

Tang Sect 81

Chapter 81.1: Hidden Strength...

"You guys..." Wang Dong looked at everyone in shock as he placed Huo Yuhao on the roof.

Bei Bei put the telescopic soul tool down and replied, "Teacher Wang may be unmatched when it comes to researching martial souls, however he's very inexperienced when it comes to concealing his emotions. "

"Then why didn't you guys call us?" Wang Dong said resentfully.

"That's because junior brother clearly saw through it! You guys have to remember not to be too expressive. Otherwise, anyone with a shred of intelligence would be able to discern your thoughts. " said Bei Bei.

Wang Dong felt gloomy as he said, "Aren't you only implying that I'm dumber than you guys?"

Xiao Xiao weakly raised her hand and said, "Me too. Senior brother told me there's a good show going on and brought me up here."

Those who could be a part of the Shrek's Seven Monsters were prodigies in their own right. Huo Yuhao wasn't the only one who recognised Wang Yan's problem. Bei Bei, Xu Sanshi and He Caitou were also aware of it. Jiang Nannan and Xiao Xiao were the only ones that had been called up.

"Nannan, can I take a look?" Xu Sanshi inched over to Jiang Nannan's side, fawning all over her. Where had the powerful aura he had possessed during the tournament gone to?

He Caitou had brought two telescopic soul tools along with him. He'd given one to Bei Bei and handed the other over to Xu Sanshi. For appearance's sake, Xu Sanshi had immediately handed it to Jiang Nannan.

Jiang Nannan ignored him and said, "The tournament's starting."

The Grand Imperial Star Hotel and Star Luo Plaza were separated by a few kilometers, which was extremely far for the eye to see. From this distance, the massive tournament plaza was but a very small square. It was more or less impossible for one to observe the ongoing clearly. Even He Caitou with the telescopic soul tool couldn't see what was going on too clearly.

Huo Yuhao said, "Senior brother, let me test out that telescopic soul tool."

Bei Bei handed the telescopic soul tool that looked like a metal box over to Huo Yuhao.

Huo Yuhao took the telescopic soul tool and peered through the transparent convex-shaped crystal, looking into the distance through the enlargement device installed within. One only had to pour a bit of their soul power into the telescopic soul tool to use it. It was a very simple auxiliary soul tool. Since there weren't many soul tool masters willing to put much effort into this aspect, they were only Rank 1 soul tools. Naturally, it couldn't enlarge the image in the distance by a large amount.

However, Huo Yuhao's eyesight was exceptionally shocking. His eyes were his martial soul, and he'd also been cultivating the Purple Demon Eyes all along. Naturally, everything would be much clearer to Bei Bei

if he could use the Purple Demon Eyes too. Even without the help of this telescopic soul tool, he would only need to use a bit of soul power if he wanted to clearly see what was going on a few kilometers away on a good day.

Huo Yuhao expanded his Spiritual Sharing as he watched what was going on on the tournament stage. It wasn't that he couldn't use his Spiritual Sharing only when he used his Spiritual Detection. He could use it on a normal basis too, just like what he was doing now. Huo Yuhao shared what he could see with his friends through his Spiritual Sharing. The four soul skills the Skydream Iceworm gave him didn't seem to be very powerful at first glance, but all of them were incomparably mystical in their own right.

The reserve team of Shrek's Seven Monsters only had to close their eyes for the scenes Huo Yuhao saw to appear in their minds.

The match held in Star Luo Plaza wasn't the first match held since they left, but rather a 1-vs-1 showdown.

He'd just clearly seen what was happening on the tournament stage when a shiver ran down Huo Yuhao's spine. The others also trembled once they became aware of what was happening on the stage under the conditions of his Spiritual Sharing. The atmosphere suddenly became very tense.

The reason for this was because the two individuals currently competing actually had five soul rings each. Moreover, they were a combination of two yellow soul rings and three purple soul rings. Even if these two Soul Kings didn't have the best ratio of ten-thousand-year soul rings between them, the words 'Soul King' pressed heavily like mountains in everyone's hearts.

Soul Kings had actually appeared after their match.

The two Soul Kings were both soul masters who didn't use any soul tools either. Their battle was extremely intense, causing strong rays of light to explode from the tournament stage from time to time. Since they were very far from the plaza, it was impossible for Huo Yuhao to see every minute detail regardless of how good his eyesight was.

Moreover, he couldn't clearly see the specific details on the stage when the rays of light flickered from the intense soul power.

"It looks like Teacher Wang was right. He really was afraid of cracking down on our confidence in the tournament." Bei Bei said with slight difficulty.

Xu Sanshi snorted and said, "So what if they're Soul Kings? Bei Bei, you're disheartened just like that?"

After the scene she saw through Huo Yuhao's Spiritual Sharing, Jiang Nannan put the telescopic soul tool down. She seldom spoke, but now she continued with, "It's normal for Soul Kings to appear in the earlier parts of the knockout tournament. The academies that can pass the first cycle of the knockout tournament can't be especially weak in any way. Perhaps the Cloud Luo Advanced Soul Engineering Academy we faced off against today was the one with the weakest constitution. Even though these two academies sent out Soul Kings for the present match, it might very well stem from the reasoning of letting the Soul Kings emerge victorious in a few matches to deplete the opponent's strength as best as they can."

“Even though you put it that way, what do you think is implied with them having Soul Kings as their commanding officers?” Bei Bei asked.

Huo Yuhao subconsciously answered, “It means there’s a very high possibility that their team is made up entirely of Soul Ancestors.”

Bei Bei nodded and said, “Junior brother is right. I’m afraid we have an arduous battle ahead of us from now on. We also definitely have to reveal our true strength. With team members composed of Soul Ancestors with a Soul King as their leader, their strength surpasses ours completely as a whole. We definitely can’t duplicate what happened in the first match. Everyone must be mentally prepared. Our victory in the first two matches was due to our opponents being weak along with a small bit of luck. The latter matches will be more difficult. I’m afraid Teacher Wang only lied to us a little. There really are quite a number of twenty-year-old Soul Kings this time around.”

Xu Sanshi shrugged and said, “It doesn’t matter, Bei Bei. After all, we can have Soul Kings in our team in the next two matches. Senior Sister Ling is a Control-type Soul King. With her deployed in battle, we won’t have a problem anymore.”

Bei Bei glared at him and said, “Stop talking nonsense! Don’t think I don’t know what you’re hiding. We’re competing in this tournament, which means that we’re representing Shrek Academy’s honor. At the very least, we’re enjoying the treatment of being core disciples in the academy. Now it’s time for us to protect the academy’s honor. Even if we use the last shred of our energy, I will not permit myself to lose on stage. Xu Sanshi, you better get your act together. We must definitely win the next two matches. We have to give it everything we’ve got before our senior brothers and sisters return.”

Bei Bei hit the nail on the head with this one, exuding a mighty power that he’d never had before along with his words.

His martial soul was the Blue Lightning Tyrant Dragon. By nature, he had the tyrannical aura of a king but the only difference was that he normally hid it extremely well. Unless it was under the conditions of a fight, no one could feel that aura around him.

This was the first time Huo Yuhao had seen Bei Bei look so serious. He immediately felt a shiver run down his spine.

Xu Sanshi frowned. “Bei Bei, isn’t it too early? You ought to know that this tournament doesn’t actually belong to us. If we reveal our true abilities too early, our opponents are sure to pursue countermeasures against us in five years.”

Bei Bei lowered his voice and said, “But we can’t wait. Sanshi, do you have such little faith in what’s to come in five years? Five years is a very long time to us.”

Xu Sanshi gazed deeply at Bei Bei and said, “If you want to go all in, I’ll go along with you.” *no ve(LB)1n*

Bei Bei said in an unhappy tone, “Can you not say it in such a sexual way? I don’t have the slightest bit of interest in you at all. I understand your concerns. Our abilities are basically fixed. Once we reveal our true strength, our foundations won’t change, although they’ll continue to increase over the next five years. But you’ve forgotten something. Even though our abilities are fixed, Yuhao, Wang Dong and Xiao Xiao are at the stage where their abilities haven’t been fixed yet. Yuhao in particular. His Imitation ability

is very effective at confusing his opponents. We need to support the team now. Also, they are the true core disciples come five years' time."

"Wait a moment. Senior brother, Senior Xu, are you guys saying that you've always been hiding your strength all this while?" Huo Yuhao interrupted.

"Uh... You can put it that way." Bei Bei gave a slight nod as he replied.

The other five exchanged glances with puzzled looks on their faces.

Bei Bei looked at Xu Sanshi, who immediately had a look on his face that said "It's none of my business". The meaning behind his look was very clear – if you bring up a topic, you'll naturally have to resolve any question that arise along with it.

Bei Bei felt helpless as he looked at the curiosity in their eyes. "The truth is... Well, since you guys are now part of the reserve team, it's no big deal if we tell you guys. Not long after Sanshi and I entered the academy, we became core disciples like you guys. As our cultivation increased, we gradually gained the approval of the academy. We then unofficially got chosen to be the next generation of Shrek's Seven Monsters. We were the only two who got chosen from the outer courtyard. To put it simply, we are slightly more valuable compared to the core disciples. The academy is slightly more biased towards us in terms of nurturing us and providing us with the necessary resources. However, that was on the precondition that we would have to sit for the inner courtyard examination after we graduated from the outer courtyard. Furthermore, we have to become Shrek Guardians for at least five years."

"Generally speaking, unofficially declaring someone to be a part of Shrek's Seven Monsters is a very rare occurrence. For example, no one was unofficially declared as a member of Shrek's Seven Monsters in Senior sister Ma's generation. The academy only thinks highly of us because Sanshi and I have rather unusual abilities. Naturally, there's someone amongst you guys who also has that qualification, and that is Yuhao. This matter has been delayed because the tournament came too soon, and also because Yuhao is now cultivating in both the Martial Soul Department and Soul Tool Department. However, both departments are nurturing him to the best of their abilities, making his treatment equal to ours."

Chapter 81.2: Hidden Strength... (Preview)

"We're still young, so the academy mainly wanted us to participate in the next tournament. Because of that, they asked us not to use all our strength under normal circumstances. But for the sake of the academy's honor, I feel that we can no longer continue to hide. During the following two matches, it'll be very hard for us to win if we have to face any Soul Kings."

Everyone couldn't help but look at each other after hearing his words. Sure enough, the fact that he had been chosen by the academy meant that he wasn't someone easily dealt with!

Wang Dong looked towards Xu Sanshi, "Senior Xu, can I ask a question? During our match today, how much strength did you use?"

Xu Sanshi thought about it for a moment. "About thirty or forty percent. In reality, Teacher Wang's estimations were wrong. I only can release my full strength when I work together with Bei Bei. We were a couple in the first place."

“Don’t be so full of air when you speak,” Bei Bei said gloomily, “Who’s a couple with you? We’re partners. Explain it clearly.”

“Che...” Xu Sanshi curled his lips, “Could it be that you don’t know who I like? This brother’s orientations are perfectly normal.” With that, his gaze immediately landed on Jiang Nannan’s body.

However, Jiang Nannan didn’t even spare him a glance. She thoughtlessly walked over to Xiao Xiao’s side, and with a flick of the wrist, the pair of scissors that had previously appeared during the match once again appeared.

Thirty to forty percent of his strength? They were all four-ringed soul masters, but just how strong was Xu Sanshi? Furthermore, there was also Bei Bei, who had similarly hidden his strength.

Suddenly, Huo Yuhao felt as if the preparatory team he was in wasn’t as weak as they seemed on the surface!

Huo Yuhao asked, “Senior Bei, does Teacher Wang know that you have been unofficially declared a member of Shrek’s Seven Monsters?”

Bei Bei shook his head. “Teacher Wang doesn’t know. This is a high-level secret in the academy. Only the two Deans of the Martial Soul Department and the elders of the Sea God’s Pavilion know of it. The Sea God’s Pavilion is the highest level of command that our academy has, and it’s based on Sea God’s Island. According to the stories, the master of the Sea God’s Pavilion is the true number one expert our academy has. Only, he keeps watch from Sea God’s Island, and even we have never seen what he looks like.”

“He’s even stronger than Elder Xuan?” Huo Yuhao asked astonishedly. From his recollections, Elder Xuan was already a near-omnipotent super-expert due to the terrifying speed at which he’d flown alongside them, and the catastrophic level of strength that he’d released when he’d flown into a rage.

Bei Bei shrugged. “Hasn’t Elder Xuan already said it before? He’s the vice-captain of our Shrek Guardians. Since there’s a vice-captain, there’s naturally a captain. Our captain is the master of the Sea God’s Pavilion. Only, nobody has ever seen him make a move.”

After listening to Bei Bei, Huo Yuhao, Wang Dong, and Xiao Xiao finally understood everything. Their understanding of the academy was simply too lacking. Unexpectedly, there was even a place like Sea God’s Island within the inner courtyard. Furthermore, from what Bei Bei said, this Sea God’s Island had a much greater level of influence even when compared to the Deans.

Bei Bei said, “There’s no need for you guys to think too much over it. Although we’ve hidden some of our strength, we didn’t hide too much. After all, we’re still at the Soul Ancestor level of strength. You’ll see it during the tournament. Let’s just follow Teacher Wang Yan’s tactics and arrangements. However, if we get put into a 2-2-3 match, there’s a high chance that Sanshi and I will be put into a team to fight against their strongest experts. On the other hand, there may be changes in the other teams. Nannan, what would happen if you were placed with Caitou?”

Without any hesitation at all, Jiang Nannan replied, “Other than a certain person, I’m fine with pairing up with anybody else.”

Xu Sanshi immediately interrupted her, "I know, you're not willing to be together with a serious-looking person like Bei Bei. Bei Bei, I think it's still better for me to work together with Nannan. You can just work with somebody else."

Jiang Nannan flew into a rage. "Stop playing dumb. The certain person I'm talking about is you. Stay away from me, otherwise don't blame me for being impolite to you." As she spoke, she waved the scissors in her hand through the air.

Xu Sanshi immediately fell silent. Clearly, he was acting as though he had fallen silent out of fear, and everybody could see that he nearly couldn't help but fly into uproarious laughter.

Bei Bei said, "Then, we'll temporarily put you with Caitou. Yuhao, we'll leave your partners as Wang Dong and Xiao Xiao. If we can't deal with our enemies during the first two matches, you won't have to try too excessively during the last match. You should do your best to hide your secrets. Preferably, it'd be better for you to lose rather than reveal some of your secrets. Understand? After all, we can still win even if we lose a single match in the round-robin tournament. Furthermore, it's impossible for us to be put into a 2-2-3 fight every round."

"Yes." Huo Yuhao replied immediately. He had nothing but utmost trust for his senior brother.

A light flickered across Bei Bei's eyes. "Fine. Everybody, go back. We don't have to stay here anymore. Teacher Wang Yan will definitely make a few arrangements for us based on our opponent's strengths. Everybody, go get a good rest and maintain your conditions."

After returning to their hotel room, Huo Yuhao called Wang Dong to his room to cultivate.

Wang Dong closed the door and said, "I didn't think that senior brother and Xu Sanshi would've hidden the fact that they were unofficial members of Shrek's Seven Devils. We should have a fighting chance now."

Huo Yuhao said, "It's hard to tell. If we're in a 1v1 elimination round or a team fight, our seniors will be able to utilise their strengths optimally. However, if we really do get into a 2-2-3 match like senior brother said, we'll be in a bit of trouble. After all, the only strong teammates we have are the two of them."

Wang Dong was somewhat unresigned. "You're underestimating us too much. Do we not have enough strength to win a single battle? Don't forget, we can now use our Golden Road again."

