

Tang Sect 96

Chapter 96.1: A Battle Between Titled Douluos

Cheng Gang, the Protector Douluo, left the Grand Imperial Star Hotel. There was no need to even mention how depressed he was feeling.

The instant he had sensed the aura of the savage, he had felt as if the blood in his body was boiling. As a Titled Douluo, he was naturally aware that when a soul beast reached a hundred thousand years of cultivation, it could choose to re-cultivate to become a human. Otherwise, it could attempt to break through the exceedingly perilous bottleneck. After two hundred thousand years of cultivation, a soul beast could no longer cultivate to become a human anymore.

However, he had indeed sensed the aura that had come from Huo Yuhao's body! Spurred by his own greed, he could not help but ponder how humans did not fully comprehend soul beasts. Perhaps there was some special circumstance? Maybe soul beasts had researched a special method of undergoing cultivation?

With such a mindset, he had gone looking for Huo Yuhao this morning with an elevated heartbeat. But who knew that things would turn out to be the complete opposite of what he had expected? After inspecting Huo Yuhao's body, he had gleaned nothing from it. Even if a soul beast turned into a human, the condition of the soul beast's body would be starkly dissimilar from that of a true human being. In particular, the method of circulating soul power was something that could not escape the eyes of a powerful individual, a Titled Douluo, like him. However, Huo Yuhao's body clearly reflected his identity as a real human.

As his hopes had been dashed, it was no wonder that Cheng Gang was currently crestfallen.

With his current status in the Star Luo Empire, it was relatively easy for him to obtain a Soul Bone. While soul bones were rare, there were still some that could be acquired. However, Cheng Gang was a conceited man. He had been searching for the most suitable and outstanding soul bone for himself. Ordinary soul bones hardly caught his eye. Despite this, he had yet to procure a soul bone for himself even though he had cultivated to the level of a Titled Douluo. After all, when top-quality soul bones appeared on the market, their prices were astronomical. Even though the Star Luo Empire supported him, they wouldn't go to such an extent for him.

"What luck, damn it. I hope those rascals have some tact. Otherwise, offending Shrek Academy for no valid reason won't be good for me. But then, I didn't really do anything either."

"You should be glad that you didn't do anything to harm them." A cold voice sounded in his mind.

"Who is that?" It was still in the afternoon, and the sun was still bearing down. With Cheng Gang's cultivation, everything within a thousand-meter radius would be within his range of sensation. However, he had not realized the presence of the person whose voice he had just heard.

"I am your daddy. Your daddy is waiting for you outside the west gate. Obedient child, come over now." That cold voice started to sound weird and piercing all of a sudden.

"Bastard, you dare to use a soul tool to make a fool of me." Cheng Gang's figure flashed, and he made his way towards the direction of the west gate as if he were a puff of smoke. To him, if even a Titled

Douluo could not detect the presence of the other party, then the other party must certainly be using some form of peculiar soul tool to avoid detection.

He had always been a very direct person, and very passionate towards martial arts. Otherwise, he wouldn't have gone to capture Huo Yuhao. He was still within Star Luo City and could wait for Shrek Academy to leave before making a move. But right now, he was extremely down, and thus he didn't deliberate before making his way to the west gate under the prompting of the voice he had heard.

After leaving the city through the west gate, Cheng Gang became calmer. He squinted his eyes, and a weird change started to develop in his pupils. Both his eyes started to turn pure black, as all semblance of white disappeared. Following that, the pure black color in his eyes split into small pupils at an alarming rate. Under such conditions, his sensitivity increased severalfold. Although he did not possess the soul skill of spiritual detection like Huo Yuhao, his detection abilities were similar to that of spiritual detection at this point. Almost everything within his vision could be sensed by him at this moment.

However, he discovered nothing.

Outside the west gate, there was no one among the bustling crowd that caught his attention. Everything seemed to be as normal as ever. However, the more it was like that, the more uneasy Cheng Gang felt. He knew that something was amiss.

"Continue to proceed west." At this point, the voice from before sounded again.

As he focused on sensing his surroundings, Cheng Gang was shocked when he heard the voice. At the same time, a chill developed in his heart. What form of soul tool was it that could escape his detection?

A shred of discomfort caused him to retreat one step subconsciously.

"Are you trying to escape? Are you not afraid that I will tear down Star Luo City?" A wave of might suddenly swept across him. With Cheng Gang's cultivation, he felt as if his blood was solidifying along with this sudden might that swept across.

It was pertinent to note that he was a Titled Douluo! Ever since he had become one, he had never felt such fear before. However, the pressure that was being exerted on him now was very obvious. What left him even more stupefied was the fact that everyone around him did not seem to react at all. This meant that the frightening pressure being exerted on him was only targeted towards him.

This was the most terrifying part. To be able to control one's might to this standard, even Cheng Gang could not do so.

"Who exactly are you?" Cheng Gang replied to the other party through the communication bridge in their spirits that the other party had set up.

"I'll be waiting for you in the west. If you don't come, I will make my move on Star Luo City. I shall give you 3 seconds to consider. 1, 2..."

"Fine, I'll go." As the Protector Douluo of the Star Luo Empire, Cheng Gang naturally could not allow this unknown, yet powerful individual to make a move on the city. When a Titled Douluo unleashed all his power, he had the daunting ability of causing mass destruction! Furthermore, through his interaction

with this mysterious individual, he could clearly sense the fury that this person contained, although he had no killing intent.

Cheng Gang did stall any further, and proceeded west immediately. That voice did not appear anymore. At this point, he did not reckon that the other party was using any form of soul tool anymore. When the might of the other party had swept over him just now, he had realized that the other party was an outstanding Titled Douluo just like him. However, he was fearless. He yearned for competition against those at the same level as him. He believed that this was the only way that he could improve himself. While the other party possessed a mighty stature, Cheng Gang was aware that some unusual martial souls specialized in reflecting such mighty stature. This didn't mean that the other party was necessarily more powerful than him.

After advancing for roughly 10 miles, Cheng Gang stopped in his tracks. He did so because he saw someone sitting in the middle of the road not far away from him. It was an elderly man who appeared to be greasy from head to toe, and who had unkempt hair. In his left hand, there was a chicken drumstick, and in his right hand, he held a wine gourd.

Cheng Gang sensed that the elderly man was only an ordinary person. However, this elderly man was enjoying his food and wine in the middle of the road.

"Come over!" The elderly man gnawed on the last fragment of meat on the chicken drumstick as he lifted his head towards Cheng Gang and looked at him.

Cheng Gang shivered with fear. His ability to hide his aura was rather exceptional! "Who are you? Why did you lead me here?"

The elderly man leapt up from the ground, "I called you over so that I can wallop you." As he spoke, the drumstick bone was already flung towards Cheng Gang.

Cheng Gang squinted both his eyes. As he whipped his right hand up, he deflected the chicken bone away.

"Snap—" The chicken bone was turned into powder, but Cheng Gang was forced one step back too. He felt an agonizing pain in his right palm, and the back of his hand even showed with a red mark.

What powerful soul power!

Neither parties had even released their martial souls, but Cheng Gang's opponent was able to force him back just by using a chicken bone. His cultivation must be very immense!

"I recall that your title is Immense. Come, show me how powerful you are. As long as you are able to withstand 10 attacks of mine, I will let you off."

In the face of this unpredictable elderly man, Cheng Gang remained calm as he said in a deep voice, "Elder, are you from Shrek Academy?"

The elderly man snorted, "You're not dumb. Do you really think that Shrek Academy is such an easy target to be bullied?" Who else from Shrek looked like that? It was naturally the Taotie Douluo, Elder Xuan.

Elder Xuan hadn't even sent by Shrek Academy. After being reprimanded by Elder Mu, he had run out on his own. He couldn't stop worrying about the little fellows!

