapped his bald head and snapped, "What are you proud of?"

Qian Duoduo chortled and said, "Don't you guys think Yuhao is truly starting to be like an Ultimate Soldier? What is an Ultimate Soldier? An Ultimate Soldier can turn the tide of battle all by himself, even if he's faced with thousands and thousands of soldiers and enemies. Huo Yuhao is beginning to embody

that essence, and that may not be a bad thing. As for what he just said, my fellow elders, have you guys heard anything?"

Elder Zhuang was the first to shake his head. "I didn't hear anything. We're too far away."

Yan Shaozhe heaved a sigh and said, "Yes! I don't know what's wrong with my ears nowadays, they're not working very well. I need to go back and clean them out. Huo Yuhao's voice wasn't travelling towards us, and I don't think anybody in Shrek City has heard anything either. This kid is always mumbling, who knows what he's talking about?"

The corner of Elder Xuan's mouth twitched again. He heaved a sigh as well and said, "I haven't been drinking wine for a long time, but Yuhao angered me last night to the point that I had a few drinks, to the point where my head is still a little dizzy today. No, I can't fly anymore. Let me rest on the battlements for a few moments. This kid will never lose, so what are we still doing here? Come, let's go back."

Elder Song's heart was twitching instead. "Damn, you're an Ultimate Douluo, and you're saying that you can't fly anymore. Who will believe that? Do you really believe that yourself?"

Elder Xuan stared deeply at Elder Song and said, "There are some things that, if you keep telling yourself again and again, you'll believe in time."

The Sun Moon Empire's army of one hundred thousand fell into complete silence in the distance.

The normal soldiers, who were originally detached because this battle of greats was none of their business, suddenly opened their eyes wide.

Their surveillance soul tools also immediately detected that Shrek City's soul masters who had flown out were going back. What did that mean? At the very least, this meant in their eyes that Shrek City had given up on Huo Yuhao. He was truly alone in this moment.

Ju Zi stared at Huo Yuhao, and her eyes were as black as could be. Her feelings were incredibly conflicted and messy in this moment. She had never expected that Huo Yuhao, who had always been kind and goodhearted, would say something like this. Of course, she didn't believe that Huo Yuhao would do anything to normal civilians, but he was subjecting himself to universal condemnation with those words!

Have I really forced this to happen? Is it because the Dou Ling Empire's royal family have been completely annihilated in Ling Dou City? Have I forced him to do this? Yuhao!? Ju Zi's heart softened a little in this moment, and even her wariness towards Huo Yuhao seemed to change a little because of her softening heart.

"What do you want?" Ju Zi's voice was still as cold as ever, but she wasn't as forceful and domineering as before.

Huo Yuhao said plainly, "I don't want anything. I'm all by myself anyway, and I'll just pit myself against you for all of eternity."

"Don't you dare!" Ju Zi roared angrily.

Huo Yuhao smiled and answered, "You can try, and see if I dare to or not. I'm not using my own life in this wager anyway. There are many people here."

Ju Zi's body quivered. "You're a Titled Douluo, and yet you dare to target innocent civilians. Are you not afraid of the heavens smiting you?"

Huo Yuhao said, "I would rather be struck by the heavens than have my country destroyed. The heavens will smite me, but that will save many lives that I wish to protect. So what if the heavens strike me down?"

Ju Zi seemed a little flustered. "What exactly do you want?"

Huo Yuhao took a deep breath as he looked up to the sky. "I am not sure if your trip here to ask the academy to hand me over is your original intention. But since you've made that request, then I am here. But catching me isn't that easy. Why don't we have a wager in front of these two armies?"

"Wager?" Ju Zi's lowered guard was immediately raised once more when she heard that word.

Wager? What does he want to wager on?? Ju Zi stared at Huo Yuhao confusedly.

"What do you wish to wager?" Ju Zi lowered her voice as she spoke.

Huo Yuhao said plainly, "You guys are most afraid of my abilities to conceal myself, and I do not wish to see you destroy my country. Even though I no longer have any ties to Shrek City, I still wish to protect it. We will fight ten battles to determine the victor. I will take on ten people by myself, who will take turns to fight me one-on-one. We will fight to the death, and the winner will continue, while the loser dies! If you guys can kill me in ten rounds, then everything will be over. If I win all ten rounds, then you will withdraw your army, and you cannot attack Shrek Academy within three years. We will execute this wager immediately if you agree, and if you don't, then be prepared to pay with your civilians' lives."

Ju Zi had a sudden revelation. Huo Yuhao had been foreshadowing this for a long time. This was his final goal after pressuring and threatening like that.

That is so smart! He's using his own strength and threats to tie down the Sun Moon Empire's armies. He's forcing me to finish this wager with him.

Ju Zi's army of one hundred thousand was watching, and if the Sun Moon Empire didn't take this wager, that meant the empire didn't care about their soldiers' safety. The army would fall into disarray, and as long as Huo Yuhao could create several small incidents and damage, that could lead to an event that the military dreaded most: rebellion!

Ju Zi couldn't accept that possibility, and neither could her generals.

Therefore, Huo Yuhao had paid with his own reputation to tie the entire Sun Moon Empire army down.

Furthermore, he was still so young, and he still wasn't an Ultimate Douluo. He wasn't even a Transcendent Douluo. He had demanded to take on ten people one after another all by himself under such circumstances, so there was no reason for the Sun Moon Empire to reject.

This fellow!

The pressure on Shrek would disappear if the Sun Moon Empire withdrew their army from Shrek City. Subsequently, the army's plan to move against the Star Luo Empire would likely have to change. Yuhao, Yuhao, you have given me a very difficult problem. *noVe/L&/In*

Ju Zi's mind spun rapidly in that short period of time.

Right in this moment, a voice suddenly appeared in her mind. This voice was very soft, but it was unnaturally clear.

"Evil soul masters are our common enemy."

"Eh?" Ju Zi felt her heart skip a beat. She had never expected that Huo Yuhao could still project his consciousness into her mind with such a formidable linked defensive barrier protecting her. At the same time, she immediately understood what he wanted to do.