Huo Yuhao smiled bitterly. "Out of everyone who can participate in the Continental Advanced Soul Duelling Tournament, tell me, who isn't a real elite? Since we've already used the Golden Road once, our opponents will be cautious of it. Its greatest flaw is the fact that it's an attack that only targets a single direction. As long as our opponents make a few preparations against it, our chances of succeeding will be much lower. Out of the three of us, two of us have two rings, while you have three rings. If all of our opponents are Soul Ancestors, we practically have no chance of winning."

Wang Dong fell silent, as though he were pondering something.

Huo Yuhao patted his shoulder. "Come, let's go cultivate. Every single little bit counts. No matter what, we should do our best. We absolutely cannot let the glory of Shrek Academy and the Tang Sect be tarnished because of us."

“Right.”

The matches of the round-robin tournament were held on alternate days. For example, every team in Group A would have to undergo seven matches. If a team wanted to qualify, they would have to beat five teams at the very least to stand a chance. Only by winning six matches would a team be able to guarantee themselves a spot in the next round.

After two days passed, the first round of the round-robin tournament ended. When compared to the elimination round, the round-robin tournament was much more peaceful. Every single team continuously revised their battle tactics, and the strategies used in every single round of the tournament were more detailed than the last. However, it wasn't as crazy as the elimination round.

The first round of the elimination round was still affecting the round-robin tournament; the teams whose main forces had been injured were using the first round of the round-robin tournament to adjust their team's condition. Because of that, the first round wasn't overly exciting. It wasn't yet time for everyone to bring out their strongest powers.

However, a perspicacious person could tell that the first round of the round-robin tournament was the calm before the storm. Many of the teams couldn't afford to lose the coming matches anymore.

Night.

“Teacher Wang Yan, where are we going?” Bei Bei asked, puzzled.

One day had passed since the first round of the tournament, and they would be starting the second round of the round-robin tournament tomorrow. However, Wang Yan was bringing the seven from the preparatory team out of the Grand Imperial Star Hotel after dinner.

In the first place, this was the most bustling part of Star Luo City. The moment they stepped out the door, they were engulfed by a large and chaotic number of people.

Wang Yan smiled slightly. “I'm bringing you to a place. Just follow me. Recently, we'd just finished our Guardian assignment before participating in this tournament. Your minds have been strained the whole time. It won't be good if you're like this the whole time. I'm bringing you to a place where you can relax. Relaxation will have some benefits for your future matches.”

Relaxing?

Their faces became somewhat strange. They were already aware of how strong their imminent opponents were, but Teacher Wang was actually taking them out to help them relax? Could anyone even believe him? However, Teacher Wang's concealment skills were much better than last time, at the very least. Nobody questioned him, because everyone knew that wherever he was going to take them was definitely for the sake of obtaining better results in the tournament.

Since the start of the Continental Advanced Academy Soul Duelling Tournament, the vast Star Luo City had become extremely congested. It was very hard to maintain one's speed within the crowd, especially on the streets near Star Luo Plaza, which were permanently congested.

During the past few days, Wang Yan seemed to have understood the general outlines of their surroundings. After bringing them through a crowded part of the road, they broke through the masses; there were now much fewer people around them.

After passing through another few streets, they finally stopped at a pointed-looking building.

This building wasn't too conspicuous, and although it wasn't too big compared to the other tall buildings surrounding it, it could be considered prominent. A sign with the design of a hammer was placed above its door, and the image of a golden, veined tabletop was under the hammer.

Of the members of the preparatory team, only Huo Yuhao revealed a blank look at seeing this sign; the others all had a sudden flash of enlightenment.

Huo Yuhao whispered to Wang Dong, "What is this place?"

Wang Dong said, "This is an auction. See the design of that sign? That elaborately carved hammer is the symbol of an auction. Only auctions and blacksmiths use a hammer as a sign, but the hammer of a blacksmith tends to be much rougher and larger. As long as it's not too late, you should be able to hear the sounds of hammering near a blacksmith."

Chapter 81.3: Hidden Strength... (Preview)

"So that's the case." Huo Yuhao felt ashamed. He was truly clueless in certain areas. As the saying went, reading ten thousand books is not as useful as travelling ten thousand miles. Naturally, he wouldn't change. After all, the most important thing he had to do was increase his cultivation.

The companions, seniors, opponents, and even the teachers who taught him, every single one of these people gave him the pressure and drive that made him continue an unending journey. During this journey, the only way he could have peace of mind was by exhausting all of his strength.

This was also an advantage of Shrek Academy. In an environment like this, Huo Yuhao and the other students would absolutely be stimulated into an all-out struggle as long as they were motivated. This was all done so they could release the potential hidden within their bodies.

This was also the reason why Shrek Academy not only had talents, but also a group of talents who came forth in large numbers.

Just what is Teacher Wang bringing us to an auction for? A few traces of doubt rose in Huo Yuhao's heart.

At the same time, Wang Yan gave them an explanation as he turned towards the others, "Although you haven't seen the other academies compete, I have to tell you all that this time's tournament is very different than the previous ones. The difference lies in the fact that there are now very few pure soul master academies left. All of the other academies have been growing in the direction of a fusion between soul engineers and soul masters."

"A fusion?" Bei Bei furrowed his brows slightly, "Teacher Wang, what do you mean by 'a fusion'?"

Wang Yan said, "There are many types of fusion for some ordinary academies. The simplest way they can do this is by diligently training the soul masters they have, then equipping them with soul tools. As long as their students learn how to use these soul tools, they're fine. Even if their ways of using soul

tools aren't as refined as a soul engineer's methods, a soul tool can still increase their fighting power. Pure soul masters are becoming rarer and rarer."

"It's just like what we saw during the first round of the elimination round, when Yuhao and Wang Dong activated their Golden Road. Our opponents had a few defensive-type soul tools. Were it not for them, they could've been seriously injured. However, situations like this are commonplace during this year's tournament. Practically every student from a soul academy has a soul tool, and some of the stronger academies have even set up their own independent Soul Tool Departments. Not only does this train their own soul engineers, but it also allows them to custom-make soul tools for their other soul masters to give them a dramatic increase in overall strength. You'll understand once I give you an example. Let's say we give a speed-increasing soul tool to an agility-type soul master like Nannan. If she can use it freely, what do you think will happen? At the same time, say we give her a few lifesaving defensive-type soul tool to guard against her weakness in defense. Wouldn't that be enough to let her use all of her strength without any worry at all?"

"I never thought that this tournament would change this much after five years. Actually, it's more accurate to say that this started several decades ago. Only, an overwhelmingly large number of academies were proud of the fact that they were soul academies at that time. Just like us, they felt that using soul tools would lower their reputations. However, the times change whether we like it or not. During the last few tournaments, academies who used soul tools have been obtaining better and better results. This unending change has changed the other soul academies' way of thinking. Only, I didn't think that they'd fully explode during this year's tournament. From what I've seen during the first round of the elimination round, over 80% of the participating academies have prepared soul tools. Furthermore, with this experience, I'm afraid that every single academy will have equipped their students with soul tools by the next tournament."

Xu Sanshi furrowed his brows. "They've forgotten the honor of being a soul master. Aren't battles between soul masters meant to be pure? The most reliable tool we have at our disposal is the strength we've cultivated, and it's our most trustworthy tool. After all, a soul tool is a foreign object."

"You're not wrong," Wang Yan said in a low voice, "Also, I can guarantee you guys that Sanshi's way of thinking is practically identical to that of the upper echelon of a large majority of academies. It's this precise reason that has constrained the development of the Soul Tool Department. After my observations during this year's tournament, however, I have to say that we've reached an irreversible point in time. Furthermore, this has to be acted upon immediately. Once we return to the academy after the tournament, I will immediately point this out to the academy."

"Soul tools will become the weapons of us soul masters. This is a byproduct of the times. If we don't keep up with the passage of time, there will be a time when we ourselves are washed away. It's true that our Shrek Academy has a deep background, but how long will this deep background let us be extravagant? You guys are the next generation of Shrek's Seven Monsters, and I hope that we can cause a change with you taking the lead. I've brought you here for that reason. It just so happens that there's a soul tool auction in this auction house today, and I hope that you guys will be able to lead the academy with your example. Naturally, I won't force you, nor do I have the capability to do so. If anyone here isn't willing to enter, you can return now." With that, Wang Yan's gaze turned somewhat apprehensive. He naturally understood that the deep-rooted Soul Tool Department of Shrek Academy had already been

established for many years, but had always been completely suppressed by the Martial Soul department. As a result, it had simply been unable to truly grow.

The inner courtyard disciples of the Martial Soul Department were elites among elites, but what about the Soul Tool Department? The Soul Tool Department also had inner courtyard disciples, but those exact disciples were only mediocre after graduating, and even now weren't able to create any sort of reputation for Shrek Academy's Soul Tool Department. This was because of the pressure of tradition! The pressure of tradition had become the currently restrained Shrek Academy's greatest barrier.

The seven of them all fell silent, and each and every one of them was pondering inwardly.

The only thing that Wang Yan could guarantee was that there would be two people who would agree with him—that was, the two people who belonged to the Soul Tool Department, He Caitou and Huo Yuhao.

But what about the other five? They were all core disciples of the Martial Soul Department; their elites. If they chose to use soul tools during the tournament, this would be equivalent to them making their decisions. Although these kids weren't too old, they were able to stand steadily within Shrek Academy. Were any of them not outstanding geniuses? Wang Yan absolutely couldn't predict their way of thinking by comparing them to their peers.

However, Wang Yan didn't regret bringing them to this auction house at all. This was his first time trying to convince them to use soul tools, but it would definitely not be his last. The more profound his research in the field of martial souls became, the more keenly he sensed the problems that would stunt the future growth of soul masters.

"Let's just stand the side first." Wang Yan brought them to a corner of the auction house so as to not block the other guests who were attending the auction.

Wang Yan took a deep breath as he looked at the people around him. "I know. All of you are thinking different things, but a large number of you are against this. Let me say this again. Why did we fall into our current predicament during this year's tournament? It was due to a mistake we made during our mission. The death and injuries of the official team resulted in the preparatory team being forced to take part in the tournament. But, haven't you thought about this before? What if the official team had soul tools with them? What would've happened then?"

"The seven members of the official team were all Soul Kings, or stronger. In other words, they could've equipped Class 5, or even Class 6 soul tools. Let me bring up an extreme example. What if all of them had defensive soul tools on them? After all, every single one of them was already sufficiently strong in terms of combat strength. The thing they needed most was a way to protect themselves. Caitou, you're a student of great ability from the Soul Tool Department, and also Fan Yu's disciple. Tell everyone this: during that corpse explosion, what if they had had defensive soul tools? Would the situation have changed?"

He Caitou seemed to reply without any hesitation at all, "It would've definitely gone differently. I can guarantee that that corpse explosion wouldn't have broken through a Class 6 defensive soul tool. Moreover, a Class 5 soul tool would have ensured that they wouldn't have been rendered unfit for combat at the very least. Their injuries would've been reduced by more than 60% as well."

Once he spoke, everyone else was stirred emotionally. Right! If they had had defensive soul tools, that tragedy might not have occurred. If that had been the case, would they have been in such a predicament during the tournament?

Wang Yan took a deep breath and said, “Children. With my age, I think I can use this to refer to you all. I have to say that each and every one of you are the academy’s most precious treasures. At the same time, you are your respective families’ most precious geniuses. However, the fall of a genius is much, much easier than nurturing one. Weren’t Yao Haoxuan and the rest geniuses as well? They all were. Yao Haoxuan even had a swallowing skill that could allow him to instantly swallow an opponent one rank above him, rendering them powerless for a certain amount of time. He could even be said to be a genius within the Control System. At the same time, they were the current iteration of Shrek’s Seven Monsters! However, what happened in the end? No matter how talented they were, they couldn’t prevent an accident from occurring. However, the existence of a soul tool can dramatically reduce the possibility of an accident.”

“You’ve already seen the uses of a soul tool. What about those flying-type soul tools? Without them, would you have been able to come here after completing your Guardian mission within such a short period of time? For the sake of achieving his maximum speed, even our academy’s Elder Xuan, who is a person who resides at the top of the pyramid, borrowed the use of a flying-type soul tool. I can tell you that the flying-type soul tool that Elder Xuan used was only a Class 8 one. That is also the strongest soul tool within our academy’s reserves right now. Then, what about Class 9 and 10 soul tools?”

Chapter 82.1: The Future Developments and Dangers of a Soul Master

“Also, one thing I can reveal to you is that Xuan Lao’s cultivation is certainly much more terrifying than what the majority of you people imagine it to be. His martial soul, the Godly Taotie Bull, is an extremely rare and special type that can also be called a mutated martial soul. The drawback of this type of martial soul lies in the need for constant consumption of food and drink, as the act of consumption itself is a form of cultivation. However, Xuan Lao’s cultivation has already reached the ninety-eighth rank, and he is the Transcendent Titled Douluo of Gluttony. It’s almost impossible to find any being in existence on this continent that is stronger than that elder in a duel.”

Even though they already had very high estimations of Xuan Lao’s cultivation, the seven of them still drew a collective gasp when Wang Yan spoke the number ‘ninety-eight’. What a thing to consider, that rank ninety-eight!

All soul masters who were rank ninety or higher were Titled Douluo, but every increase in cultivation after the ninetieth rank came with exponential growth. This was particularly the case for the ranks past ninety-five, as attaining that rank made one worthy of being called a Transcendent Douluo.

For example, if a newly-promoted rank ninety Titled Douluo were to encounter a hundred thousand year soul beast, his only option would be to turn and flee. Unless he had a sufficiently powerful martial soul and soul ring, he would not have the capability to battle such a soul beast.

However, if his cultivation was somewhere around rank ninety-two or ninety-three, then he would stand a fair chance against the hundred thousand year soul beast, as long as it wasn’t on the level of a Beast King.

And if his cultivation was at rank ninety-five, that of a Transcendent Titled Douluo, then the hundred thousand year soul beast would be the one doing the fleeing. Not even two hundred thousand year soul beasts who had broken past their limits were likely to have the guts to battle a rank ninety-five Titled Douluo.

And then there was Elder Xuan, who belonged to a tier equivalent to the Ice Jade Empress Scorpion among soul beasts. It was the *crème de la crème*, and the terror of terrors.

Only then did Huo Yuhao understand why he had felt such an overpowering panic in his heart when Xuan Lao was enraged. Even Skydream and the Ice Empress had remained silent within his spiritual sea, neither communicating anything to him or causing any strong spiritual waves. The might of Elder Xuan's cultivation had simply been too terrifying.

"If this was set several hundred years in the past, I'd say that Xuan Lao was almost without parallel. But is that really the case today?" Wang Yan went on. "I can tell you all with certainty that Xuan Lao remains unrivalled in single combat. However, the Sun Moon Empire has several Class 9 soul engineers who are capable of fighting him on even ground, to the point of posing a threat to his life. Top tier soul engineers whose existences are just as terrifying. Their entirely different fighting style enables them to use all of their soul skills to increase their soul power before launching an attack through a powerful soul tool. Another thing you must not forget is that Class 9 is not the ultimate limit of soul engineers. If the day comes when a Class 10 soul engineer appears in the Sun Moon Empire, then... how are we to face that?"

At this point, Wang Yan had already gotten himself quite worked up. "There's one more thing. It may not be much of an issue in your generation, but as the time goes by, this problem that I've discovered is bound to affect all soul masters: the problem of soul beasts."

"Soul beasts?" they echoed, puzzled by the apparent non sequitur.