As for the competition before, he had been watching it secretly. When Wang Dong supported Huo Yuhao and Bei Bei to seize victory, he had been so emotional that he had teared up, even though he hadn't been so impassioned for a long time. At that point in time, he even had the urge to burst up to the arena to compete himself!

Today, he had witnessed the entirety of Cheng Gang's actions. He had watched from the side. If Cheng Gang had had the murderous intention to kill both Huo Yuhao and Wang Dong, he and even the Star Luo Empire wouldn't have been spared.

Cheng Gang lamented in his heart. From what he knew, Shrek Academy's teacher that had come this time should have only been in the Soul King level!

"I was a little reckless. However, if a soul beast converts into a human to cultivate, it will pose a huge threat to the human race. That's why I..."

"Shut your trap." Elder Xuan bellowed in anger, "Cut your flowery words with me. Are you not just being selfish? Let's not even talk about the fact that a soul beast can't turn into a human. Even if a soul beast could, it would just become a human after it succeeds in its cultivation. What has that got to do with you? Are you not eyeing the hundred thousand year soul ring and soul bone? Stop trying to spout nonsense to me. On account of the fact that you did not attempt to kill them, I shall only teach you a lesson today. Remember it."

Cheng Gang was the Protector Douluo of the Star Luo Empire, and it'd been a long time since he had been admonished like this. His face turned red, and he retorted in fury, "Come on then, show me what you have to teach me."

As he said that, his left leg stepped forward slightly. Following that, a beam of glowing concentrated black emanated from within his body. When this black glow appeared, it had an earth-shaking effect. The entire earth seemed to tremble slightly.

Cheng Gang's body began to show obvious changes. To a Beast Soul Master, the higher his cultivation, the greater the changes his body would experience when he unleashed his martial soul. Right now, this was the case with Cheng Gang. His skin turned dark and glimmered with light, as if it were a crustacean that was coated with a layer of black. The most intriguing change that he experienced were in his brows. Both sides of his eyebrows grew longer at the same time before they curled up. Eventually, they reached over 20 centimeters in length, as if they were two tentacles that were pointed upwards...

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Two yellow, three purple, four black. A total of nine rings appeared on his body. Following the rhythm of the soul rings, the frightening aura of a Titled Douluo burst forth ceaselessly.

The earth-shaking sensation became stronger and stronger. It seemed to have been influenced by Cheng Gang's martial soul. This was the pressure of a Titled Douluo. A Titled Douluo who could cause mass destruction! Because of the presence of Titled Douluo, a soul engineer had always been unable to surpass a soul master.

As he howled, Cheng Gang stepped forward abruptly. At the same time, the earth in front of him undulated and rose more than 10 meters tall like a tidal wave. Following that, the plot of earth that rose up started to slam down on Elder Xuan.

This wasn't any earth-type power, but a pure force. Cheng Gang wasn't even using a soul skill right now.

Elder Xuan snorted, and stepped forward with his right leg too.

"Boom—"

Just that simple step caused a huge impact, as if a meteorite had crashed or an earth dragon had risen from the ground. The earth that Cheng Gang had lifted was instantaneously crushed. Not only that, but the frightening force was converted into a fan-shaped yellow shockwave that was conducted towards Cheng Gang's feet.

Cheng Gang could only feel a wave of irresistible force being transmitted to him from beneath his feet. When he wanted to use a soul skill, he discovered to his shock that his soul power had been repressed. After that, he was heaved into the air.

As Elder Xuan stomped with his right foot, he appeared in front of Cheng Gang in a flash.

"The forte of the Ant Emperor is its strength. Let this old man see how strong you are." As he spoke, Elder Xuan's hand was already pressing on Cheng Gang's shoulder.

From the moment he leapt from the ground to the instant that he pressed on Cheng Gang's shoulder, only a brief period of time had passed. However, Cheng Gang felt that this brief period of time was as long as a century.

When Elder Xuan's figure flashed, Cheng Gang must have had thought of at least five ways to escape his opponent's control. However, he was unable to perform any of them. As they were pulled closer, a startling pressure was exerted on him. He was stifled by this pressure, and could not even use a single soul skill. He froze in mid-air.

Since he had become a Titled Douluo, and even since he had become a soul master, he had never experienced such a situation in all his years!

Cheng Gang was completely out of sorts now. He had never thought that someone so powerful existed in this world. It was also at this point that the frightful momentum disappeared. Both Cheng Gang and Elder Xuan landed on the earth again. Elder Xuan's huge hand was still pressing on Cheng Gang's shoulder.

"Come. I will not use my soul power, but only my pure strength. Whatever you have to do, I will let you off if you can shrug my hand off your shoulder." Elder Xuan looked at Cheng Gang in disdain.

As a Titled Douluo, Cheng Gang was normally an arrogant person. Furthermore, the strong suit of his martial soul was its strength!

An ant might be minute, but it was able to lift heavy objects up to hundred times its weight. Moreover, Cheng Gang's soul skills were targeted towards increasing his strength still further. He could be considered a pure strength-type Titled Douluo. His opponent's soul power was immense, and he knew that he could not resist it, but he did not believe that he could not match up in terms of strength.

Therefore, Cheng Gang expended all his strength and used all the soul skills he had which could increase his own strength. He struggled mightily.

The frightening strength caused the earth beneath him to crack, and fissures extended through the earth for several thousand meters around them. It was as if an earth dragon was really going to rise from the ground.

However, the hand that was pressing on his shoulder was very strong. No matter how hard he tried, he could not shrug it off.

Cheng Gang's veins were already popping out. He had already tried his best, but he was still unable to free himself.

No, that's impossible. That's impossible. Cheng Gang was unwilling to believe it no matter what. As a Titled Douluo, he could not even struggle against this opponent of his who had yet to even unleash his martial soul, and who was not even using his soul power right now. This was unthinkable.

His confidence was slowly being crushed, and his dignity was gradually being degraded. He struggled less and less as time passed. Eventually, there was only a look of dejection left on Cheng Gang's face.

Elder Xuan picked his brows and asked, "Can you do it?"

Cheng Gang shook his head helplessly.

Elder Xuan retracted his right hand, "This is a lesson to you. As a Titled Douluo, you need to possess the ego and pride that belongs to a Titled Douluo. As someone with nine rings, you went to bully those two kids with only two or three rings. This is a humiliation for you. I don't want your life either. Forget this matter after you've slapped yourself a hundred times. I also don't want to dirty my hands by beating you up."

Cheng Gang's body shivered. He'd rather die than slap himself. However, everyone was scared of death. He was not an exception either. In Star Luo Empire, he possessed great authority. How could he be willing to die? In front of this elderly man, he had no other choice, as he was helpless against him. He was filled with regret now! As he had been blinded by greed, how could he have thought of the pride and ego of a Titled Douluo? However, it was too late for regrets now.

"Piak—" He slapped himself hard, "Piak, piak, piak..."

As he saw Cheng Gang slapping himself, Elder Xuan counted every slap seriously. After more than 10 slaps, Cheng Gang's face had already swelled up. With Elder Xuan around to scrutinize him, he did not dare to let himself off lightly.

As Cheng Gang slapped himself, Elder Xuan's face became much more appeased. He had finally done something for those little fellows.

It did not take long for Cheng Gang to slap himself a hundred times. Very soon, Cheng Gang had completed this humiliating task. Right now, his cheeks were already swollen like two huge peaches. Blood flowed down from the edges of his lips continuously.

Elder Xuan nodded and said, "Enough. Scram now."

“Elder, are you an Ultimate Douluo?” Cheng Gang asked in a blur. The physical pain that he felt was not comparable to the agony he felt in his heart.

A long time ago, Cheng Gang already knew that there were huge gaps between the cultivations of Titled Douluo. But after he became a Titled Douluo, he reckoned that his own abilities were very powerful and forgot this. When he was slapping himself earlier, he had become much clearer in his mind too.

Every major level of a soul master was divided into ten different ranks. When the lowest soul scholar reached Rank 10, he could become a soul master after obtaining a soul ring. Because of that soul ring, a soul master was much more powerful than a soul scholar. In the soul master level, every increase in rank would increase one’s soul power by at least 10%. At the stage of a soul grandmaster, the gaps between the ranks would become even greater.

However, the gap in soul power between Titled Douluo was the greatest. This was after 90 ranks.

Only after obtaining a soul ring could one’s soul power transcend Rank 90 and reach Rank 91 through the power of the soul ring. Between Rank 91 and 92, there was a twofold increase in soul power.

Of course, the powers of a soul master could not just be determined using soul power. The strength of one’s soul skill, the effectiveness of the soul rings on one’s body and even differences in soul bones could make up for the differences in cultivation between two different people. Hence, a Rank 92 soul master might not find it particularly easy to defeat a Rank 91 soul master.

However, there was definitely a gap in soul power. Every time one’s cultivation increased a rank, the difference would increase too. When Rank 95 was reached, there would be a huge bottleneck. A Rank 95 Transcendent Titled Douluo possessed a cultivation that could resist 10 lower ranked Titled Douluo. If a Titled Douluo’s cultivation could reach Rank 99, he would be recognized as an Ultimate Douluo.

In the entire history of the Douluo Continent, there had been very few Ultimate Douluo. The period of time when there was the greatest concentration of Ultimate Douluo was during the generation of Tang San of the Tang Sect. Not only did Ultimate Douluo appear then, but Tang San and his wife, as well as their rivals, even became Gods.

However, very few Ultimate Douluo had appeared on the Douluo Continent since then.

“I’m not.” Elder Xuan shook his head and denied Cheng Gang’s words.

“You are not? Can you tell me your title then?” Cheng Gang continued to ask indignantly.

Elder Xuan twisted his mouth and said, “How did you reply to those little fellows? I shall reply you in the same way. You are still not fit to ask what my title is. You don’t have the right to. Scram now.” As he said that, he kicked Cheng Gang in the torso. Cheng Gang felt as if he was flying above the clouds as he was kicked out. But this kick wasn’t important. When he controlled his body to cushion his landing on the ground, the slovenly elder had already disappeared.

While his face was flushed, his heart was cold at this point.

He shook his head and wiped the blood off his lips. Cheng Gang muttered bitterly, “I am a frog in a well. I am really a frog in well! After I became a Titled Douluo, I thought that I was the most outstanding. But I

didn't expect that I'd be nothing against someone who is truly powerful. Shrek Academy, what a Shrek Academy! I have to shut myself in and cultivate again."

Huo Yuhao and Wang Dong did not know that Elder Xuan had avenged them. After eating, they went to visit Xiao Xiao.

However, the two of them only remained at the entrance of the room to take a look at her situation. They did so because it was not too appropriate for them to enter, given the situation inside.

Xiao Xiao's room door wasn't shut and was half-opened. From the opening of the door, Huo Yuhao and Wang Dong could see a burly figure sitting at the bedside. This person was meticulously feeding Xiao Xiao porridge with a small spoon.

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"Caitou simmered the porridge himself. After simmering it for half a night, he only scooped up the rice oil on the surface, which was the essence of the porridge. I didn't know that he's actually so meticulous underneath that cloddish appearance of his." Teacher Wang Yan commented after he appeared behind Huo Yuhao and Wang Dong suddenly.

"Brother Caitou is such a nice person!" Wang Dong complimented.

Wang Yan chuckled and said, "When all of you returned, all of you conked out, so you didn't see what Caitou was like. He muttered one sentence repeatedly. He said that no matter what happens in the future, he wouldn't let Xiao Xiao be hurt because of him. He swore to protect her. Let's go, it's fine since Caitou is here to take care of Xiao Xiao. Xiao Xiao has also just awoken, so let's not disturb her." As he said that, he gently shut the door and dragged both Huo Yuhao and Wang Dong to his own room. He had many doubts in his mind, and needed to interrogate both of them.

After they arrived in Wang Yan's room, Wang Yan gestured for both of them to take a seat on the sofa. Following that, he stared at them with a serious expression on his face without opening his mouth for a whole minute.

Huo Yuhao and Wang Dong began to develop chills on their skin after being eyeballed by Wang Yan. Wang Dong got to a point where he could no longer bear it, and asked, "Teacher Wang, why are you staring at us?"

Wang Yan sighed slightly before replying, "I have been cultivating since my youth. Only when I reached 20 did I realize that I'm not innately talented. Then, I turned my attention to the research of martial souls. I toiled, and eventually cemented my place in Shrek Academy today. I am 41 years old this year, and I've been studying martial souls for a good 35 years now. In Shrek Academy, there's never a lack of talents. However, my understanding of what a 'talent' constitutes has been redefined repeatedly when it comes to your batch. I have even seen the occurrence of many situations that have until now only appeared in myths and legends."

"Initially, I believed that Dai Huabin was the most outstanding among your batch of students. Although he's only 13 years old, he possesses soul power up to Rank 37. It's almost conceivable that he can reach the cultivation of Soul Emperor when he's 20 years old, under the meticulous guidance of the academy."

“Maybe the both of you are unaware, but we’ve something known as ‘seeds’ in the academy. They refer to students whose cultivation can reach 6 rings even before they’re 20 years old. Right now, there are only 4 ‘seedling’ students remaining in the entire academy. They include Ma Xiaotao and Dai Yaoheng, whom the two of you have seen before. Achieving 6 rings before the age of 20 is also publicly recognized in the continent as the criteria to be called an unrivaled talent.

“I used to think like that in the past too. However, after I got to know the both of you better, I have been reminded through your actions that this theory is fallacious. The class of one’s soul power is not everything. There are even more crucial components and situations apart from the class of one’s soul power. Let me explain to the both of you. Yuhao, I shall talk about you first.”

“You are the one who surprises me the most. In terms of diligence, you are among the top 3 of all the students that I’ve seen. As for your talent, you are the only one with an ultimate martial soul that I have ever seen. What’s even more unbelievable is that it’s a twin martial soul. Your second martial soul awakened after the first. These few conditions of yours are all suitable to be the subject of my research. Even till now, I have not grasped some of your mysteries. As for your will and resilience, you are without a doubt the toughest person I have seen among those in your same age bracket. I am certain that your achievements will be above Dai Huabin’s in the future. In the competition yesterday, you displayed two abilities at the end. Don’t tell me that they were skills derived from your first soul ring. If I am not recalling wrongly, your first soul skill was your soul bone skill, which is a powerful soul skill that resembles the power of a domain. Logically speaking, with your condition, you shouldn’t have been able to possess such a skill. And when you displayed that skill at the end which forced Ye Wuqing off the arena, I could feel the frightening aura of that soul skill even though I wasn’t even in the arena. Furthermore, Ye Wuqing had already freed himself from the restraint of the Golden road. With his cultivation as a Soul King, you couldn’t have beaten him simply by consolidating your soul power. At that point in time, I felt that your control of soul power became much greater. Can you explain to me how you were able to do that?”

In the face of Wang Yan’s doubts, Huo Yuhao groaned inwardly. Teacher Wang was indeed very astute in his observations, as his questions were all on point.

However, Wang Yan did not press him to answer immediately. Rather, he turned to Wang Dong, “What about you then? Your situation is even more interesting. Twin martial souls, am I right? If I’m correct, that black light of yours that was shaped as a hammer should belong in the strength-type category. That means that your body contains a second martial soul that’s in the strength-type category. You have concealed it quite well! Although I’m shocked, I can still accept it. However, I am interested to know the method that you used that led to Shangguan Can’s fourth soul skill losing effectiveness and even triggering such an intense backlash. Your victory was not determined by that last hammerstroke of yours, but through the instantaneous backfiring mechanism that you initiated. You actually repelled the soul skill that even Bei Bei was controlled by. How did you do that?”