Wang Yan nodded vigorously, then elaborated, "What I'm referring to is the number of soul beasts. All of you have learned during your time in the academy that soul beasts have existed since time immemorial on our Douluo Continent, as well as the fact that, a great many years ago, there were no humans here. One could say that our entire continent is a world belonging to soul beasts... you could indeed say such a thing. The human race itself is the result of the evolution of soul beasts, and we are a form of intelligent soul beast."

"Over the passage of time, we humans began to appear, around tens or even hundreds of millennia ago. In the beginning, the human race was weak, and only served as food for the soul beasts. However, since humans did exist, there was a reason for our existence. Our physical capabilities may be weak, but we have our strengths: our fecundity, and our ability to learn."

"Human intelligence was gradually developed as we evolved through the ages, and our reproductive capabilities ensured that we did not suffer extinction even when we were preyed upon by soul beasts. And when we developed to such an extent that the intelligence of an ordinary human was on par with that of a top tier soul beast, earth-shaking changes began to happen on the continent.

"With our intelligence, humans began creating tools, traps and weaponry. We used the weather and geography to our advantage in battling soul beasts. We learned to cooperate, to group together and attack a single soul beast. We gradually began to possess the ability to hunt and kill soul beasts, instead

of being hunted and killed by them. Nutrition became richer, and humans continued to grow.”
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“Following the evolution of our intelligence, another change came about with the appearance of soul masters. The first soul master came to be when the first human with a prodigious level of innate soul power accidentally drew the soul ring of a slain soul beast into his own body. After tens of thousands of years of change and research, humans gradually grasped the techniques required to become soul masters. In the meantime, we also began to undergo a population explosion. Our intelligence allowed us to start learning how to build, to start having our own homes and cities. The number of soul masters, along with their powers, continued to increase.”

“Soul beasts remained powerful as they always were, but in the face of our intelligence and learning capabilities, they gradually lost the ability to pose any real threat. Finally, humans ruled the continent, and soul masters indubitably became the most powerful and most important occupation on this continent.”

Wang Yan’s narration of the process of human evolution was very simple, but captured the few most important changes. At this point, his topic suddenly took a turn.

“However, here’s the thing you kids may never have thought of: what changes would happen to soul beasts alongside our human race’s development.”

“Indeed, soul beasts may have been around for tens of millennia, and the proportion of soul masters amongst humans is one in thousands – it’s not that much. But the fact remains that we are encroaching upon the soul beasts’ habitats, and slaying them for our soul rings. More and more high level soul beasts have been hunted and killed by people like us – like all of you here, who all bear thousand-year soul rings. Those only come about in soul beasts that have cultivated for a thousand years. And just like their soul rings, these high-level soul beasts are also limited in numbers!”

“Ten thousand years ago on this continent, the overall power of soul beasts was still greater than that of humans. But today, after ten thousand years have passed, I can say with certainty that the collective power of soul beasts is no longer comparable to ours. The reason for that is that too many high-level soul beasts have become our soul rings. So let me ask you: what happens after another ten thousand years? What changes will happen to the continent in that time? Will we still be able to go to the forest and slay soul beasts as we please? I can give you a definite answer: ten thousand years from now, even a ten-year soul ring will be an article of luxury. The final fate of soul beasts is absolute dependency upon humans as they are confined by us like livestock.”

“By that time, it’s very likely that all soul masters will only be able to use ten year soul rings, and even hundred year ones will become unattainable. When that time comes, what will we use to increase our own power? As time passes, soul tools are bound to become the true source of human strength. That is the inevitable result of time. I can do nothing to change this progression of events, and neither can any of you. What you must do instead, at this moment, is accept the truth. In the future, the only way our descendents can become stronger than us is through the usage of soul tools. And all of you, right now, stand at a crucial moment in the transformation of an era. Only through the perfect fusion of one’s abilities with a soul tool can you become strong enough not to be left behind in obsolescence.”

Those words had been held within Wang Yan's mind for much longer than just a day or two. Finally unleashed, the effect they had upon the seven was akin to stirring the deaf and enlightening the blind. All of them felt deeply shaken.

Huo Yuhao and Caitou, being students of the Soul Tool Department, were less affected than the other five, who had always had some measure of aversion to soul tools. And yet, right then and there, could they really keep feeling that way?

Some of what Wang Yan had said felt distant to them, but some of it had evidently instilled in them a sense of urgency. It was an uncomfortable feeling, and disrupted how they normally thought about things.

All of them knew fairly well that Wang Yan's speech was intended to convince them to accept soul tools and use them in the tournament. But it was also far from being that simple, and had a great impact on them all.

Wang Yan said no more, simply watching those children, who were still at such a tender age. He looked at the future hope of Shrek Academy, silently waiting as they thought things over. He knew they needed time.

Wang Yan's eyes betrayed traces of sorrow as he raised his head to glance at the already pitch-dark sky. What would the continent become in ten thousand years? At that time, would Shrek Academy still maintain its current position as the foremost academy on the continent?

It will, it definitely will. Wang Yan unconsciously clenched his hands into fists.

Shrek Academy made me what I am today. No matter what happens, I will do all I can to ensure that it remains great, that no one ever surpasses it, that Shrek Academy will always be the strongest.

At that thought, Wang Yan felt his heart set afire, and hot blood course through his veins. He suddenly felt that it wasn't entirely a bad thing for the starting lineup to suffer such a heavy blow. At least it rang the warning bells to the seven that were the academy's future hope, the next generation of Shrek's Seven Monsters. If they could accept what he was suggesting, then it would have a huge effect on the future of the academy while also leading the academy down the right track. Or, at least, the right track he had discovered.

Chapter 82.2: The Future Developments and Dangers of a Soul Master

Perhaps the Sun Moon Imperial Soul Engineering Academy may already have exceeded Shrek in this field. We can only chase after them in full pursuit, relying on the ten thousand years of Shrek Academy's roots to do so. Shrek will never lose to anyone.

Just as Wang Yan was pondering to himself, a person suddenly spoke up. The first person to finish his pondering was Bei Bei.

"I agree with what Teacher Wang said. I'm willing to try working with a soul tool." Bei Bei's voice was very steadfast; he was never someone who hesitated much. His warm countenance couldn't conceal his strong heart, and he was a person who did his all after setting his mind to something, just like when he had entered the Tang Sect for Tang Ya's sake.

Sensing the astonished gazes of his fellow teammates, Bei Bei said in a low voice, "Out of the seven people here, five of us belong to the Tang Sect—that is, everyone besides Sanshi and Nannan. Everyone knows about the history of the Tang Sect. Previously, we were the most glorious of existences on the entire continent. At that time, the glory of the Tang Sect was even greater than that of Shrek Academy. However, why did our glory fade away? It's true that there were some reasons behind this, but the most important one was the fact that we were washed out by the passing of time."

"The emergence of soul tools directly affected our revenue streams—this was the main reason behind the fall of the Tang Sect. I'm sure everyone knows that very few of our hidden weapons are used in the military anymore, so much so that I can even say that they aren't used at all. We can't stop the passage of time, and only by adapting to it can we allow the Tang Sect to rise again."

With that, his gaze landed on Huo Yuhao. "When my junior brother first entered the Tang Sect, Xiao Ya and I had a discussion. The future growth of the Tang Sect will only occur if we merge our hidden weapons with soul tools. If we succeed, it'll be because of soul tools; if we fail, it'll be because of soul tools. We will crawl up from where we fell. This is also our only path going forward."

"As a soul master, an assault-type one, my heart tells me to reject a foreign source of power like a soul tool. However, this is rejecting the changes that go with time. As the eldest of all of us, and also the senior brother of the Tang Sect, I want to start by changing myself. When we get back, I will ask the academy to allow me to study in the Soul Tool Department in addition my current studies. Even if I don't create them, I will at least learn how to use them."

Bei Bei's words were powerful and resonating, and even Wang Yan's emotions were stirred. He was overjoyed.

There was no doubt that Bei Bei's words carried a large amount of weight within the new generation of the Shrek's Seven Monsters. With his approval, convincing the others would be much easier.

Xu Sanshi nodded, "Teacher Wang, what you and Bei Bei said makes sense. I can also understand where you're coming from. However, I still have a few questions I want to ask you for guidance. It's very likely that the strongest experts in the future will be soul engineers, but with our current levels of strength, it's already impossible for us to become soul engineers. In other words, we won't be able to change our current soul skills to ones that can amplify soul power, like soul engineers. Since this is the case, will we always be behind everyone else? Furthermore, it's very difficult for us to learn how to create soul tools; we can only learn how to use them. However, we will never be as good at using them as the soul engineers. How will we contend against them? I truly do not wish to make a decision while my heart is at a loss."

Wang Yan said, "Well said. I understand what you're worried about, and you're right. If you intend to purely pursue the field of soul tools, a person who started off as a soul master will never be able to catch up with a soul engineer. However, you've forgotten your own advantages! If there comes a day when you can become a Titled Douluo, you'll definitely be able to get a powerful soul skill. These soul skills aren't inferior to any Class 9 soul tools. Also, can your physiques even be compared to soul engineers who've chosen soul power-amplifying soul rings? Impossible. Furthermore, your physiques as a soul master will be strong enough to allow you to withstand stronger soul rings. If you get a more powerful soul ring, won't you get more soul power? Soul engineers will never be able to compete

against soul masters in terms of physique. You merely have to find a compatible soul tool; after all, a soul tool is only your weapon. On the other hand, a soul tool is a soul engineer's everything. Due to these differences, a soul master only needs to use a soul tool as long as he himself is strong enough. When compared to a pure soul engineer, you'll definitely possess a few advantages, especially when you consider the fact that a simple soul engineer will never be able to reach Class 10."

"What are the requirements of a Class 10 soul engineer? To become one, you need to create a terrifying Class 10 soul tool while being able to control it. That requires the cultivation of a Transcendent Titled Douluo, which means that you'll need to be Rank 95 or higher. You're all soul masters, and I'm sure you're all aware of the fact that the more you cultivate, the harder it gets. Even on the entire continent, how many pure soul engineers are able to reach the Titled Douluo rank? I can count them on one hand, I'll give you that. How many of them are able to become Transcendent Titled Douluo? I can also tell you that there are exactly zero people who have been able to do so. Because of that, the pinnacle experts of the continent will definitely be people who focus on their strengths as soul masters while simultaneously studying in the field of soul tools. Even if a true Class 10 soul engineer were to appear, it'd be very hard for that person to fight against a Transcendent Titled Douluo who possesses a Class 9 soul tool."

A look of enlightenment filled Xu Sanshi's eyes. "Right! Teacher Wang, you're truly a person who can enlighten someone else. A pure soul engineer who only trains his soul power will find it much harder to improve when compared to us. I understand, I understand."

Wang Yan's confidence immediately increased as he saw Xu Sanshi become convinced by his words. A look of self-confidence flashed through his eyes as he said, "During these past few days, I've been observing how the other academies fight. I've noticed that the academies with deeper backgrounds have been pursuing a fusion of soul masters and soul tools. However, a large majority of those academies are still trying to find the perfect level of fusion. On the other hand, I've noticed the most things from the Sun Moon Imperial Soul Engineering Academy. Although they've never tried to hide anything, I've noticed that practically every member of their preparatory team has an extraordinary martial soul. Even though not all of them have taken the stage, I can see that their way of thinking coincides with mine from this point alone. By focusing on a soul master's cultivation, they'll be able to guarantee that their students will become powerful soul masters. Then, they can use powerful soul tools. Now, do you still have any questions?"

Xu Sanshi said, "Teacher Wang, you've convinced me. I'm willing to try it out, both for the sake of the academy and for my own sake."

He Caitou chuckled, "I naturally have no problems with it. However, the sad thing is that I'm a food-type soul master."

"Can a fifteen-year-old four-ringed food-type Soul Ancestor like you say anything more?" Wang Yan said unhappily, "Your talent being overlooked due to your martial soul has been one of the largest mistakes the Martial Soul Department has made in recent years. With the help of your soul skills, it's very possible that you'll be one of the strongest soul engineers among you seven. After all, you can focus on cultivation alone. I can say that your martial soul makes you the most suitable person on the entire continent to become a pure soul engineer."

Wang Yan's gaze turned to Jiang Nannan, who hesitated slightly for a moment before saying. "But, it'll take money to buy a few soul tools later. Also, they seem to be very expensive."

After hearing her somewhat strange words, everyone present was left stunned. Huo Yuhao reacted most profoundly to this; he still remembered the first time he had met Jiang Nannan; the number one beauty of the outer courtyard had actually tried to negotiate with him, as if she was very stingy with her money.

"I'll pay for you!" Xu Sanshi said instantly.

As if she'd thought of something, she immediately furrowed her brows and flew into a rage, "Screw off!"

"Uh..." As if he'd thought of something, Xu Sanshi unexpectedly obediently lowered his head after being yelled at. Other than feeling somewhat wronged, he didn't look too dissatisfied.

His appearance gave the impression as though he was a person who was getting bullied.

"Nannan, you don't have to worry about this," Wang Yan said warmly, "The academy will settle the issue of money. At the very least, you won't have to worry about this before graduating. You're already a core disciple of the academy, and the academy will even give you a generous amount of money for living expenses if you're able to enter the inner courtyard. Even moreso, completing guardian missions will give you prize money. Students of our Shrek Academy have never been troubled because of money."

Jiang Nannan's eyes lit up, and she immediately said, "Then I have no problems as well."

It was finally Huo Yuhao's turn. When he and Wang Yan's eyes met, he already had an answer.

"Teacher Wang, I only have a single problem. I don't seem to have any soul tools that I can buy." Huo Yuhao laughed bitterly.

"No, there's something you can buy," He Caitou said suddenly.

"Huh?" Huo Yuhao looked towards He Caitou, puzzled.

He Caitou chuckled and rubbed his bald head, "Once you enter the auction house, you'll understand. Practically every single auction house that sells soul tools will have that thing." n/-D.v.(e.L.-B/)1--n

Xiao Xiao said, "I also have no problems. In the first place, I was planning to go back and cultivate diligently to buy that flying-type soul tool as a toy after I become a Soul Ancestor. It's really too convenient."

Wang Yan let out a long sigh after seeing that the situation was settled. He chuckled, "That's for the best then. Wang Dong, what about you? You shouldn't have any problems, right? Let's go in and participate in the auction then."

Surprising everyone present, the silent Wang Dong suddenly raised his head and revealed a stubborn look as he said resolutely, "No, I have a problem. I'm not willing to use a soul tool. You guys can go ahead, I'm going back first." With that, he turned around and took large strides in the direction of the Imperial Grand Star Hotel.

Chapter 82.3: The Future Developments and Dangers of a Soul Master

Huo Yuhao hurriedly chased after Wang Dong, "What's with you, Wang Dong?" Even he hadn't sensed anything wrong with him, and this sudden change had left him at a complete loss. Like the others, he didn't think that Wang Dong would have any problems. He'd never heard Wang Dong rebuke soul tools so strongly in the past. Moreover, Teacher Wang Yan had just given a long explanation that was filled with true information.

Wang Dong paused, lowering his head slightly. "Yuhao, I'm fine. I have no idea what's happened, but my heart doesn't want this, nor is it willing to use a soul tool. You guys can go first, I'll be waiting in the hotel."

Huo Yuhao wanted to speak further, but Wang Dong raised his hand to stop him. "No need to persuade me any further. I'm really fine. I just don't really want to use a soul tool to increase my own strength. I might be fine with it later, but I can't accept it just yet. I understand the logic behind what Teacher Wang said, but I still need to go back and think it over a little."

Huo Yuhao didn't try persuading him any further, because he clearly understood that it would be very difficult to try changing his best friend's mind when he had decided on something.

After seeing Wang Dong off, Huo Yuhao returned to the group. "He's fine. He just doesn't fancy using soul tools. Teacher Wang, let's go."

Wang Yan nodded and smiled slightly. "It's fine. You all have your own aspirations, and I didn't think I'd be able to convince all of you in the first place. I'm very satisfied that the six of you are willing to try them out. Let's go, the auction is about to start."

Huo Yuhao had originally thought that this was going to be a very small auction. After all, the building didn't look too big from the outside. However, he entered a completely different world after truly entering it. The auction was located mostly underground, and the building was only its entrance.

After walking into the auction house, they were met with a five meter wide staircase that was laid with a red carpet as it headed downwards. Yet, they didn't see any workers to guide them inside.

They continued heading downwards. After twenty meters or so, they finally reached the registration area. Wang Yan had already completed a few complicated procedures before coming here in addition to giving each and every person a number plate. Because of this, the red cheongsam-clad girl took them inside.

After passing through a simple wooden door, the scenery suddenly changed. A patch of gold filled their vision, the decorations of the wide, dazzling corridor surpassing even the Imperial Grand Star Hotel Huo Yuhao and the rest had stayed in in terms of luxury.

The corridor was over ten meters wide, and the ground was laid with precious white jade. There was a pair of beautifully patterned pillars that were carved from the same material every ten meters, and the walls seemed to have been papered with gold leaf. The carvings on the wall were complicated and beautiful. Huo Yuhao used his sight, that was far stronger than that of ordinary folk, to look at the walls in detail, and was astonished by how meticulous it was. It had to be known that this was only a wall used for decoration!

Luxurious crystal lamps hung from the top of the ceiling, but they didn't give off a stifling feeling, as the corridor was a full five meters tall. The lamp gave off a gentle yellow light, and its contrast against the golden walls made it seem as if they were in a world of gold. This was enough to leave anybody dazzled.

Wang Yan whispered, "Don't underestimate this place just because it's unremarkable on the outside. In reality, this is Star Luo City's largest auction house. It isn't easy to obtain a pass to attend this auction. Not only do you need to prove your assets, you even have to go through an evaluation. If we followed the normal routes, it'd take at least half a month for us to get in here. We were only able to smoothly enter this place with Dai Yueheng's help. Unfortunately, I was unable to persuade the three of them. They've stayed in the Martial Soul Department for many years, and their combat styles are already fixed. Hastily giving them soul tools won't do them any good either."

As Wang Yan spoke, they entered a large door, guided by the young lady. It was very obvious that this wasn't the end of the corridor; there was still a door similar to the previous one in front of them. In addition, there was a flight of stairs that headed downwards at the end of the corridor.

Bei Bei seemed to be accustomed to this place. Unlike Huo Yuhao, Xiao Xiao, and Jiang Nannan, he didn't look everywhere constantly. He turned towards the girl who'd opened the door for them and asked, "I'll have to trouble you to give us a simple explanation of the rules of today's auction."

"Understood," The girl said respectfully, "Today's auction specializes in the sale of soul tools, and will only sell soul tools ranked Class 6 or below. Because of that, there are relatively lax rules. According to the way we classify auctions, this auction can only be considered a Grade 4 auction. Our Starlight Auction separates auctions from Grade 1 to Grade 5, with Grade 1 having the strictest rules. Only Grade 1 auctions will be held in the main auction hall. This is Hall 12, and it can accommodate a total of two hundred people. It's used for Grade 4 auctions."

Bei Bei nodded, "Thank you."

After entering Hall 12, the lighting suddenly dimmed. This was because only the walls surrounding them had wall lamps on them. After entering the auction hall, every single person would receive a beautiful mask. Furthermore, these masks were differentiated by color. Huo Yuhao and the rest received white masks, but they didn't know what these colors signified. Other than white, there were also yellow, purple, black, red, gold, and other types of masks.

The decorations in the auction hall gave off a simple, refined, but luxurious feeling without losing any sense of warmth. Only, one would feel very comfortable after entering here. There were a total of two hundred large, comfy chairs which were covered by dark-blue swan cloth; these chairs were curved. Perhaps it was due to Dai Yueheng's influence, but Huo Yuhao and the rest were placed on the first row, which was also the row closest to the auction stage.

Wang Yan reminded everyone, "Everyone, put your masks on. It's very possible that various problems will arise if you participate in this auction. Because of this, the auction house has provided masks to cover your appearances. This is all done to prevent any problems from arising. The colors of these masks are also used to differentiate the ranks of the guests here, and their ranking is identical to that of soul rings. The lowest ranked mask is the white one, and it goes up from there. On the other hand, the golden mask, which is ranked above the red mask, is for the auction's most distinguished VIPs. Normally, a person like that will never appear in an auction like this."

Only then did Huo Yuhao understand the differences between the masks. This was his first time attending an auction, and he was curious about everything. The chair he sat on was very comfortable, and this was one of the rare occasions that he was able to rest.

At this moment, the auction hall was already filled with sixty to seventy percent of its attendees. A waiter came over to ask what beverages they wanted, and Huo Yuhao asked for a glass of plain water.

“Distinguished guests, welcome to our Starlight Auction. Our auction is about to start, so I would like to ask all of you to take a seat.” The graceful and pleasant voice of a woman rang out from all directions, causing the auction hall to quiet down. The originally dim lights in the hall gradually turned even darker, but the lights on the auction stage grew brighter.

A purple cheongsam-clad girl climbed up to the stage from a side of the auction hall. She looked thirty or so, and had a dignified and beautiful appearance. Her face carried a faintly discernible smile, and as she walked, her perfectly fitting cheongsam sketched the outline of her perfectly mature body.

Xu Sanshi’s eyes immediately turned towards her, and his throat moved slightly as he involuntarily gulped.

Bei Bei and Xu Sanshi were sat by either side of Huo Yuhao. At this moment, Bei Bei lowered his mouth to Huo Yuhao’s ear and whispered, “Junior brother, this should be the auctioneer. When choosing an auctioneer for an ordinary auction or a large-scale auction hall like this one, the first thing considered is a person’s appearance. They can’t just be good-looking; a male auctioneer has to have an upright-looking appearance, while a female one has to be dignified and beautiful. This way, they’ll instill a sense of trust in the people participating in the auction. If I’m not mistaken, the auctioneers in this auction hall are also separated by ranks according to the color of their clothes, just like how we’re differentiated by our masks. This auctioneer should be a lower-middle ranked one. Actually, I’m very curious as to how the gold-ranked auctioneers in this place look.”

At this moment, the purple-clothed auctioneer was already behind the auction table with a smile on her face. Her gentle voice reverberated throughout hall 12, borrowing the assistance of the sound-amplifying soul tool on the table.

“Distinguished guests, good evening to you all. I am a purple-ranked auctioneer of the Starlight Auction, Qing Ya. Today, I will be hosting this auction.”

With that, she walked out from the auction table and bowed with a smile on her face. This immediately won her a round of applause.

After returning to the auction table, Qing Ya smiled. “Today’s auction will specialise in the selling of soul tools. Our goods will all be soul tools which are ranked Class 6 and below. They are suitable for soul masters and engineers below the Soul King rank. In addition, we have prepared a secret, big item to make your trips worthwhile. Distinguished guests, don’t miss it for all the world. Our auction will now start, so can a staff member please bring up the first item that will be auctioned off today.”

Two red-clothed girls pushed a cart that was covered with a purple cloth onto the auction stage. After pushing the cart all the way to the center of the stage, they removed the cloth from the cart.

A black soul tool appeared on the cart. This soul tool was rectangular, and it was about a foot long. It had complicated carvings on it.

Huo Yuhao was not only a soul engineer, but he also possessed a pair of Spirit Eyes that ordinary folk could never hope to obtain. His eyes moved slightly, and he was able to clearly see the carvings of the soul tool on the stage. He whispered, "This should be an offensive soul tool that goes on your arm. It should be around Class 3 or so. Wang Dong should be able to use it."

A soul master needed the corresponding level of cultivation to fully release the power of a soul tool. If a person's cultivation was lower than the minimum requirements of a soul tool, he would be unable to release its strength; if his cultivation was higher than its maximum power, it would be unable to increase his combat strength effectively.

Qing Ya smiled slightly. "Our first auctioned good is a Class 3 attack-type soul tool, a relatively rare Soul Light Ray. An ordinary item like this should never be able to be auctioned in an auction like ours, but this Class 3 Soul Light Ray that can be placed on a person's right arm has been crafted by a Class 6 soul engineer. It's a special item, and quite rarely seen. An ordinary item like this was turned into a complicated one in the hands of a grandmaster like him, and its core formation has given it a special effect."

Chapter 83.1: The Ranked Carving Knife

"This ray has a paralysis effect, so its real name ought to be Paralysis Ray. Those ranked Soul King and below should be affected after being hit by the ray. How much it affects the soul master is dependant on the individual's cultivation."

"We've already tested it. When used on a Soul King, this Paralysis Ray is so effective that it can numb them for a second. This is on the precondition that the ray must hit a defenceless Soul King who is not protected by soul skills or soul tools. When used on a Soul Ancestor, the ray can numb them for more than two seconds, with the same precondition as before. Moreover, it can numb a soul master with three soul rings of the same rank for at least three to four seconds."

"Honoured guests, please note that we tested the ray on assault-type soul masters. The effects will definitely be different when used on other types of soul masters."

"The requirement to use this Paralysis Ray is low, but it's extremely practical. It's a quality product amongst Class 3 soul tools. The starting bid is a thousand golden soul coins, with every increase not being lower than fifty golden soul coins. The bid starts now!"

Someone immediately raised their auction board when Qing Ya finished talking. "One thousand three hundred golden soul coins."

Just as Auctioneer Qing Ya said, it was very rare to see a Class 6 master making a Class 3 soul tool. One shouldn't look down on the fact that this soul tool wasn't of a high class because it was extremely practical. Soul Ancestors would find it quite useful. In addition to that, the low requirement for using this tool was its biggest asset.

As a result of that, the auction price for such items was always on the high side. Soon, the price shot past the two thousand golden soul coins mark.

One had to know that the materials used to make this soul tool weren't very outstanding other than its ingenious design and the elaborate manufacturing of the formation arrays. It was a Class 3 soul tool after all. It was a relatively high price to pay for a soul tool of said class. Normal Class 3 soul tools would go for hundreds of golden soul coins only.

Just as expected, the bidding paused after it passed the two thousand mark. A few of those fighting to bid at the start were hesitating now. This was because everyone had limited amounts of money in their hands. Moreover, this was only the first auction item.

"Two thousand five hundred golden soul coins." At this moment, Wang Yan suddenly raised the board in his hand.

Auctioneer Qing Ya's eyes shone, and she smiled sweetly at Wang Yan, who was wearing a mask. "Honoured guest number 166 has bid two thousand five hundred golden soul coins. Is anyone going to go higher?"

The Auctioneer's source of income came through commissions from selling auction items. For example, if an item that cost one hundred golden soul coins was sold for two hundred, the auction house would deduct 10% from the total sum as their cut. Auctioneers would get 0.1% of the amount above the cost of the auction item.

One shouldn't look down on such a small value of 0.1%. It was very normal for a Class 4 auction to exceed a hundred thousand golden soul coins in profit at the end of the day. Since this was Star Luo City, and even the largest auction in the whole Star Luo Empire, they practically had to organise countless auctions every day. A few high level auctioneers usually only appeared once a month, but could earn a lot through commissions.

As a result of that, when Qing Ya saw Wang Yan add five hundred to the bid, her heart naturally leapt with joy. As a purple-ranked auctioneer, she understood very clearly that the first price reached in the auction would often determine the direction of prices in the whole auction. Even though this first item wasn't very expensive, it would definitely be a good start if the premium was sufficiently high enough.

Once the bid for two thousand five hundred was made, the audience fell silent. The competitors who were still hesitating just a moment ago no longer pondered the matter any further. This price was clearly far more than they could afford.

"Two thousand five hundred golden soul coins, going once." After Qing Ya questioned the audience a few more times and didn't get a response, she started the closing call for the bid.

This moment was when a first-rate auction revealed its aura. A normal small auction would delay the closing call of the bid for as long as they could, but Qing Ya showed no sign of doing so.

Bang! Down fell the hammer on the table. "Deal. The Paralysis Ray is sold to guest number 166. Thank you for your generosity." Qing Ya shot Wang Yan another sweet smile, to which he responded with a light nod.

"Who's going to use this soul tool?" Wang Yan turned his head and asked his group.

He Caitou was the first to interject. "Teacher Wang, give this Paralysis Ray to junior brother. The effect of this soul tool is very rare. I reckon the manufacturer of this formation array has concealed something

within it which is very difficult to emulate. Even though junior brother hasn't cultivated three soul rings, his soul power has already reached Rank 27. He might find it difficult to use it, but he can still use it before he reaches Rank 40. "

Hearing him say this, the others naturally shut their mouths. In reality, the person most suited to using the Paralysis Ray ought to be Xiao Xiao. This was because she was closer to Rank 30 than Huo Yuhao was, and would breakthrough at any time.

However, it was clear that He Caitou had his reasons for saying this. Relatively speaking, this Paralysis Ray was even more suited to Huo Yuhao's fighting style.

Huo Yuhao never thought that he'd actually get the first auction item as a reserve soul engineer.

As the auction continued, there were really many good items for specialising in soul tools. The overwhelming majority of soul tools were from Class 3 to Class 5. Wang Yan continuously bid for the items, and purchased more than ten soul tools, distributing them to everyone.

"The following is the second to last item for today. After this item is auctioned off, we'll come to our grand finale. I believe the audience will definitely be pleasantly surprised."

The young girl wheeled out the penultimate auction item for the day. From the shape of the cloak and how it was practically sticking to the trolley, one could see that this item wasn't big.

Qing Ya walked to the front of the cart with a sound amplification soul tool in her hand. She smiled and said, "I'm sure everyone seated in the audience who's done in-depth research into soul tools will definitely be very familiar with this item. It also often appears in soul tool auctions as well. It has an amusing name – Milk's Bottle."

She lifted the fabric off the item as she spoke, simultaneously taking the auction item from the cart.

The item was a silver necklace, and on it hung a metal pendant in the shape of a milk bottle, about the size of a grown person's thumb.

He Caitou's eyes shone as he whispered to Huo Yuhao. "Junior brother, this is what I was telling you about. You need this the most now. Looking at the type of Milk Bottle she's holding, it looks like a Class 4 soul tool."

Huo Yuhao had a wave of misgivings in his heart, while simultaneously feeling ashamed. He'd learned how to make soul tools for almost a year, but there were still many things he didn't know within the realms of soul tools.

Auctioneer Qing Ya smiled and said, "As the name implies, a milk bottle is naturally used to drink milk. However, to either a soul engineer or a soul master, their milk bottle is used to replenish their soul power. Naturally, I have to mention that breastfeeding is still the best."

The audience immediately erupted in laughter after hearing this joke, and even Qing Ya herself was laughing. The mountains on her chests were somewhat fitting to the breastfeeding she was talking about.

"Back to the topic at hand, the scientific name of this milk bottle ought to be energy restoration soul tool. Both soul masters and soul engineers can use this item. The milk bottle can be a soul tool of any

class, but only soul masters rank 3 and above can make it have a given effect. It's very common amongst soul tools, but a high-class Milk Bottle is extremely expensive. I remember seeing a Class 7 Milk Bottle appear once in our first-rate Starlight Auction. It really caused a commotion at the time. In the end, a deal was made for seven million golden soul coins, setting a new record for all Milk Bottles."