“Err...”

Wang Dong was similarly speechless. Just like Huo Yuhao, he had his own secrets, and more than just a few!

As he looked at the both of them, Wang Yan chortled. "Alright, I won't put the two of you on the spot. I'm just pointing out the mysterious conditions both of you have. Everyone has their own secrets, especially for soul masters like us. Honestly speaking, I have developed a sense of surrealism towards the word of soul masters because of your appearances. Since when did twin martial soul become so readily available, such that there are three of them now? Moreover, each one of them is greater than the preceding one. All of you are indeed phenomenal! However, I remember a phrase shared by the dean that I concur with. If things go wrong, there must be something strange. Our academy is blessed with three twin martial souls at the same time. Perhaps a heavy responsibility will land upon the shoulders of the few of you. Hence, I hope that the few of you won't waste this gift that you have been blessed with. Putting effort into your cultivation to achieve the special abilities that the few of you were meant to have will be the best choice that the few of you can make."

"As your Teacher, I won't question your commitments. But my purpose in calling the both of you here today was to tell the both of you that you can feel free to approach me if you have any doubts. After all, I am more experienced, and I know more than the both of you. With the ten thousand years of heritage that Shrek Academy has, my knowledge is bound to be richer than the both of you. I can aid you in skipping some unnecessary bends along the way. If it involves your secrets, I can guarantee with my character that I will preserve them."

As they saw the sincere expression on Wang Yan's face, both Huo Yuhao and Wang Dong appeared much more relaxed.

Huo Yuhao said, "Teacher Wang, I do have some questions that I would like to ask you."

"Shoot." Wang Yan nodded his head towards Huo Yuhao.

Huo Yuhao said, "Teacher Wang, you have seen both our martial souls, which are vastly different from each other. My first martial soul is the spiritual-type Spirit Eyes, whereas my second martial soul is the ultimate ice martial soul, the Ice Jade Scorpion. As for Wang Dong, his first martial soul is the light-type Radiant Butterfly Goddess, and his second martial soul is of a strength type. I can fairly say that these four martial souls that we possess are completely dissimilar. However, how are our martial souls so compatible with one another, such that we were even able to exhibit a martial soul fusion skill?"

"I remember that you taught us before that compatibility between martial souls happens very rarely. It's even rarer to witness a high degree of compatibility between martial souls. Generally speaking, compatibility between martial souls is achieved if they are of the same type, or if their carriers were of the same species. For example, Lan Susu and Lan Luoluo managed to achieve martial soul fusion through overlapping their entirely similar martial souls before achieving compatibility through their identities as twins. The same goes for the fusion between Dai Huabin & Zhu Lu, the White Tiger and the Netherworld Civet. At least their martial souls both belong to the Felidae family. Furthermore, one represents positive energy, while the other represents negative energy. This means that it makes sense that they are compatible. But between the both of us, where does the compatibility originate from?"

This problem had been bugging Huo Yuhao for some time. In the past, he had not known what Wang Dong's second martial soul was. He even assumed that their second martial souls had some form of connection. But now, he realized that the second martial souls the two of them possessed were completely unconnected. Despite this, there was still a high degree of compatibility between their

martial souls, to the point where they had even obtained the Haodong Power. which was a force that could be used to cultivate and improve together.

Wang Yan laughed bitterly. "It's indeed tough for me to answer your question. I have been pondering it too. Regarding this, I've pored over a lot of materials in the academy. However, I'm still unable to give you a precise answer."

"The fusion of twin martial souls has never appeared before in the records of the academy over the past ten thousand years. I can even say that there's no relevant information regarding this in the entire history of the continent. Thus, no one can be sure about what's going on with the fusion of both of your martial souls. We can only guess."

"I thought about it last night, and came up with a few possibilities. The first possibility relates to the quantity of martial souls. While it's true that both your martial souls are different, it's also crucial to understand that your martial souls are both twin martial souls. Twin martial souls are very rare. For two to appear, and even achieve compatibility like the both of yours, is even rarer. Your two twin martial souls represent one similarity between the both of you."

"The both of you must be wondering why Xiao Xiao can't fuse with you. This relates to my second possibility, which is also the most probable reason. The two of you are complement each other."

"For two martial souls to fuse together even though they are unconnected to each other has happened before. The reason why they can fuse together is due to their complementary existence. As both martial souls complement each other, they will fuse together, just like Yin and Yang, developing a martial soul fusion skill in the process."

"Huo Yuhao's two martial souls of the spiritual type and ice type. As for Wang Dong, your martial souls belong to the light-type and strength-type categories. All four of your martial souls are different, but no one can be sure whether they are complementary to one another. Maybe, for some reason, your martial souls fused together because they are complementary."

Chapter 97.1: The Conjecture Regarding Multiple Fusion Skills

"My last guess, which I think is highly probable, is that there's him in you and you in him."

After he said this, Huo Yuhao and Wang Dong were stunned. They looked at each other, and Huo Yuhao had a weird look in his eyes. Wang Dong shifted his gaze away the moment their eyes met. His tender face blushed a little.

"Don't misinterpret what I'm saying." Wang Yan snapped at them, "I'm talking about your martial souls, not the both of you. You kids nowadays have such fertile imaginations."

"You were the one being ambiguous," Wang Dong retorted.

Wang Yan ignored him and continued, "The him in you and you in him that I mentioned refers to the fact that there may be some form of co-existence between your martial souls internally, even though they seem to be unconnected on the surface. It's a little awkward to put it this way. I'll give you an example to clarify things."

“For example, the Spirit Eyes and Radiant Butterfly Goddess do not seem to be connected to each other. However, what if Yuhao’s Spirit Eyes contain the power of light? This means that Yuhao’s martial soul contains a characteristic of Wang Dong’s martial soul. Let’s shift our attention to the Ice Jade Scorpion and Wang Dong’s strength-type martial soul. I’ve checked, and found out that the strength of the Ice Jade Scorpion is rather powerful. This means that an Ice Jade Scorpion possesses strength. This may be a key point why both of your martial souls could fuse together. However, I will still need to research the details further.”

After hearing Wang Yan’s words, Huo Yuhao and Wang Dong pondered them carefully, and their faces gradually showed looks of admiration. Yes! The situation described by Teacher Wang did exist in their bodies, but they hadn’t thought of his point before. In this way, it didn’t seem too unexpected that their martial souls had fused.

Wang Yan grinned, and his eyes were filled with fanaticism as he said, “Whatever the reason for the fusion of your martial souls, they have already fused. I will continue to research further, but this is not the main point. After all, what’s supposed to have fused has already fused. What I really want to research is the difference between the fusion of your twin martial souls and that of a single martial soul.

“Both of you have such a high degree of compatibility. This produced the Golden Road, a powerful martial soul fusion skill in terms of control. Then, did both of you realize that this is only a fusion between your first martial souls!? Since this is the case, will 4 different fusions occur? As the two of you have two martial souls each, this allows for 4 different permutations. Theoretically speaking, there’s the possibility of 4 martial soul fusion skills.”

Huo Yuhao and Wang Dong stared at each other and saw the shock in each other’s eyes. 4 martial soul fusion skills? What kind of concept was that? If they could possess 4 different skills and use them at the same time, they might be able to challenge a soul king with their current abilities!

Wang Yan leaned into the sofa and watched their shimmering eyes. “However, don’t be too optimistic. Besides the fact that it’s almost impossible for four martial soul fusion skills to appear, you won’t have the ability to use all four martial soul fusion skills in battle even if they appear. That’s because the power of the martial soul fusion skills will rise along with your cultivations. At the same time, your soul power will be depleted much quicker upon using them. I estimate that the two of you will only be able to use two martial soul fusion skills in a battle, unless some unprecedented situation occurs. Of course, both of your futures will be very bright if more martial soul fusion skills appear.