"Naturally, the milk bottle is used to replenish soul power, regardless of their respective rank. One only has to fill it with soul power before using it for it to work. This soul tool has its limitations as well. When using it, one has to stop and absorb the soul power with all their mind and soul. If one does not focus, they will fail to guide the soul power into their body. As such, I have to warn the audience in every auction not to use the milk bottle in battle. Alright, I believe that the audience understands the milk bottle very well. I won't blather on any longer. The starting bid is six thousand golden soul coins, with every increasing bid not lower than a hundred golden soul coins."

When Qing Ya proclaimed that the bid for the Milk Bottle was open, He Caitou also explained its characteristics in far greater detail to Huo Yuhao.

"Yuhao, this soul tool is the most complicated soul tool in its class in terms of its make, and also has the highest material requirements. The reason for that is because it has to store a huge amount of soul power. In addition to that, the Milk Bottle can't let the soul power leak out at the same time, nor can it compress soul power till it causes an explosion. As such, the requirements for the formation arrays and materials in manufacturing a Milk Bottle are extremely high. There is only one criterion for successfully making a Milk Bottle, and that is stability. After the Milk Bottle is filled with soul power, it must be stable. If not, it'll turn into a bomb that can explode at any time."

"This auctioneer's warning is very accurate. Generally speaking, one definitely can't use the Milk Bottle while in battle. This is because when the soul master is absorbing the soul force from the Milk Bottle, a lot of soul power will be released. In the process of receiving soul power from the Milk Bottle, the soul master's body will definitely be deadlocked. This would be extremely fatal for a soul master in battle. Moreover, there are times when it's very difficult to control the Milk Bottle. It will normally absorb all of a soul master's soul power, or fill a person's soul power to the brim."

"A high level Milk Bottle is expensive because it's very demanding in terms of the materials it needs. It's also far too troublesome to make one. The difficulty of making a Class 7 Milk Bottle can even surpass that of a normal Class 8 soul tool. At the very least, a Class 8 soul tool master is needed to make it. Even I can only make a Class 3 Milk Bottle at this point. That in itself doesn't mean anything, but it takes too long to make it. I only tried making one once, and wouldn't do it again!"

"Yuhao, things are different with you because your innate ability is spirit-based. Your spiritual power is powerful enough to be extremely effective in controlling the Milk Bottle. That way, it's more convenient for you to control how much soul power you absorb."

Chapter 83.2: The Ranked Carving Knife

"Furthermore, you're a control-type soul master. During a team fight, you can stay behind the team the whole time and recover your soul power using the Milk Bottle. However, you might encounter a situation where you receive too much soul power while using this Class 4 Milk Bottle. Will your body be able to endure it? After all, it'll be a huge surge of soul power."

Huo Yuhao's heart trembled and he immediately responded, "That won't be a problem." A Class 4 Milk Bottle wasn't something to be taken lightly but he still had his fusion partner! When he and Wang Dong fought with each other, they could produce Haodong Power in their bodies. And if they were to use this Milk Bottle after releasing the Golden Road, wouldn't that immediately replenish their depleted soul energy? This Milk Bottle was truly a good replenishing soul tool for them.

As the two of them were talking, the price of the Class 4 Milk Bottle had already reached eleven thousand gold soul coins.

One would never have to worry about selling a Milk Bottle during an auction; this was true regardless of what class the Milk Bottle was. This was because it was simply too practical. It could even be said to be essential for a high-ranking soul engineer. And now, even soul masters were very willing to use them. Although a Milk Bottle would appear at practically every single auction, the difficulty involved in its creation made it so that its supply would never catch up to demand. Naturally, its price would increase more and more as time went on, to the extent that Milk Bottles were now one of the most demanded soul tools on the market.

Wang Yan was just able to listen into their conversation when He Caitou had spoken earlier. As they chatted with each other, Huo Yuhao subconsciously glanced at Wang Yan, who nodded back at him.

Earlier, Wang Yan had already spent nearly seventy thousand gold soul coins. This wasn't a small number. Nobody knew how much money the academy had allowed him to take along with him.

Bei Bei whispered, "Teacher Wang, do you have enough money? If you don't, I have some too. This Milk Bottle is quite good, and all of us can use it. Also, it isn't as if we can't use it at all during a fight."

Wang Yan smiled. "Don't worry, I don't really have to spend any money. I have the credit certificate that the academy issued. No matter how much money we spend, the academy will naturally settle the bill for us."

Bei Bei's eyes lit up, "The academy actually issued a credit certificate for us?"

A credit certificate wasn't money, but a guarantee that was based off trust that could be used to claim money from an organisation. Naturally, only credit issued by pinnacle existences would be effective and held in high regard. For example, the imperial families of the various academies and top-ranked academies. Only pinnacle existences like these would issue credit certificates with no limits on them. Undoubtedly, Shrek Academy was one of these existences.

The fact that Shrek Academy had given them a credit certificate for their trip this time around signified the absolute trust the academy had in them. This was because the credit certificate they possessed had no upper limit on it; this meant that the academy would have to foot the bill no matter what they bought. The Starlight Auction would just have to settle its payments with Shrek Academy to complete its transactions.

"Twenty thousand." Wang Yan placed a bid, once again using a high bid to crush the spirits of the other participants in the hall.

Wang Yan had made his move many a time earlier, and he had crushed everyone else using pure wealth practically every single time. Because of this, the others weren't willing to let prices reach excessively

high levels. Once he made a move, a large majority of the other bidders immediately dropped out of the bidding.

Naturally, there were some people who were feeling unresigned. After all, this Class 4 Milk Bottle had a true price of twenty thousand gold soul coins or so.

“Twenty-one thousand.” A low voice rang out from the back.

Wang Yan replied with an unflinching face, “Twenty-five thousand.”

At this moment, the entire hall quieted down again.

After this round of bidding, Qing Ya’s gaze toward Wang Yan started to change from a regular, professional one to a more intense one. After all, nobody wouldn’t like a person with money. Moreover, Wang Yan’s voice wasn’t too loud. Although he wore a mask, the aura of a scholar still leaked out from him.

“Twenty-five thousand going once, twenty-five thousand going twice, twenty-five thousand going thrice. Done!”

Qing Ya’s hammering speed was extraordinarily quick, as if she wanted to leave a good impression on Wang Yan. They had obtained the Milk Bottle.

This time around, Huo Yuhao was somewhat excited. He was truly curious about this soul tool that could replenish his soul power.

After pushing the cart down the stage, Qing Ya walked to the very front of the auction stage. Her charming face was now slightly flushed, and she said in a much quieter voice, “Distinguished guests, our mystery gift is about to take the stage. This is also the final item we are auctioning tonight. This wasn’t supposed to appear here originally, but with the permission of our chief auctioneer, we have decided to reveal this item to thank our various distinguished guests for supporting our Starlight Auction. Although it is extremely valuable, I trust that every single person here will be able to tell its true worth. Now, I would like our ceremonial lady to push our mystery gift onto the stage.”

A push cart once again ascended the stage from the side. Unlike the previous items, this push cart wasn’t just bigger; the cloth on it was actually changed to a conspicuous red one.

All matters conducted within the Starlight Auction were differentiated by color, with gold being the most honorable color. After that would be red, the color of a hundred thousand year soul ring.

From this, it could be seen that this mystery gift was extremely extraordinary.

It was quickly pushed to the centre of the stage, beside Qing Ya.

From the general outline of the cloth covering it, this item didn’t look too small.

Huo Yuhao squinted his eyes, quietly releasing his Spiritual Detection. After obtaining Imitation, his Spiritual Detection had become even more covert. As long as he willed it, he could completely conceal all of his soul rings so they would not appear during the activation of any of his soul skills.

However, as Huo Yuhao quietly swept his spiritual power across the red cloth and the item within it, his body suddenly trembled violently. He quickly covered his eyes with his hands, and his entire body started to spasm.

He Caitou and Bei Bei were both startled, and the two both blurted out in unison, “Yuhao, what’s happened to you?”

Huo Yuhao paused for a few seconds before coming back to his senses. When he pulled his hands down, however, He Caitou and Bei Bei could clearly see the glint in his eyes.

“What a sharp feeling.”

When he had scanned the red cloth using his Spiritual Detection to find out what the item inside was, he had felt an indescribable sense of sharpness. That sharpness had instantly torn through his Spiritual Detection, going so far as to pierce through even his spiritual origin. This had scared Huo Yuhao to the point where he had quickly cancelled his soul skill. Although this was the case, his soul skills were still channelled through his Spirit Eyes. As a result, they were still greatly irritated, to the point where tears started flowing from his eyes.

Qing Ya had already started her introduction on the stage of the 12th Hall.

“Everyone here must really want to know what our mystery gift is. It’s getting late already, and Qing Ya doesn’t want to spoil the climax. This mystery gift is very ordinary, but it’s also a soul engineer’s most inseparable friend; every soul engineer must have one of these. However, the last item we’re auctioning is completely different. It isn’t a soul tool—which is why I said that it shouldn’t have been here in the first place. However, it’s too closely related to a soul engineer. Before I remove this cloth, let me say one last thing: this item’s rarity and value is enough for it to be auctioned off in one of our Starlight Auction’s top-ranked auctions. Everyone, please take a look.”

Everyone’s gazes were drawn towards the stage the moment Qing Ya lifted the cloth from the cart. However, the dazzling or exceptionally brilliant item that they were expecting didn’t appear. What appeared in its place was an item that couldn’t be any more ordinary. It was just as Qing Ya had said—this was an item that any soul engineer would be familiar with, as well as something they couldn’t go without.

The reason behind the tall cloth covering the cart wasn’t due to the size of the item itself. Instead, it was because the item was placed on a showcase, and the mass covered by the cloth was naturally the showcase itself. The item itself was very small, around half a foot long or so, and was as thick as a finger. It seemed to grow narrower and narrower from the bottom to the top, and the very top of the item was an extremely sharp-pointed tip. On the other hand, its bottom was a half-inch wide blade. It had a simple, dark look to it, and faintly discernible carvings could be seen on it. They emitted a faintly ancient, yet gloomy aura.

A large number of participants let out dissatisfied sighs. Clearly, they didn’t think that this mystery gift had surprised them at all. However, the pupils of a small number of people were rapidly contracting. The appearance of this item had astonished them.

A carving knife. Right, this was a carving knife that a soul engineer could use to carve a core formation. Both ends of a carving knife were useful to a soul engineer, who could use them differently while carving

different core formations. Soul engineers couldn't lack a carving knife; this was a basic requirement to carve a soul tool.

Huo Yuhao also had a carving knife, given to him by Fan Yu. It was a relatively decent carving knife, made out of a hard metal that made it sharp, sturdy, and stable. It was very suitable for him to use it. Fan Yu had also told him that he would help him find another, more outstanding carving knife after he became a Class 4 soul engineer. After all, the higher the rank a soul engineer was, the more precious and tough the metals he would use. If a soul engineer's carving knife wasn't good enough, how would he be able to carve a core formation? Furthermore, a good carving knife could let a soul engineer achieve twice the results with half the effort while creating a soul tool.

Huo Yuhao and He Caitou were both stunned upon seeing this carving knife. At the very least, they weren't able to tell where its outstanding points were on the surface. However, Huo Yuhao placed a great deal of trust in his earlier feeling. The sharp sensation that had pierced through even his Spiritual Detection was definitely not fake, and this carving knife was definitely not normal.

Qing Ya's voice rang out from the crowd of dissatisfied voices, "In all likelihood, a few of our distinguished guests have been deceived by its outer appearance. Then, I can only tell you with much regret that you are all wrong. Missing this mystery gift will be your life's greatest regret. Now, let me introduce to you all this seemingly ordinary carving knife that is definitely not ordinary."

Chapter 83.3: The Ranked Carving Knife

"A carving knife is a necessity for a soul engineer. Moreover, a good carving knife is the most important thing that a high-ranking soul engineer can have. Distinguished guests, the carving knife you see in front of you can't be described using the word 'simple' alone. Calling it an exceptional carving knife wouldn't be an exaggeration at all. Firstly, let me give a quick explanation. There's a ranking for carving knives within the world of soul engineers, and the top-ranking ones are all in the hands of the best soul engineers in the world. I'm sure that everyone here has heard of the term 'ranked carving knife'. It's a term used to describe carving knives that have reached the leaderboard."

"Our Douluo Continent's Carving Knife Leaderboard lists the top hundred carving knives in the world. Regretfully, over two-thirds of those knives belong to the Sun Moon Empire. This is one of the main reasons why there are so many, and so powerful, soul engineers in the Sun Moon Empire. And the item you see before you is one of the hundred carving knives on the Leaderboard. In other words, it's one of the ranked carving knives that I've just spoken about."

The crowd below the stage immediately flew into an uproar the moment Qing Ya uttered the words 'ranked carving knife'. The previous sighs of dissatisfaction immediately vanished, and He Caitou closed his eyes helplessly.

If Qing Ya hadn't explained everything, he had been planning to keep everything to himself. As one of Fan Yu's disciples, he had noticed a few abnormalities regarding this carving knife after making a close observation. Moreover, as a soul engineer himself, his desire for a ranked carving knife would never be lacking. There were only two ranked carving knives within Shrek Academy, which respectively belonged to Dean Xian Lin'er and Fan Yu.

Right now, a ranked carving knife had just appeared before them. This had an extremely important significance to them, and even Shrek Academy as a whole.

Although Wang Yan didn't know much about carving knives, he was instantly excited after hearing the words 'ranked carving knife'. He understood that this was something that he had to bring back to Shrek Academy no matter what. Even if it had a high price, the academy would still reward him for it. Out of the precious things that the academy was looking for, a ranked carving knife had been ranked among the top for a long time! This was especially true for the Soul Tool Department, for even Vice-Dean Qian Duoduo wasn't able to use a ranked carving knife.

The fervent atmosphere below the stage instantly caused a brilliant smile to appear on Qing Ya's charming face. She wasn't impatient at all—after waiting for a full five minutes, the participants of the auction gradually calmed down.

"Auctioness Qing Ya. What're you still waiting for? Quickly start the bidding." There were already a few people who couldn't hold in their excitement anymore.

Qing Ya smiled, "Distinguished guests, please do not be so impatient. I'm sure that everyone here knows that our Starlight Auction has always been sincere and honest to all of our customers. We have always guaranteed the quality of all goods that are sold within our auctions, and we will never allow a faulty or problematic good to be given to our distinguished guests. Because of this, I would like everyone to allow me to finish speaking."

Whilst speaking, Qing Ya looked regretfully at the ancient carving knife in front of her and sighed lightly. "If this were an ordinary ranked carving knife, it would never have appeared here. Distinguished guests, I'm sure that you are all aware of this. A ranked carving knife is one of the most valuable items within the world of soul engineers. It's even more valuable than certain precious materials. The reason why this ranked carving knife has appeared as the last item in today's Class 4 auction is because it has a particular problem."

"It's ranked 99th on the Carving Knife Leaderboard, but with its strength, it shouldn't be ranked that low. In fact, it should be within the top 30. However, the main reason why it's ranked so low is because it's a cursed carving knife."

He Caitou suddenly cried out, "Is that the Ominous Soul-Devouring Knife that counter-devours its owners?"

Shrek Academy was seated in the first row of the auction, and his voice wasn't soft either. Qing Ya was naturally able to hear his words, and a trace of astonishment immediately appeared on her charming face whereupon she answered, "We actually have a knowledgeable guest. Correct, this carving knife is the 99th ranked Soul-Devouring Carving Knife that's known as the Vicious Knife."