Huo Yuhao couldn’t help but ask, “Teacher Wang, is it really possible? Then what should we do?”

Wang Yan replied, “I’m not sure if it’s really possible. I mentioned before that such a situation has never appeared in the history of soul masters. The reason why I’m proposing this is because I hope for the both of you to try it out. What you have to do is very simple. It’ll still be a fusion of martial souls. However, I hope that both of you can summon a different martial soul during the fusion process. That means both of you should try to summon the single martial soul. There may be a possibility of success.”

“So it’s that simple!” Wang Dong said.

Wang Yan chuckled, “What else did you think you had to do? For incompatible martial souls, everything will still be futile even with ten thousand attempts. But for those like you, whose martial souls are

compatible, this process is not difficult. Based on the use of the martial soul fusion skill that both of you possess now, I believe that the other three martial soul fusion skills can be unleashed once every 3 days if you are able to succeed at your other 3 fusions. Thus, I shall give you both 9 days. Within 9 days, you'll have to complete all the experiments. Wang Dong, can you tell me what your second martial soul is?"

Wang Dong hesitated for a moment before nodding his head. Then, he said, "My second martial soul is the Clear Sky Hammer."

After hearing the words 'Clear Sky Hammer', Wang Yan stood up in shock from the sofa before Huo Yuhao even had a chance to react. "What, the Clear Sky Hammer? It's actually the Clear Sky Hammer. You are from the Clear Sky Sect?"

Wang Dong nodded his head and replied, "Yes! Why?"

Wang Yan laughed bitterly. "No wonder. The Clear Sky Sect was once the top sect on the continent! Come to think of it, it has a rather close yet complicated relationship with our academy. But as the Tang Sect fell, the Clear Sky Sect hid itself from the world again. If I'm not wrong, a direct disciple should have the surname Tang! Why is your surname Wang then?"

Wang Dong snorted and said, "This is my secret. I can't tell the both of you. What's wrong if my surname is Wang? Inheriting the Clear Sky Hammer means that I'm a part of the Clear Sky Sect. Furthermore, the Clear Sky Sect did not really hide itself from the world."

"No wonder," Wang Yan muttered, "Yuhao's second martial soul is Ultimate Ice. You are compatible with him because you have the most powerful offensive tool on the continent. I am really looking forward to the other martial soul fusion skills that can be created between the both of you. I suggest that the both of you try to fuse the Clear Sky Hammer and Ice Jade Scorpion first. These are two martial souls that have not been used in your current martial soul fusion skill. After this, the two of you should try fusing the Clear Sky Hammer and Spirit Eyes, as well as the Ice Jade Scorpion and Radiant Butterfly Goddess."

"Teacher Wang, is it possible for 3 or even all 4 martial souls to fuse together at the same time?" Huo Yuhao asked suddenly.

Wang Yan jumped in shock, and hurriedly said, "No. Don't ever attempt that, at least not now. It's not easy to tell what will arise from that kind of situation. However, a martial soul fusion skill causes a great depletion of power. Once you attempt a fusion of such a degree, both of your powers may be depleted even if you succeed. To be safe, only consider such an attempt when your cultivations reach six rings. As long as you succeed with one of the three combinations that I proposed, there will be extra changes in your strategy for the latter stages of the tournament."

"3 rounds have already been completed in the round robin stage. We have also met our strongest competitor in our small group, which was the Justsky Academy. The remaining 4 rounds won't be too difficult for us either. Especially for tomorrow's competition, since Ling Luochen has already recovered from her injuries and can participate. After one more round, Ma Xiaotao and Dai Yueheng will also recover. With the return of these 3 official team members, it won't be too difficult for us, at least during the round robin stage. The two of you should think on how you can unleash a brand new martial soul fusion skill."

Huo Yuhao said, "Teacher Wang, we will do our best. However, please keep this a secret for us."

Wang Yan nodded and said, "Naturally. I may not even let you use your new martial soul fusion skill even if you succeed. After all, you will carry the responsibility of handling the Shrek Academy Tournament in 5 years' time."

Huo Yuhao said, "Teacher Wang, can you give me that Soul-Devouring Carving Knife? I am a spiritual-type soul master. When I bid for that carving knife, I had a feeling that it had some sort of special connection to me. I'm sure it won't harm us."

Wang Yan shook his head and said, "No, I can't. The two of you are the pride of our academy. Even if there's only a slight danger, I still must keep you away from it. It's not too late for you to try using it under the guidance of your teacher from the soul tool department when we return to the academy. You can't possibly make a soul tool right now."

"I..." Huo Yuhao was helpless, and could only forget his wish to obtain the Soul-Devouring Carving Knife.

After bidding goodbye to Wang Yan, Huo Yuhao and Wang Dong returned to Huo Yuhao's room excitedly. However, they couldn't possibly try a new martial soul fusion skill right now. They had just unleashed the Golden Road yesterday, and their bodies had not yet recovered fully. If they were not at their peak states, it was less likely for their martial soul fusion to succeed. Furthermore, Huo Yuhao had already expended all his energy. Hence, their priority now was to recover.

As the Haodong Power was initiated, they entered a state of cultivation very quickly. In their hearts, they were yearning for the creation of a new martial soul fusion skill.

Wang Yan's words seemed to have opened a door for them. Even though they had not attempted it yet, the two of them had the feeling that they would succeed.

Gloomy clouds filled the sky. Rounds after round of the Continental Advanced Soul Duelling Tournament continued. As of yesterday, the third round of the tournament had already ended. There were only 1 or 2 teams that managed to ensure perfect winning streaks in each small group.

With the results of the first 3 rounds of competition in, the situation was much clearer. The traditional powerhouses pulled away from the rest, and the team that evoked the most debate was still the top academy of the continent, Shrek Academy!

Chapter 97.2: The Conjecture Regarding Multiple Fusion Skills

Today should mark Shrek Academy's fourth appearance in the round robin stage of the tournament. However, nobody knew whether they would participate today, and if they did, whether they would emerge victorious in the end.

Shrek's Seven Monsters had relied upon their incredible perseverance and determination, as well as their extraordinary talent, to overcome stronger opponents during their last battle. Their lineup had been composed of four soul ancestors, one soul elder and two soul grandmasters, but they still defeated their opponents, Justsky Academy, who had had three soul kings and four soul ancestors in their lineup. Despite their victory, they had paid a painful price for it. Six of them had hit the deck the moment their battles ended, and some of them were severely injured. It was hard to say whether or not Shrek Academy had enough people for the next round.

Furthermore, could they recreate the same miracle if they went on to the next round? Could they win today's contest with an exhausted and wounded team?

All the spectators had already arrived on scene way before the appointed time, and they were all silently standing in wait with these doubts in mind. They either wanted to see another phenomenal performance from Shrek Academy, or Shrek Academy's exasperated and helpless defeat.

It was already midday, but dark clouds were moving aimlessly in the sky and the heavens seemed a little gloomy. A light drizzle had begun as miniscule raindrops drifted downwards. This was the first time there had been rain since the beginning of the competition, and there was no doubt that the teams would carry on the contest in the rain.

"Here they come!" Somebody shouted into the air as the audience, the participants and the other students turned towards the entry tunnel.

Indeed, the troupe of participants from Shrek Academy were here, clad in their dark green school uniforms.

Bei Bei, as the team leader, led the entire company. He Caitou, Jiang Nannan, Huo Yuhao, Wang Dong and another young girl who looked like she was around twenty years of age followed closely behind in that order. Nobody had seen this girl before in this competition.

This young girl was elegant and pretty, but her expression was ice-cold. Their teacher in charge, Wang Yan, was behind her. This meant that only six people would represent Shrek Academy in today's contest – Xiao Xiao and Xu Sanshi were both absent, as Xiao Xiao had been heavily injured, and Xu Sanshi's vitality had been damaged.