"This Ominous Soul-Devouring Knife has had over three thousand years of history. Three thousand years ago, it appeared in the Sun Moon Empire. Its creator was an absolutely exceptional soul engineer who supposedly became a Class 9 soul engineer. Furthermore, he wasn't just a soul engineer, but a soul master as well; a terrifying evil soul master. Three thousand years ago, he brought about a storm of carnage and terror to the continent."

At that point, the participants in the auction quietened down. The expressions of many people turned grave as well.

“The Ominous Soul-Devouring Knife was created by that evil soul master during his later years. According to the stories, he encountered a mortal enemy not long after creating this carving knife. He was a genius in his generation, but also a monster. He subsequently fell, but didn’t carry the Ominous Soul-Devouring Knife by his side when he died. Following the passage of time, this vicious knife ended up in the mortal world.”

“When our Starlight Auction made an investigation into its past, we found that this vicious knife has had a total of thirty-seven owners. However, every single one of these thirty-seven people have died violently. Of which, nine of them became evil soul masters. According to the legends, this Ominous Soul-Devouring Knife contains a trace of that talented evil soul master’s soul. Because of that, it steers its owners toward the path of evil. If you are not strong-willed, you will not be able to use it. Furthermore, it absolutely cannot be used frequently. Thus, it fell and fell in the rankings until it finally reached a spot where it couldn’t fall any further. Due to its previous glory, it has never been stricken from the Carving Knife Leaderboard. People who like it have always been hoping that it can finally find a true master, but we hope that its owner possesses the attribute of Light. This way, it’ll be very hard for him to be corrupted. Naturally, we don’t have a complete understanding of this carving knife. Thus, we advise that our distinguished guests be cautious when purchasing this item. We can guarantee that as long as you don’t pour soul power into it, you won’t be counter-devoured. Furthermore, with its status as a ranked carving knife, turning it into an heirloom is quite good.”

After listening to Qing Ya’s long explanation, everyone present finally understood why a ranked carving knife had appeared in a Class 4 auction. Many participants who were originally eager to buy it were now silent.

This Ominous Soul-Devouring Knife would absolutely not have an excessively low value due to its status as a ranked carving knife. However, no matter how good it was, it couldn’t be compared to one’s life! If a person bought such a precious item and didn’t use it, wouldn’t it be a waste? In the end, this was just a Class 4 auction, and many of the participants weren’t very rich. Because of this, hesitation began to appear in their hearts.

He Caitou sighed and shook his head, “You can’t buy this vicious knife. I’ve heard my teacher talk about it before. The counter-devouring of this vicious knife isn’t as simple as what that auctioneer said. You should be able to see this from what happened to the owners who didn’t die. After all, it’s a ranked carving knife! If we buy it and bring it back, will we be able to resist not using it? If I’m not mistaken, my teacher said that soul tools produced by this Ominous Soul-Devouring Knife will have two additional effects, making them terrifying existences. It’s truly a pity.”

Nobody would take their own lives as a joke. When He Caitou finished speaking, Wang Yan revealed a disappointed look in his eyes. He was already prepared to give up on the Ominous Soul-Devouring Knife.

“The starting price of the Ominous Soul-Devouring Knife is one hundred thousand gold soul coins, and each increase cannot be lower than five thousand gold soul coins. We can start the auction now.” Qing Ya spoke with a smile on her face. In reality, she wasn’t excited at all. She was able to tell with her nearly

ten years of experience as an auctioneer that the Ominous Soul-Devouring Knife would be left unsold yet again.

In reality, the Ominous Soul-Devouring Knife had appeared in one of the Starlight Auction's top-ranked auctions shortly after the organization had obtained it. Its starting price wasn't a hundred thousand, but three hundred thousand. It had been acquired by chance, and it was still a ranked carving knife no matter what was said!

However, who could've predicted that its infamy was so widespread? Even the high-ranking guests of the Starlight Auction weren't willing to possess it, even as an heirloom. Just who would dare to keep it with the dangers of an evil soul master's soul residing within it?

The Vicious Soul-Devouring Knife had a history that could only be described using the word 'savage'. None of its previous owners, including its creators, had been able to live for more than ten years after coming into possession of it. Because of this, it had spent a large majority of its three thousand years of existence lying unused.

Helpless, the Starlight Auction's owner could only let it appear often within various auctions. Furthermore, he promised to give a commission of 1% to the auctioneer who was able to sell it off. However, things turned out contrary to the way he wished. The Ominous Soul-Devouring Knife had appeared in several tens of auctions, but nobody had been willing to buy it. Due to this, its price fell and fell yet again until it was near the price that the auction had purchased it for.

If it's not going to sell, so be it. Qing Ya hadn't had too much hope in the first place.

A somewhat young voice suddenly rang out from the seating area at this moment, "One hundred thousand gold soul coins."

A sign containing the number 333 was suddenly raised.

Qing Ya was left dumbstruck. This was the first time that a person had bid on the Ominous Soul-Devouring Knife! She was completely overjoyed after a brief moment of astonishment. It had to be known that the 1% commission of its price of a hundred thousand gold soul coins was one thousand gold soul coins! Even if a person squandered his money, it would be enough for that person to survive for a few years. It was already quite good for Qing Ya to be able to obtain tens to hundreds of gold soul coins during each auction she hosted. After all, she was only a purple-ranked auctioneer. If she was able to sell the Ominous Soul-Devouring Knife, she could be promoted to a black, or even higher ranked auctioneer.

Qing Ya even forgot to speak for a brief moment due to the exuberance she felt.

"I'm bidding one hundred thousand gold soul coins." That young voice rang out once again.

"Ah! Okay, guest number 333 has bid one hundred thousand gold soul coins. Are there any more guests who wish to bid?" Qing Ya came to her senses and spoke hurriedly. Furthermore, the hope she felt spiked dramatically. If one person was willing to bid for it, why wouldn't there be a second? Even if the bid was increased by five thousand, she would take away fifty more gold soul coins.

Chapter 84.1: The Gold of Life

Huo Yuhao was the one who had placed the opening bid.

Everyone from Shrek Academy was shocked to hear Huo Yuhao bid for the item. People like Bei Bei and Xu Sanshi who didn't really know about soul tools could get a sense of this carving knife's problem from Auctioneer Qing Ya's explanation and the silence from the audience. Yet, Huo Yuhao had placed a bid without even consulting them about it. He...!

"Junior brother, you..." Bei Bei frowned. His junior brother wasn't an impulsive person from his understanding of the boy!

Huo Yuhao glanced at his senior brother with a slightly apologetic look in his eyes. He then leaned towards Wang Yan and said in a low voice, "Teacher Wang, I used my Spiritual Detection a moment ago, and determined the source of this Ominous Soul-Devouring carving knife's problem. I've got a way to control the drawback from using it. Let's bid for this first. If I'm not mistaken, this carving knife ought to have been forged from an extremely precious and mysterious metal called the Gold of Life. It just so happens that I can undo the remnants of the curse contained within the carving knife with my spiritual power and Ultimate Ice. There definitely won't be a problem."

Wang Yan frowned and said, "Yuhao, don't be hasty. Your life and future is at stake! I can't let anything happen to you."

Huo Yuhao muttered irresolutely to himself for a bit before continuing, "Teacher Wang, why don't you look at it this way: let's bid for it first. If I can't use the carving knife, I'll get the Dean of the Soul Tool Department and Teacher Fan Yu to supervise me in undoing the curse on this soul-devouring carving knife when we get back to the academy. I will only use it on the condition that the curse has definitely been lifted. If not, I will give up and leave it to collect dust in the academy. I'll definitely repay this sum of money to the academy in the future. Do we have a deal?"

Wang Yan felt a little reassured after hearing what Huo Yuhao said. The ranked carving knife was only going for a hundred thousand golden coins. If Huo Yuhao could really use the carving knife regardless of how problematic it was, then this was a huge steal!

A ranked carving knife appearing in a first-rate auction was a rarity because soul tool engineers who owned a ranked carving knife would treat them as treasures. These ranked carving knives would be passed on from one generation to another; only wastrels would put it up for auction. The highest bid in history for a ranked carving knife had amounted to tens of millions of golden soul coins! That had been for a carving knife ranked in the top twenty.

It wouldn't be a bad thing to spend a hundred thousand golden soul coins if it meant the academy would have three ranked carving knives.

When he thought to this point, Wang Yan nodded at Huo Yuhao. He had another reason for agreeing to this bid. How could anyone compare to Shrek Academy in terms of people with reputable backgrounds? They had a few especially powerful light-attribute soul masters. If Shrek Academy couldn't control this murderous carving knife, then there was really no one in this world who could do so at present.

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Even though the creator of this carving knife was an evil soul master, he too was a Class 9 soul tool engineer. However, no existence wasn't unparalleled in the face of Shrek Academy. Moreover, Wang Yan faintly had the impression that the Shrek Guardians seemed to have gone on a very important

mission three thousand years ago. After paying a heavy price, they had managed to kill a powerful soul master.

In any case, he had to follow through with it since Huo Yuhao had already bid for it!

Qing Ya repeatedly questioned the audience, yet there was no response from them. No one was willing to bid for this murderous carving knife because they knew that once they bid for it, a deal would really be formed.

“A hundred thousand golden soul coins, going once!” Qing Ya had no choice but to start the final call to close the auction.

“A hundred thousand golden soul coins, going twice!”

“A hundred thousand golden soul coins, going thrice! Sold!”

The mallet fell with a bang, announcing that this exceptionally murderous carving knife now belonged to Shrek Academy. At the very least, it didn't belong to Huo Yuhao yet.

Seeing as he had won the bid for this soul-devouring carving knife, Huo Yuhao's face was beaming with happiness as he heaved a huge sigh of relief. “Yuhao, what's the Gold of Life?” He Caitou asked in a low voice.

Huo Yuhao hastily replied, “I read about it in an ancient text in the library. The Gold of Life is a special kind of metal that's extremely rare. This metal appears to have a life, but doesn't possess intelligence. It can seemingly break down all metals and ores known to man. It's very rare. From what was written in the ancient text, the Gold of Life seems to hold tremendous power, but no one has completely grasp the means of using the Gold of Life to date.”

He Caitou scratched his head and said, “It looks like I need to read more books. I didn't even know that a treasure like this existed.”

Huo Yuhao sighed to himself. It was only natural that he hadn't read about it from some ancient text. Something like the Gold of Life might not even belong to this world! This was because the description of this metal came from Calamity Necromancer Electrolux – the entity from another space that had helped him kill an evil soul master.

When the soul-devouring carving knife countered Huo Yuhao's spiritual power, the almighty beings in his mind sensed that his spiritual sea was in danger and woke up at the same time.

The Skydream Iceworm was the most sensitive to changes in spiritual power, so he too was the first to awaken. He only looked at the soul-devouring carving knife and told Huo Yuhao he shouldn't carelessly play around with it because a huge threat resided in that toy. The Ice Empress had other thoughts about this matter. In a slightly more disdainful manner, she commented that though this carving knife was cursed, Huo Yuhao had an Ultimate Ice armor. Added onto the fact that he had the Skydream Iceworm's tremendous spiritual power, and the curse shouldn't have too much of an effect on him. However, it only made sense if he couldn't use this carving knife.

As they were both arguing with each other, a sound of bewilderment came from Calamity Necromancer Electrolux. He hadn't been surprised for who-knows-how long, but he was really astonished when he saw this carving knife.

The words "the Gold of Life" then spilled from his lips.

Huo Yuhao explained everything that Electrolux had told him to He Caitou.. The reason why Huo Yuhao had impulsively placed a bid without soliciting Wang Yan's opinion on the matter was because Electrolux told him he definitely had to get this carving knife at all costs.

However, Electrolux fell silent once the carving knife was in his hands. Huo Yuhao only sensed that the mysterious old man was actually pleasantly surprised, an emotion that was rare to him.

The Skydream Iceworm and the Ice Empress both held somewhat of a restraining fear towards Electrolux. As such, they hadn't opposed him yet. After all, Electrolux had previously proven his good intentions with actions. If it weren't for him, Huo Yuhao might have died in the face of the Envoy of the Death God. The soul beasts believed in the creed that the strongest was deemed king. Electrolux had used his strength to show them how powerful he was, so they had no choice but to accept his existence.

Chapter 84.2: The Gold of Life

"Yuhao, this carving knife made from the Gold of Life isn't simple at all. Once you get it, I'll be able to resolve its issues, whereupon you'll be able to easily solve some of the problems you'll have to face in the future with it. I won't have to worry about my strand of divine sense being extinguished either."

Electrolux sank back into silence after uttering these words. However, only Huo Yuhao was able to listen to him speak; even the Skydream Iceworm and the Ice Empress were screened out by his mysterious powers.

Shrek Academy had obtained a plentiful harvest from tonight's auction, but they had spent a lot of money to acquire it. Wang Yan decided to settle the issue of payment and the collection of the items by himself, allowing the others to go back and rest. As for the Soul-Devouring Carving Knife that Huo Yuhao had bought, Wang Yan would be able to retrieve it with Huo Yuhao's participant sign.

Wang Yan's ranking within the Starlight Auction had increased from the initial white to purple with this exchange. Subsequently, he now had the qualifications to participate in auctions that were of a higher class. However, only black-ranked and above customers were allowed to participate in the Starlight Auction's top-ranked auctions.

The Soul-Devouring Carving Knife had left a very deep impression on Huo Yuhao. This was especially so after Electrolux's words, which made him overjoyed. His senses as a spiritual-type soul master were extremely acute. Although his spiritual power was far, far weaker than pinnacle experts like Electrolux, the Skydream Iceworm, and the Ice Jade Empress Scorpion, he had a very strong ability to differentiate between good and evil. He could sense pure goodwill from Electrolux's divine sense, but the Skydream Iceworm and the Ice Empress still had some reservations towards him. However, these reservations began to gradually decrease as they followed his improvements in cultivation. After all, they no longer had any path of retreat.

Huo Yuhao didn't head straight back to his room after returning to the Imperial Grand Star Hotel. Instead, he went to Wang Dong's room and knocked on his door.

"Who is it?" Wang Dong's voice rang out from within.

"It's me, I'm back."

The door opened, revealing a somewhat stupefied Wang Dong.

Huo Yuhao wasn't polite at all as he entered Wang Dong's room before closing the room's door. He asked, concerned, "Wang Dong, what's with you?"

Wang Dong shook his head and furrowed his brows slightly, "You might not believe me, and even I don't understand what's going on. When I heard everyone talking about using soul tools, I felt an indescribable sense of vexation in my heart. There seems to be another consciousness in my mind that's rejecting the use of soul tools. This feeling's kinda strange, but it's not comfortable at all. However, I don't seem to be able to reject it. I chose to come back because of that. Actually, I understand what Teacher Wang Yan's saying, and I believe that what he's saying is correct. However, it seems like I can't use soul tools at all."

Huo Yuhao was stunned. "Just what is this? Is there a problem with your spiritual sea?" He immediately thought back to his own situation. Did Wang Dong have other souls living within his spiritual sea? He still remembered what the Skydream Iceworm had told him—Wang Dong also had three martial souls, like him. His three martial souls were already settled now. His Spirit Eyes were his main martial soul without a doubt, while his second martial soul was the powerful Ice Jade Empress Scorpion. His third martial soul was very likely to be one that he couldn't add any soul rings to—the Divine Law of Necromancy, the Calamity Necromancer Electrolux who seemingly possessed the powers of a evil soul master despite being much more pure-hearted than many other people.

However, what about Wang Dong? What were his three martial souls? Huo Yuhao believed that the Skydream Iceworm's judgement couldn't have been incorrect.

"Wang Dong, do you trust me?" Huo Yuhao asked seriously, his hands on Wang Dong's shoulders.