Xu Sanshi needed to recuperate after bruising his vitality. Even though Xiao Xiao's injuries had been stabilized, there was no way she could participate in the competition for the time being. There was a silver lining to her injuries – she was now at the bottleneck of Rank 30, and was on the brink of becoming a soul elder once she broke through. All she had to do was gain another soul ring.

Therefore, it could be said that Xiao Xiao had remained at the hotel to recover and cultivate at the same time. The girl with the chilly expression that walked behind every other participant was Ling Luochen, who was a control system battle soul master with an ice-type martial soul.

Even if there were people who were familiar with the participants from Shrek Academy in the previous competition, those who recognized Ling Luochen were few and far between. Puberty could change a girl's looks in all kinds of ways, and Lin Luochen was but fourteen or fifteen years old five years ago. She was nearing twenty now, and there had been many transformations in her physical appearance since the last time she had competed. Furthermore, she had never made an appearance for Shrek Academy when she was only a reserve participant. This was the reason why nobody was familiar with her abilities.

The Sun Moon Imperial Soul Engineering Academy's team had the biggest reaction upon seeing her appearance. Ma Rulong's eyebrows creased as he muttered under his breath, "Are they finally sending out members of the official team? If I remember correctly, their team at this competition consists of ten people. This is the first appearance of someone outside of the reserve team."

Wang Yan didn't arrange any tactics or strategy when they entered the resting lounge. Due to Shrek's Seven Monsters' outstanding performance in the last round, Wang Yan had completely let go of his authority and handed it over to Bei Bei.

Bei Bei wasn't severely injured, and was but a little exhausted. He had already recovered after two days of rest, and with the help of his Blue Lightning Tyrant Dragon martial soul and the physique of a Golden Holy Dragon soul master.

Instead of sitting down, Bei Bei stood before his comrades and said, "Our opponents today are from the Longpeace Academy of Star Luo City. It can be said that they're battling us on their home ground. Even though their strength cannot be compared to Justsky Academy's, they're not that weak, and they have a soul king amongst their ranks. I will decide on the order of battle after drawing lots."

The judge swiftly arrived on stage and announced the drawing of lots. Bei Bei displayed his unnaturally lucky touch, and it was clear that luck was on Shrek's side today. In light of the fact that they were a man down, a group battle gave them the best edge, and the result of the ballot was as such.

Bei Bei was about to step off of the stage after the ballot was drawn when the team leader from Longpeace Academy exclaimed, "It seems the task of defeating Shrek Academy has fallen to us."

He was big and tall, with a center parting to his hair. There was a tinge of arrogance in his eyes, and he looked at Bei Bei as if he was looking at an opponent that he had already defeated.

Bei Bei glanced at him from the corner of his eye and curled his mouth a little. "Just like the bamboo shoots in the mountains. A sharp mouth and tough skin – but empty inside." As he spoke, he had already stepped off the stage.

Longpeace Academy's team leader was boisterous in speech, and he had been loud enough for the other members of Shrek Academy, who had already entered the waiting area, to hear him.

He Caitou was indignant. "Seems like everybody wants to bully Shrek Academy. We will surely teach them a lesson later."

At this moment, Ling Luochen stood up and stepped over to Bei Bei's side. She lowered her voice and said, "Do they really think we have no depth? Leave this group battle to me, Bei Bei. Let Huo Yuhao and I take this round. I will make them pay the price for their outrageousness."

Bei Bei hesitated. "Just the two of you? Senior sister, this..."

Ling Luochen lowered her voice again and said, "I never joke about Shrek Academy's honor and glory."

Bei Bei contemplated his options for a moment, then nodded his head. "Alright. Do be careful."

Ling Luochen gestured to Huo Yuhao and whispered something in his ear. Huo Yuhao nodded his head repeatedly before he followed Ling Luochen onto the competition stage.

All seven members Longpeace Academy's team had moved swiftly to the stage after the conclusion of the ballot. Even though they hadn't stepped back into their corner, their cone formation was set up, and the person standing at the forefront was their outrageous team leader.

The judge was a little confused as he only saw two members from Shrek Academy on stage. "This is a group battle, Shrek Academy. It's not a two-two-three fight or anything – please get the other members on stage. If not, they'll be considered to have forfeited this round."

Longpeace Academy's team leader laughed condescendingly. "Shrek Academy is truly disappointing! Making such a low-level mistake when under stress." He sighed, "What bad news for the reputation of the number one academy on the continent. Let's get ready, boys. We will not lose this round due to a moment's lapse in concentration."

Ling Luochen said plainly, "We only need two people for this group battle." She hadn't even looked at her opponents once as she took Huo Yuhao to the other corner of the competition stage.

The judge was slightly taken aback, and couldn't help but press the issue. "Will it really just be the two you?"

Ling Luochen nodded her head without even turning back as she sauntered away.

Longpeace Academy was a little perplexed as well. "Are they too arrogant, or are they preparing to admit defeat?"

One of the participants beside him said, "I think it's more likely they're trying to admit defeat. They are too depleted from the last round, and they barely managed to bring six people here today. I've never seen this girl before. They only have two people on stage – what else can it be, but attempting to admit defeat? This is a kind of self-assurance, as losing a battle to seven people when they're only two isn't embarrassing at all. However, a loss is a loss, and Shrek Academy will still have lost this battle."

All seven members of Longpeace Academy's team seemed to agree with this argument. This was the Continental Advanced Soul Master Academy Soul Dueling Tournament, and they refused to believe that these two people on stage were about to challenge them in any way.

The judge heard their flagrant discussion, and his eyebrows furrowed. He said with a serious voice, "Step back, all of you. Get ready for battle."

He disagreed with their assessment. As a powerful soul sage, he could feel the fearsome ripples of soul power coming from Ling Luochen's body. It was clear that she was at least a soul king – a soul king from Shrek Academy. As such, she was at least thirty percent stronger than the soul kings from other academies. With a participant of her level, how could Shrek Academy just be admitting defeat?

Ling Luochen had already retreated to the edge of the stage. She took point, while Huo Yuhao stood behind her. Her expression was typically chilly, but right now her face was so icy that it was frightening. It was even a little pale.

She was a member of the official team from Shrek Academy. She didn't have an explosive temper like Ma Xiaotao, but the pride deep within her heart was no different from the same pride shared by the other members of Shrek. She would never swallow any humiliation suffered by Shrek Academy.

Following the lowering of his right hand, all of the members of Longpeace Academy's team immediately released their respective martial souls. It was hard to deny the reason behind their outrageousness – besides their team leader, who was a soul king, the other six were soul ancestors. Furthermore, their

team leader had the optimal combination of two yellow, two purple and one black soul ring. This was the origin of his arrogance.

Ling Luochen unleashed her martial soul as well – she also had two yellow, two purple and one black soul ring. Huo Yuhao had two white soul rings behind her, as usual. Nobody knew the true level of his soul rings, and this included Wang Dong and his other friends, let alone his opponents.

Ling Luochen raised her right hand and exclaimed, “Begin.” Following the flickers of her first soul ring, the Icy Staff appeared in her hands, and the surrounding air instantly became freezing cold.

She was naturally speaking to Huo Yuhao. Huo Yuhao stepped forward and closed his eyes as he pressed both of his hands to Ling Luochen’s back.

Immediately, Ling Luochen’s eyes turned even colder as an inexplicable aura started to emanate from her body. In the next moment, she directly channeled her fifth soul ring – the black one – and she began to radiate a pressurizing effulgence as the brilliant color extended outwards.

Chapter 97.3: The Conjecture Regarding Multiple Fusion Skills

The seven people from Longpeace Academy who had just released their martial souls immediately felt that something was amiss, because they could feel a rapid fall in temperature. Then they saw the icy-blue halo of light opposite them starting to expand.

“That crazy woman is using her ten thousand year soul skill straightaway. Everyone, be careful,” their team leader cursed in a low voice. He immediately released his soul skill as he prepared to resist carefully. From his perspective, a soul skill with such a large area-of-effect could not be too powerful. If they could withstand it, they would counter-attack. After all, there was strength in numbers.

However, he soon saw something that made his gaze pause. In his field of vision, the judge of the competition, who was swiftly moving away from the center of the arena, suddenly stumbled.

Then, this unlucky judge turned into an ice statue. He was frozen in a retreating position.

What was going on?

Before the people from Longpeace Academy could react, they all felt an immense, frigid chill at the same time. It appeared to be coming straight for them. Then, their vision started to blur. While they were still conscious, their martial souls, soul power, and even their soul skills were frozen in the ice and snow.

In an instant, there were eight sculptures in the arena.

Ling Luochen retracted her staff and turned to Huo Yuhao and said, “Go, kick them all down. Remember, use only your legs and not your hands. These foul-mouthed scoundrels don’t warrant such respect.”

Huo Yuhao’s heart missed a beat. He thought, “The seniors from the inner courtyard are so strong!”

The strategy that Ling Luochen had just used was very simple. With the help of Huo Yuhao, her ice-elemental attack had turned into Ultimate Ice, and then she had used her fifth soul skill, the Icebrilliant Halo.

While it was Ultimate Ice, with her powerful control of magic and elemental mastery, she was able to freeze her opponents for a while. Coupled with Huo Yuhao's Ultimate Ice, even if her opponent were a Soul King, he would be unable to escape for at least ten minutes.

This was the terrifying aspect of an Ultimate martial soul. If aided by the same element, the power of Ultimate Ice would become abnormally terrifying.

The audience and representatives from the various schools were all dumbfounded.

The moment Huo Yuhao walked past the unfortunate judge, the ice cracked, and the judge was able to break free from it. However, his entire body shivered for a while because of the cold. He seemed to have something to say, but in the end, he swallowed his words, which were likely a warning against beating the judges.

If a Soul Sage could be frozen for a period of time, what was there to say about a Soul King?

Subsequently, the 'battle' chiefly became a scene where all Huo Yuhao did was kick the seven ice sculptures that enclosed the members of Longpeace Academy's team. The teacher in charge of the academy was deathly afraid that his team would be injured from the impacts, and rushed down to catch his students as Huo Yuhao kicked them out of the arena. Fortunately, Huo Yuhao was generous enough to give that teacher enough time to catch each of his students.

The judge had recovered from his shivers too. In shock, he stared at Ling Luochen, who had already withdrawn her martial soul, and proclaimed, "Winner, Shrek Academy."

The entire audience was stunned.

Just as everyone thought that Shrek Academy was out of the fight, Ling Luochen used her powerful ice-manipulation skills to tell them that Shrek Academy was still number one in the continent! They were the invincible Shrek Academy!

The faces of the students from the Sun Moon Imperial Soul Engineering Academy appeared to have frozen over. They seemed to have lost their ability to think.

In the earlier rounds of the competition, no matter how excitingly Shrek Academy battled, no matter how strong their will, they would show them respect at most, and never caution. After all, a preparatory team was ultimately a preparatory team. If they had so much difficulty resisting the onslaught from Justsky Academy, what more could be said about them? Even Ma Rulong, their captain, believed that victory would ultimately be theirs.

However, just as their hearts were filled with hope, Ling Luochen appeared today. She was able to control all her opponents in the blink of an eye. This was not enough to shock everyone from the Sun Moon Imperial Soul Engineering Academy. After all, they had been careless when dealing with her. What shocked them was that the judge, a Soul Sage, was frozen by her too. Even though the judge was only frozen for five seconds, and he had not released his martial soul, it was a testament to Ling Luochen's powerful ten thousand year soul skill.

Who dared to say that they would not be immobilized by her powerful soul skill? In a battle, even if one was immobilized for a single second, the consequences on the outcome of the battle would be dire!

Shrek Academy only deployed a single Soul King, but was able to stun everyone with her prowess. This was testament to the awe of Shrek Academy.

When Ling Luochen and Huo Yuhao left the arena, the others from Shrek stared at each other. They knew the power of this icy-cold soul master, who was also a member of the official team.

Ling Luochen was able to maximize her own elemental powers with the help of Huo Yuhao's Ultimate Ice. However, the power of her ten thousand year soul skill was equally terrifying too! Skills with an area-of-effect coverage were the hardest to control. Yet, they were able to see that when the Icebrilliant Halo appeared, it did not spread out in all four directions, but instead went straight for her opponents. This was enough to illustrate her mastery over ice, which she could control as well as any other part of her body.

Wang Yan exhaled, and his body evidently relaxed. With the return of Ling Luochen, Shrek Academy regained its status as a powerful team. As the teacher in charge of this team, the pressure on him had been greatly reduced. Ma Xiaotao and Dai Yueheng would soon return too. The upcoming rounds would be easier for them.

Ever since he had brought the team here, he had been under a huge amount of pressure. The responsibility on his shoulders was heavier than that on the shoulders of his students. At this point, he could truly take a breather.

Like before, the team from Shrek Academy did not linger long. After the competition, they quickly returned to their hotel to rest. Everyone who stayed behind were from the other academies, who were discussing Ling Luochen's elemental control with great interest. The hot topic of the day was how to counter her.

The round robin portion of the competition entered its fourth round, which was also its mid-phase. Shrek Academy was in the first group, which was comprised of eight other teams. Every team had to take part in seven rounds of competition to complete a cycle.

In the next three rounds, Shrek Academy did not meet any opponent who posed a serious threat to them. They were on a winning streak. After two rounds consisting of a one-on-one deathmatch and a group battle, they were able to defeat their opponents. Finally, they were able to emerge victorious in their group with zero losses, drawing closer to the cruel elimination round.

Unexpectedly, the other team that was able to progress to the next round from their group was Justsky Academy, who had caused so much trouble for them before.

As the other groups had nine teams each, they were able to obtain three full days of rest after this round-robin cycle ended.

Ma Xiaotao and Dai Yueheng had by now fully recovered from their injuries. However, they did not participate in the round robin portion of the competition. They did not even go down to the arena. This was part of Wang Yan's strategy. Concealing their true power would be immensely beneficial to the subsequent rounds of the competition.

In these few days, Shrek Academy received a lot of good news. Xiao Xiao had more or less recovered completely, and after that difficult battle, she was able to break through her Rank 30 bottleneck. All she needed was a third soul ring.

After experiencing many arduous battles and relentless sessions of cultivation, Huo Yuhao and Wang Dong both experienced an increase of a single rank in soul power. Wang Dong's soul power was now at Rank 32, while Huo Yuhao's was at Rank 28, bringing him a step closer to Rank 30.

What was even more delightful was their experimentation with the martial soul fusion skill. However, they did not know what their rate of success was. Only Wang Yan knew that. At least, they had experimented with the other three combinations, and they had been able to achieve breakthroughs as they tried out these three combinations.

Xu Sanshi remained in bed for five days before Bei Bei finally kicked him out of it. He was shameless indeed. To receive Jiang Nannan's care, he had remained persistently in bed as he moaned about his predicament non-stop. He thought that this would improve Jiang Nannan's attitude toward him, but everyone knew that it was a one-sided affair. Jiang Nannan still treated him coldly.

As everyone recovered from their injuries, Shrek Academy returned to peak condition. Their power might not yet be comparable to the original official team, but it was not too far off.

After all, the two Soul Emperors and main control-type soul master of the original official team were still present. Coupled with Bei Bei, whose martial soul could evolve into the Golden Holy Dragon, and Xu Sanshi, whose martial soul could evolve into a Xuanwu, a powerful Soul Ancestor, and the exceptional powers of the rest, their overall strength was still terrifying.