Wang Dong was stunned for a moment. He immediately nodded subconsciously, "Naturally. Why wouldn't I trust you?"

Huo Yuhao said in a low voice, "You know that I'm a spiritual-type soul master. The biggest difference we spiritual-type soul masters have from ordinary soul masters lies in how well we can control our spiritual power. I have much more spiritual power than ordinary soul masters, and my spiritual power is stored in an area called my spiritual sea. I feel like I know something similar to what you've just told me, so I'd like to check your spiritual sea for a bit. Is that okay? There will be no problems as long as you have complete trust in me. At the very least, we'll be able to figure out whether there's a problem with your spiritual sea."

Wang Dong looked deeply into Huo Yuhao's eyes, "I trust you. But, what do we do if there really is a problem with my spiritual sea?"

"Then we'll solve that problem." Huo Yuhao replied unhesitatingly. He had no confidence in other areas, but he was certain of his abilities with regards to spiritual power. After all, he had the support of an

existence like the Skydream Iceworm! There was an extremely miniscule chance of a problem arising with the assistance of his Brother Skydream, who had a million years' worth of experience in controlling spiritual power. Moreover, he even had a power like the Ice Empress supervising him.

Seeing Huo Yuhao's confidence, Wang Dong nodded. "Okay. What do I have to do?"

Huo Yuhao said, "You have to close your eyes and stop moving. No matter what happens, no matter what you feel, don't be astonished. Do your best to calm your mind. I'm going to carefully peer into your spiritual sea with my spiritual power."

"Okay." Wang Dong nodded, "Do we start now?"

Huo Yuhao nodded back, "We'll start now. Prepare yourself." *no ve-lb*.In

Wang Dong slowly shut his eyes and relaxed his body. He and Huo Yuhao were close partners who were able to fuse their martial souls. As a result, they had already established an unbreakable level of trust.

Huo Yuhao took a deep breath and calmed himself as much as possible. At this moment, the Skydream Iceworm and the Ice Empress were both awake. They were monitoring Huo Yuhao's control of his spiritual power at his request, and they would make a move if any problems were to arise.

Huo Yuhao moved his hands from Wang Dong's shoulders to the back of his head, then lowered his head slowly. After that, he placed his forehead against Wang Dong's forehead. The two of them could even hear each other's breathing.

Wang Dong's body shivered slightly. His long eyelashes shook, brushing against Huo Yuhao's eyes.

"Don't move, relax. I'm about to start." Huo Yuhao urged quietly.

Wang Dong regained his composure, but his face was somewhat red.

A gentle wave of spiritual power carefully flowed out from Huo Yuhao's forehead and into Wang Dong's body from the point at which their foreheads were touching.

Soul masters considered the area between the eyes, the brows, the forehead, and the nose the spiritual root of Heaven and Earth. It was the place which contained the spirit, the ancestral cavity, and the ancestral Qi. At the same time, it was where the spiritual sea resided. Placing their spiritual seas next to each other was naturally the easiest way in which Huo Yuhao was able to easily transfer his spiritual power to Wang Dong.

Their soul power was already harmonious due to their martial soul fusion. Moreover, Wang Dong trusted him fully. Huo Yuhao's spiritual power was able to quietly enter Wang Dong's spiritual sea without any trouble.

Chapter 85.1: Twin Controllers of Ice and Fire, Thousandstrike Lance

Huo Yuhao had spent more than a year cultivating with his blood, sweat and tears. In addition to Skydream Iceworm's guidance, he was getting more and more proficient in controlling his spiritual power. Even though he still didn't have a spiritual sea that was sufficiently large enough, it was comparatively elaborate enough under his subtle control over his spiritual power.

As a result of that, it appeared as though his entrance into the spiritual sea in Wang Dong's body was exceptionally gentle when he did so from his temple.

Wang Dong felt a burst of warmth from his temple. Following which, he seemed to be in a slightly dazed state, as though everything wasn't real anymore. Immediately after that, he strongly felt as though someone was openly spying on him.

Huo Yuhao's spiritual power entered Wang Dong's spiritual sea without a hitch. The first thing he saw was a faint golden field, nothing too different compared to his spiritual sea. The only difference was that Wang Dong's spiritual power was much weaker than his own.

I succeeded! Huo Yuhao was elated. For a connection between spiritual seas to work, both parties had to be extremely in sync. If one were to forcefully enter another's spiritual sea, it was very likely to cause damage to either parties' soul sea. At the very least, the connection happening at this moment proved the absolute trust Wang Dong had in him.

The spiritual sea could be said to be the most mysterious place in the human body. Even till today, no one had really been able to grasp the mysteries of the spiritual sea. As a result of that, Huo Yuhao was exceptionally careful as started delving into the depths of Wang Dong's spiritual sea.

But at this very moment, an indescribably terrifying aura suddenly surged out of Wang Dong's spiritual sea.

That incomparably imposing aura was like a mountain. When faced with such terrifying might, Huo Yuhao's spiritual power was as small as a drop in the ocean.

"Run!" The Skydream Iceworm's startled voice suddenly rang out in Huo Yuhao's spiritual world. A massive suction force came from behind. Right before that terrifyingly formidable power came in contact with him, Huo Yuhao's spiritual power had already been completely stripped back to his original body.

Even though that was the case, Huo Yuhao still felt that the sight before his eyes had turned into a golden world. After that, his whole body flew backwards in a completely uncontrollable manner, viciously striking the wall. It was as though he'd been branded there for a good couple of seconds. Only after that did he slowly slide down while his own spiritual sea started vibrating violently.

The Skydream Iceworm barely kept Huo Yuhao's spiritual sea intact as it released its sealed, powerful spiritual power. Even so, Huo Yuhao was unable to regain his senses for a long time. His face was completely pale as he sat listlessly on the ground.

His mind drew a blank. After a good ten or so seconds passed, Huo Yuhao gradually regained consciousness, and the scene before his eyes was plain once more.

He clearly saw Wang Dong standing there with his eyes still closed as his body slowly absorbed a light golden light. He was emitting a feeling of divinity.

W-what's going on? Huo Yuhao was in a state of shock when he felt a wet puddle on his back. It was no surprise he was afraid. Just a moment ago, he had clearly felt as though his spiritual world was about to be completely destroyed if the Skydream Iceworm hadn't pulled his spiritual power back into his spiritual sea!

That power was really too terrifying, to the point where the Skydream Iceworm and the Ice Empress were a little sluggish. They were rendered temporarily unable to answer Huo Yuhao's question. Just what exactly was hidden in Wang Dong's spiritual sea that had stunned the two powerhouses in his mind?

"Elder Electrolux, what exactly is that power? How can it be so powerful?" Huo Yuhao asked, feeling horrified.

"Since the process was too brief, I can't determine what it is for sure either. I could only faintly feel that there's something sealed within his body. This seal is extremely powerful, so unimaginably powerful. Even when I was at my strongest in my previous life, I'm afraid I couldn't even compare to this seal. This seal seems to be sealing something on Wang Dong's body, or putting it another way, something in his consciousness. But at the same time, it's also protecting his spiritual sea so that it doesn't corrode. In any case, you shouldn't try it again. Just a step later, and your body and soul would've been obliterated. Thankfully, the big worm's sensitive to spiritual power, and was able to save you in time," Electrolux spoke with a heavy tone.

Naturally, Huo Yuhao didn't dare to try again. His lapels were completely drenched from the back. He never would've thought that the outcome would be like this. This was just as Elder Electrolux said. He had almost gone to the dogs!

"Elder Electrolux, would this situation cause harm to Wang Dong?" Huo Yuhao asked urgently.

"No, it shouldn't. This situation is actually very rare, but it's not like something like this hasn't appeared amongst humans before. There are a very few situations in the human world that will cause humans to have godlike traits, just like this one. To put it simply, a deity exists in your friend's body," Electrolux said.

"Gods were nothing but illusions in the world I came from. Once one broke through that realm, they had to give up their corporeal body and everything they had. A deity expands itself all across the world and controls everything, yet controls nothing at the same time. This is main reason why people from my world weren't willing to become gods. When gods appeared, their souls would spread across the world. If a new life graced the world when that happened, the newborn's vitality might very well cause a shred of the deity's soul to enter their body. This is very beneficial to humans because, it would endow that child with talents. Moreover, this deity wouldn't affect the newborn's body, and would gradually disappear as the human aged. To put it in other terms, it's called luck."

"Those who possess deities in them are lucky individuals. Don't you guys have that saying where lucky people don't have any worries in life?"

After hearing Electrolux's explanation, Huo Yuhao gently exhaled. Everything was fine as long as Wang Dong was okay. Naturally, he wouldn't try and pry into his spiritual sea anymore in the future. His experience from a moment ago was really too scary.

The Skydream Iceworm and the Ice Empress didn't give him any other explanation. After all was said and done, they were soul beasts, and their understanding of the human world wasn't as profound as that of Electrolux. Moreover, the deity that was like a seal really didn't harbor any ill intent towards Wang Dong. It only silently protected Wang Dong's soul. As a result of that, their conclusive opinion was the

same as Elder Electrolux's, and they felt that everything would be fine as long as Huo Yuhao didn't purposely go and stir up trouble for himself.

Wang Dong seemed to have woken up at this moment. He slowly opened his eyes, and was taken aback when he saw Huo Yuhao collapsed on the ground. "Yuhao, what happened to you?" He quickly strode forward and lent Huo Yuhao an arm.

Huo Yuhao smiled bitterly and said, "It's nothing. I just pried into your spiritual sea just now, and it consumed too much of my spiritual power. That's all. Your status is very normal, and there's nothing wrong with you. I reckon it's a psychological burden from when you cultivated your martial soul as a child. Don't mind it too much. You don't have to use soul tools if you don't like them. You have me, after all. Come, let's cultivate for awhile. I consumed quite a lot of my spiritual power just now, so you need to help me out. Are we going to stay here, or are we going over to your side?" **novE/1b**-In

Wang Dong saw his pale face and quickly said, "Why torture yourself? We'll stay here." As he spoke, he helped Huo Yuhao to the bed. The two of them pressed their palms against the other's, and the gentle fluctuations of soul power converged into Haodong Power, starting to circulate within their bodies. Only then did Huo Yuhao feel somewhat stronger than before.

A thousand miles away...

A massive castle built atop the peak of a mountain. The grey castle was filled with an archaic aura, making it seem as though it had reached the pinnacle of existence.

In the castle, two middle-aged men were drinking wine in a spacious hall.

They were extremely tall. They still exuded a majestic aura even as they sat there.

The middle-aged man sitting at the head of the table had long green hair draped over his impressively wide shoulders. His eyes were actually green too! As he closed and opened his eyes, there was an ineffably special sense of realism to his simple and unadorned eyes. It was as though they were faintly revealing the tyrannical aura that his body couldn't suppress.

White skintight garments enveloped his tall figure. He held a huge wine cup in his hands, letting fine amber wine enter his system.

A middle-aged brawny man whose body wasn't inferior to his sat in the seat next to the head of the table. This person had fine, short hair that resembled steel needles. He had a majestic appearance, with a chiseled, resolute face. His eyes were light brown, and shone faintly with a golden glow.

These two people were only sitting there, but the feeling they exuded was an extremely majestic one. That strong aura definitely couldn't be fully concealed even if they were to suppress it.

These two men had originally been drinking wine when their bodies shook at the same time out of the blue. Soon, a look of terror appeared in their eyes. With a swoosh, they immediately stood up.

At this moment, four bolts of lightning seemed to have suddenly filled the hall. Two of them were the color of jade, while the other two were light brown. The palace-like hall creaked, failing to withstand the sudden terrifying aura that had exploded out in the room.

Chapter 85.2: Twin Controllers of Ice and Fire, Thousandstrike Lance

"It's Wang Dong. What's the matter?" The black-haired brawny man roared, a savage glint in his eyes. He raised his right hand, causing a powerful golden light to shoot out from his palm. Right after that, nine consecutive rings of light instantly rose from his feet.

If a soul master were to see the colors of his nine soul rings, he would definitely have fainted. His nine soul rings were actually as pitch-black as ink. Furthermore, the black emanating from his soul rings seemed to be different from ordinary ten thousand year soul rings; they gave off a profound and mighty aura.

Nine ten thousand year soul rings?

The short-haired man's sixth soul ring lit up, and he quickly sketched out a few golden lines in front of him, forming what seemed to be a pattern.

"Wait a moment." The long-haired man raised his hand and grabbed the short-haired man, suppressing the latter's aura.

"Big brother, Little Dong might be in danger." The short-haired man let out a low roar, somewhat discontent.

His long-haired counterpart shook his head. "It's fine. There shouldn't be anything wrong with him. My senses are never wrong. We can't overtly interfere in Little Dong's growth."

The short-haired man was unresigned, as if he were a fierce tiger protecting its young, "No. I can't be careless. Why don't we go over to Shrek Academy and follow him? We'll be able to avoid most of our problems then. If anything does happen, I won't be able to withstand the consequences."

The long-haired man shook his head slightly. "You! The more you care about him, the more trouble you'll cause. Let's do it this way: let's get the sect to send a few people to protect him from the shadows. Second brother, when will your short-tempered personality ever change?"

"Hmph! What's there to change? Ever since... whatever, I'm not going to talk anymore. Just whose fault was it that we didn't have the ability? Let's drink, drink." As he spoke, he raised an enormous cup of fine liquor and downed it all in one gulp.

The long-haired man shook his head helplessly as he watched his sibling. "You!"

The short-haired man put his wine cup down. The valiant look on his face had turned into one of worry. "Big brother, is he really fine?"

The long-haired man put his own wine cup on the small table beside him and moved his arms a bit. Immediately, a series of pops and cracks echoed from his body.

"I know what you're thinking. Let's do it this way: as long as you can beat me, I won't care about you; I'll let you do whatever you want. How about it?"

"Nope... you're just trying to use me to get your kicks. I'm not going to be fooled by you." The short-haired man said resentfully.

"Come, let's do it once?" The long-haired man replied mischievously.

“Big brother, I feel like you should go find a woman. There are truly many good women out there. Can you not look at me like that?”

Star Luo City.

Shrek Academy was all gathered together at dawn. Today, the second match of the Continental Advanced Academy Soul Duelling Tournament’s round-robin section would be commencing.

Dai Yueheng, Ma Xiaotao, and Ling Luo Chen were still recovering from their injuries. At the very least, Ling Luo Chen would still need a few days to recover from her injuries.

Along with the rest of Shrek Academy who were fully equipped with the soul tools they had bought yesterday, Wang Yan walked straight towards Star Luo Plaza.

He had already given the suitable soul tools to the members of Shrek Academy, with the obvious exception of the Ominous Soul-Devouring Knife. He had personally helped fill Huo Yuhao’s Class 4 Milk Bottle before giving it to him.

Their opponents for today were already determined, but the tournament format had to be chosen through by lots. Wang Yan prayed that they wouldn’t get a 1v1 fight—after all, that was the most unfavourable format for Shrek Academy. This was because their opponents would have a Soul King. In a 1v1 fight, a Soul King would completely suppress their team, thereby drastically reducing their chances of winning. Star Luo Plaza was as fervent as always, and this was especially true when the members of Shrek Academy stepped out from the soldier-protected contestant’s passageway. The crowd immediately flew into an uproar.

Shrek Academy’s previous two matches had left an extremely deep impression in the minds of the audience. Just how would Shrek Academy surprise them again? All of them wanted to know the answer to this question.

Wang Yan had given them an introduction to the opponents they would be facing today during breakfast. Unlike their previous matches, they would be facing a soul academy today. The Thousand Spirits Advanced Soul Academy originated from the Dou Ling Empire, and it was an extremely famous academy within the empire itself. It was ranked in the top three most outstanding academies within the Dou Ling Empire, and it had provided a large number of outstanding talents for the empire.

Huo Yuhao maintained an indifferent look on his face as he walked into the resting area, surrounded by his companions. He had to continue assuming the airs of an expert until he was exposed, after all.

He had fully recovered his spiritual power through yesterday’s cultivation. Moreover, his energies were now at their peak condition due to the Haodong Power.

Two fights. They had to persist for two fights, at which time Ling Luo Chen would return. Their following matches in the round-robin tournament would be much more relaxed with a Soul King overseeing them. After all, a Soul King was already a pinnacle existence within the Continental Advanced Academy Soul Duelling Tournament.

The only academy with a so-called ‘special privilege’ within the entire tournament was undoubtedly Shrek Academy. They were still participating in the first match of the day, and this had been chosen by Shrek themselves.

8 a.m. It was now time for the match to start. The Emperor of the Star Luo Empire sat above the city walls, intending to spectate the match. There was no doubt about it—he was most interested in Shrek’s performance.

The referee walked to the centre of the tournament stage, then used a sound-amplifying soul tool to loudly announce, “Both parties, enter the waiting area. Team leaders, please take the stage to conduct the lot-drawing.”

The members of Shrek Academy rose to their feet and entered the waiting area clad in dark green. Wang Yan nodded to Bei Bei, who glanced at Xu Sanshi before climbing up to the stage with large strides.

His counterpart from the Thousand Spirits Soul Academy was also a male who looked around twenty or so. This person had a slim body and a stern face, giving the impression that he was a javelin. He remained expressionless as he faced Bei Bei.

Lot drawing, start!

Everyone present was interested in the results of the lot-drawing. Any match that Shrek Academy participated in would be extremely interesting, regardless of which format was chosen. Right now, the audience only wished for their opponents to last a little longer, so they could watch an even more interesting fight.

Wang Yan’s prayers worked—the result of the lot-drawing was what he wanted most.

“Shrek Academy vs Thousand Spirits Academy, team fight.” the referee loudly announced the result of the lot.

The team fight was without a doubt the format that contained the most intense and comprehensive fights that tested the overall strength of both teams. The leaders from both teams had no objections to this.

“Both teams, take the field.” The referee’s voice boomed.

He Caitou, Xu Sanshi, Jiang Nannan, Xiao Xiao, Huo Yuhao, and Wang Dong all rose to their feet. One by one, they ascended to the stage under Wang Yan’s supporting gaze.

Wang Yan had prepared most for the team fight in the morning. He already had all their strategies in place, and all Shrek needed to do was execute them.

Both parties stood opposite each other on the stage. Bei Bei and Xu Sanshi stood at the very front, while Jiang Nannan and He Caitou stood behind them. This was followed by Wang Dong and Xiao Xiao flanking Huo Yuhao, who stood in between them.

Huo Yuhao placed his hands in front of his stomach and closed his eyes, as if he was just taking a rest. On the contrary, the students from the Thousand Spirits Soul Academy were all staring at him.

Every single academy had conducted an analysis on Huo Yuhao’s strength after the first day’s elimination round. Although nobody thought that he was a terrifying existence who was able to possess six hundred thousand year soul rings, they had high expectations of him.

After all, the duo's Golden Road Amidst Withering Resplendence had left an extremely deep impression on their hearts. They had won with a single strike!

Huo Yuhao didn't look old from the outside; he was fourteen or fifteen at most. However, the other academies had taken him to be a Soul King, or even a Soul Emperor-ranked expert.

The javelin-like leader of the Thousand Spirits Soul Academy was now focused on Huo Yuhao. Flickering through his eyes was not fear, but a strong will to fight. Shrek Academy's team formation was much more ordinary compared to the curved formation they had taken during their first team fight. However, their opponents had assumed a somewhat unexpected formation.

The leader of the Thousand Spirits Soul Academy didn't stand at the very front of his team; instead, four people did. This was somewhat unexpected, but their formation consisted of four people standing in front. These four were all tall and brawny male students, forming what seemed to be a wall as they stood there.

Their javelin-like leader stood behind the four, while two young girls stood behind him.

These two girls were very easily differentiated—one of them was red-haired, while the other was blue-haired, making them rather eye-catching. All seven of them looked to be around twenty-or-so years old, and the formation they had taken made it seem as though they were an invulnerable fortress.

Huo Yuhao quickly thought back to Wang Yan's introduction of the Thousand Spirits Soul Academy. Every single academy had a main force and a batch of reserve students, and Wang Yan was able to accurately determine the seven members of the Thousand Spirits Soul Academy's main team after careful observation. Today, the seven people who came out were identical to Wang Yan's predictions.

Wang Yan had delivered an extremely thorough analysis on the enemy team, even talking about their individual specialties.

The Thousand Spirits Soul Academy's current formation could be easily described using a single sentence: The four shields form an invulnerable fortress, while the twin controllers of Ice and Fire attack along with the Thousandstrike Lance.

The four students standing at the very front of the enemy team were called Yang Ming, Song Hu, Bai Chen, and Ye Mao. According to Wang Yan's deductions, the four of them had come from the same place. In other words, they came from the same sect. This was because they shared an identical martial soul—the defense-type Spirit Rhinoceros' Shield, an upper-middle tier defensive martial soul.

On the other hand, the stern javelin-like leader of the Thousand Spirits Soul Academy's team was called Shen Ce. He was the true core and the main attacker of the team, and his Thousandstrike Lance allowed him to specialise in both long and short-range attacks.

Chapter 85.3: Twin Mistresses of Fire and Ice, Thousandstrike Lance

The blue-haired girl standing in the back was called An Lengye and had the Frost Bear as her martial soul, while the red-haired girl next to her was called Fei Yuyan and possessed the Blaze Tiger. The reason for their nickname 'Twin Mistresses of Fire and Ice' was because they were both control-type soul masters.

They hadn't used any soul tools during their previous match, thus there was no way to know whether or not they would do so in this match. However, the comprehensive strength of the Thousands Spirits Soul Academy was incomparable to the Cloud Luo Academy they'd faced in the previous round.

Shen Ce was at the five-ringed Soul King level of power. According to Wang Yan's predictions, he was around Rank 53 or 54. However, the other six members of his team were four-ringed Soul Ancestors. Wang Yan estimated that two of them were above Rank 45.

This match would absolutely not be a pushover to Huo Yuhao and the rest.

"Match, start!" Both parties simultaneously released their martial souls following the referee's shout. There was only a single exception to this, and that was Huo Yuhao.

In reality, he had already released his martial soul. Only, his Imitation made it so that no one else was able to see his soul rings.

Huo Yuhao kept his hands over his stomach as he remained motionless, while Wang Dong and Xiao Xiao stood by his side with no intentions of moving either. The two of them had released six soul rings each, and they both had the optimum combination of soul rings.

Two yellow, two purple, and two black rings. This was the optimum combination of soul rings for a six-ringed Soul Emperor.

The easiest way to distinguish the strength of an opponent was by looking at one's soul rings when both parties released their martial souls. Their opponents from the Thousand Spirits Academy were clearly stunned when Wang Dong and Xiao Xiao released their respective six rings. A formless pressure was now acting like a large hand that was crushing their chests, causing their breathing to subconsciously become rushed.

Naturally, only the three of them stayed unmoving. Bei Bei, Xu Sanshi, Jiang Nannan, and He Caitou made their moves simultaneously.

Bei Bei and Xu Sanshi both held cigars in their mouths. The former was puffing the Strength Amplifying Large Cigar, while the latter puffed the Defense Amplifying Long Cigar. The four of them simultaneously released their soul rings, and Bei Bei took the initiative to charge towards their opponents with large strides. Xu Sanshi stayed by his side, while Jiang Nannan's body flickered and vanished. However, this was only from the point of view of their opponents. In reality, she was hidden behind Bei Bei.

He Caitou followed close behind as he took large strides forward as well.

At this moment, Huo Yuhao's trio slowly advanced forward.

Shrek Academy's lineup could be described using the word 'formation-less', so much so that they even seemed somewhat scattered. It seemed as though they were each fighting their own battles.

Compared to them, the Thousand Spirits Academy was clearly much more organised.

A dark-yellow layer of light rose from the bodies of Yang Ming, Song Hu, Bai Chen, and Ye Mao as they released their martial souls. Right after that, transformations began to occur on their bodies as a result of the release of their martial souls.

Their originally-tall bodies became even more muscular, and their yellow skin became even thicker. The most noticeable part of their transformation occurred to their right arms, as their forearm muscles started twisting violently. After that, shields started to sprout from their right arms. *novelb/in*

The layers of keratin on their dark yellow shields made them seem as thick as armor. The Spirit Rhinoceros' Shield was a mutation of the Rhinoceros, and the four of them possessed it. The four meter-long shields made it seem as though a wall was protecting the three people behind them. These four soul masters each had four soul rings, consisting of two yellow and two purple rings. They gave off a thick and solid feeling as they stood there. Were it not for the formless and choking pressure coming from the distant Wang Dong, Xiao Xiao, and Huo Yuhao, the layer of defense they'd created would've been even more perfect.

Their leader, Shen Ce, naturally stood behind the four of them.

Shen Ce's martial soul looked somewhat special as it was released. He raised his arms into the air, causing his body to give off a layer of silver light. He looked towards the sky and motioned in a way that made it seem as though he was trying to hug the heavens. Right after that, a silver light instantly shot out from his back and into the sky before bouncing back into him after coming into contact with the defensive barrier surrounding the arena. This silver light then floated in front of him.

This silver light was actually an extremely sharp and long lance. Its twelve-foot-long body shone a brilliant silver, and faint carvings covered its surface. An intense aura of sharpness immediately surged from the lance the moment it appeared in Shen Ce's hands, creating a distinct juxtaposition with the four Spirit Rhinoceros Shields in front of him.

This was Shen Ce's martial soul, the Thousandstrike Lance! He gave off a somewhat familiar feeling to the seven members of Shrek Academy, being an assault-type soul master who used a tool soul. They had previously encountered this exact feeling from one of the official members of the Shrek's Seven Monsters who was also an assault-type soul master, Chen Zifeng.

Didn't Chen Zifeng's Soulchasing Sword also possess a terrifying aura of sharpness like this as well? Chen Zifeng's aura had been suppressed by Ma Xiaotao during their previous fight, resulting in his abilities not being revealed. However, Huo Yuhao and the rest had sensed just how terrifying that sharpness was.

The Thousandstrike Lance flickered with two yellow and three purple soul rings. There was no doubt that the Soul King-ranked Shen Ce was incomparable to Chen Zifeng. However, his abilities were extremely similar, and his attack power was undoubtedly extraordinary. His fifth purple soul ring gave off an extremely profound feeling, and although it wasn't a ten thousand year soul ring, it was an eight thousand year soul ring at the very least.

Just as Shen Ce released his Thousandstrike Lance, two entirely contrasting lights appeared behind him, acting as a backdrop to his actions. On the left was a blue-colored Ice, while on the right was a red-colored Fire.

These were the martial souls that An Lengye and Fei Yuyan had released.

The martial souls these two soul masters possessed were very distinguishable. They were both possessors of beast souls, but their beast souls didn't cause any changes to their bodies. Instead, they appeared as images of light in front of them.

An enormous, three-metre bear that was dark-blue in color appeared in front of An Lengye, emitting an intense aura of ice. On the contrary, a two-and-a-half-meter long tiger appeared in front of Fei Yuyan, its red body interwoven with black stripes.

Huo Yuhao had learned about things like this in Shrek Academy. What An Lengye and Fei Yuyan possessed were called martial soul mimics. If the first soul ring that a soul master obtained was identical to their martial soul, there was a chance that he or she could cultivate a martial soul projection.

A martial soul projection wouldn't give too much of a power-up to a soul master; it mainly changed a soul master's fighting style. An ordinary beast soul master would use their martial soul to strengthen a particular area of their physical body, then fight using that. On the contrary, a soul master who had a martial soul projection would command their projections to fight for them. The comparative load on their bodies would be lighter, and this made it easier for their companions to protect them. However, there were very glaring flaws to this fighting style—their physical bodies would be comparatively weaker. Thus, it was necessary for a soul master to carefully command their projection to protect themselves.

An Lengye, who possessed the Frost Bear, and Fei Yuyan, who possessed the Blaze Tiger, should've been assault-type soul masters. However, the fact that they were girls and their clans were relatively powerful made it so that they chose to cultivate a martial soul projection during the earliest parts of their cultivation. This allowed them to become control-type soul masters instead. This was the 'Twin Mistresses of Fire and Ice' that Wang Yan had spoken about.

Unlike Shrek's charging assault, the seven members of the Thousand Spirits Academy didn't make a move after releasing their martial souls. The four wielders of the Spirit Rhinoceros' Shields came together, protecting the other team members behind them. At the same time, the four of them simultaneously released their first soul skill, Shield Wall!

Countless dark yellow shadows blossomed from the Spirit Rhinoceros Shields, and the four shields instantaneously transformed into a thousand shields that blocked the line of sight and path of the Shrek's Seven Monsters.

Unfortunately, they didn't know that Huo Yuhao's Spiritual Detection had been activated since the start of the match. Shrek's team simply didn't need to use their eyes to see what was going on behind the Shield Wall.

The elegant-looking An Lengye and Fei Yuyan simultaneously released their soul skills in a careful manner. An Lengye's soul skill activated first, and the Frost Bear strutted forward with its head held high. After reaching the Shield Wall, it vigorously thumped its own chest. At the same time, An Lengye's first soul ring lit up.

An intense, icy-blue wave of light instantly spread out from the Frost Bear, and the originally-yellow Shield Wall was immediately encased in an icy-blue light. This was An Lengye's first soul skill, Frost Shield.

Her Frost Shield combined with the Spirit Rhinoceros Shields, causing the latter's defensive capabilities to instantly triple.

The person who had the highest cultivation rank after Shen Ce within the Thousand Spirits Academy was An Lengye, who was a Rank 45 soul master.

The Frost Bear's abilities weren't limited to just that. After thumping its chest, it suddenly raised its enormous paws and pounded the ground heavily. An ice-blue wave of light spread out from them, cleverly maneuvering around the four Spirit Rhinoceros Shields before expanding outwards. The icy aura generated from it immediately caused the temperature on the tournament stage to drop drastically. This was An Lengye's second soul skill, Frost Seal!

Affected by the icy air, the charging Bei Bei, Xu Sanshi, Jiang Nannan, and He Caitou were slowed down dramatically. Furthermore, a layer of frost started to rapidly cover the floor of the tournament stage; the now-smooth surface caused their footing to become somewhat unstable.

An Lengye's control of Ice was extremely strong, while the four Spirit Rhinoceros Shields seemed impenetrable. However, they weren't attacking, but defending. If that was the case, how was the Thousand Spirits Academy going to win?

A blazing fire rapidly sprouted from Fei Yuyan's Blaze Tiger, and her first, second, and third soul rings flickered alternately.

The Blaze Tiger formed an intense ball of fire in its mouth, then spat it directly at Shen Ce's feet.

A fiery red ring of light immediately appeared, dyeing Shen Ce's entire body a scarlet-red.

Fei Yuyan's first soul skill, Raging Flame Ring, imbued its target with the fire attribute, along with a strong resistant to fire. At the same time, it gave its target the ability to attack and defend using the power of Fire by imbuing the element of fire into their soul skills. This was a powerful Fire-type auxiliary skill. Unfortunately, it was only a single-target skill.