"The pairing for the elimination round is out," Wang Yan said in a deep voice. He had just returned from the Star Luo Empire's palace, where he had drawn lots. Afterwards, he gathered everyone for a briefing.

"For the Round of 16, our opponent is a familiar one. They are the premier academy from the Dou Ling Empire, the Dou Ling Imperial Soul Academy."

When they heard the name 'Dou Ling Imperial Soul Academy', a look crossed the faces of Ma Xiaotao, Ling Luochen and Dai Yueheng.

Ma Xiaotao arched her brows and asked, "Why did we meet them so early on?"

Xiao Xiao asked curiously, "How powerful is the Dou Ling Imperial Soul Academy?"

Ma Xiaotao said, "They were in the top four in the previous tournament, that's how powerful they are. They are much stronger than the Justsky Academy who you met earlier on. Teacher Wang, how powerful are the members of their delegation this time?"

Wang Yan said, "The Dou Ling Imperial Soul Academy's official team is comprised of five Soul Kings and two Soul Ancestors. They are powerful indeed. Furthermore, they are not inflexible in their approach. While they are an advanced soul academy, they are also the premier soul engineering academy. Through my observations, I have realized that every single one of their delegation possesses a soul tool, and they are able to wield them efficiently in battle. At least two of them are soul engineers, which means that they are Soul Kings with soul tools. This is a difficult opponent."

Chapter 98.1: A Top-ranked Auction

“Teacher Wang, we qualified from the round-robin round in first place, and with their strength, the Dou Ling Imperial Soul Academy should’ve done the same as well. If that’s the case, why are we fighting them? Aren’t the number one teams supposed to only get the second place teams in the round of 16?” Dai Yueheng asked suspiciously.

Wang Yan said, “In terms of overall strength, the Dou Ling Imperial Academy should’ve been first place in their group. However, that wasn’t the case. A black horse which also had a streak of consecutive wins and no losses appeared in their group. Yet, the Dou Ling Imperial Academy forfeited their match with that black horse for no reason. That’s why they qualified in second place. I didn’t think that we’d meet them.”

“Was there a problem?” Ma Xiaotao asked, “The Dou Ling Imperial Academy is also a well-known school. They must’ve known the importance of the group matches, and what first place signifies. Just what would make them give up that first place spot? Are they trying to preserve their strength for a single attack?”

Wang Yan replied, “I’ve also thought about this. The only difference between first and second place in the qualifier rounds lies in the round of 16. It doesn’t hold any significance after this match. The Dou Ling Imperial Soul Academy must’ve done this for a reason, and they must’ve concealed it well. We’ll only be able to see why in the match. Fortunately, we’ve kept the fact that you and Yueheng are participating in this match a secret as well. With you guys leading the team, there shouldn’t be too big of a problem. Okay, I’m going to explain the rules of our next elimination round.”

“Over the ten thousand years that the Continental Advanced Soul Duelling Tournament has been held, its rules have never changed. This is especially so for the final elimination rounds. To make the tournament more interesting, as well as to better display the comprehensive strengths of the participating academies, the tournament format will change slightly from previous matches. The elimination rounds won’t be decided using lot-drawing as per previous matches. Each match will be held over two days, and both a team battle and an individual knockout round will be held. Winning the team fight doesn’t mean that you’ll definitely proceed to the next round; if you can defeat all seven of your opponents using only three members, you’ll be able to overturn the outcome of the team match. On the other hand, the team that wins the team fight can guarantee their advance into the next stage by defeating three of their opponents using seven team members.”

“These tournament rules both illustrate the importance of a team’s overall strength and give a chance to teams which have strong individuals. For example, our team has Soul Emperors like Ma Xiaotao and Dai Yueheng. Even if we lose the team fight, they might be able to shine in the individual matches and defeat all seven of their opponents by themselves. In that case, we could still win the elimination round. Because of that, although the elimination round tests our strength as a complete whole, it gives a great chance to strong individuals. Truly powerful academies will definitely try extremely hard to nurture their best students, and one reason for that is to allow them to turn the tides in the elimination round’s individual matches.”

The fact that the elimination round was actually held in a way like this was something that nobody had imagined. Huo Yuhao asked, "Teacher Wang, then what happens in the 1v1 fights if a team member is injured or over-exhausted from the team fight?"

Wang Yan replied, "Then it'll depend on the strength of that team's bench. Every academy that's participating in this tournament has to have a preparatory team, just like what you guys originally were. If something like what you've just said occurs to an official team member, a member from the preparatory team will have to take their place."

"Bei Bei, Xu Sanshi. The two of you should've recovered already. Would it be possible for the two of you to use your abilities if you were to participate in the elimination round?"

Wang Yan was naturally referring to Bei Bei's Golden Holy Dragon and Xu Sanshi's Xuanwu.

Bei Bei nodded. "I should be able to. My martial soul doesn't get strengthened as much as Xu Sanshi's. However, it all depends on whether I can make it come out. After using it once, I'll have to wait three days to use it again, just like the fusion skill my junior brothers use. Also, I'll only have the power to unleash a single attack. I'll only be able to stabilise this power once I become a seven-ringed Soul Sage."

Xu Sanshi had a bitter look on his face as he said, "I can't say for sure, because I can't control it. A variation like that only occurs to my martial soul when I receive an especially intense stimulation. However, I'm the same as Bei Bei. Once I become a Soul Sage, everything will be fine."

Wang Yan nodded slightly. "I understand. Now, I'll make arrangements for the team members who are participating in tomorrow's match. Once we enter the elimination round, we can't be sloppy at all. Our upcoming opponents were within the top 4 of the last tournament, and so we'll definitely have to go all-out. Ma Xiaotao, Dai Yueheng, Ling Luochen, Bei Bei, Xu Sanshi, Huo Yuhao, and Wang Dong. The seven of you are participating in the team fight tomorrow. Ling Luochen and Huo Yuhao will be the main controllers in the team, and everyone else will launch frontal attacks to smash our opponents with our strength. Caitou, you'll have to go make a few cigars and distribute them to everyone so they'll be able to use them during the match."

"Yes." He Caitou answered.

Xiao Xiao curled her lips and said, "It's got nothing to do with me then."

Wang Yan smiled slightly. "Seeing that we're near the end of the tournament, nobody can guarantee that we won't suffer any injuries. As benchwarmers, you guys are also important. You all have already performed very well during the earlier parts of the tournament. You, Nannan, and Caitou also have to make preparations to go out and fight at any time. Now, I'll talk about the strategies we'll use in tomorrow's team fight. No matter what that Dou Ling Imperial Academy has prepared, we'll have to give them a show of strength."

With the return of the two Soul Emperors, the current Wang Yan was filled with confidence to win. They still had to go through four more elimination rounds to secure their spot as champions, and although the following matches would be very tough, it wouldn't be as tough as the preparatory team facing off against Justsky Academy.

At this exact moment, someone suddenly knocked on the door to the conference room.

Wang Yan furrowed his brows and shouted in a low voice, "Didn't we tell the service staff to not disturb us?"

A pleasant, female voice rang out from outside the door. "Sorry for the interruptions. I'm not a member of the service staff; I've come from the Starlight Auction."

The Starlight Auction? Wang Yan couldn't help but feel stunned for a brief moment after hearing this somewhat familiar voice. The person who was nearest to the door—Bei Bei—stood up and shot Wang Yan a questioning look. After seeing Wang Yan give him a nod of assurance, he walked towards the door and opened it.

A woman wearing a black cheongsam was standing outside the door. Being twenty-eight to twenty-nine years old, she possessed a mature charm and an occasional air of youth.

Huo Yuhao and the rest all recognised her; she was the auctioneer who had held the auction they'd participated in that day, Qing Ya.

Qing Ya's gaze directly landed on Wang Yan as she smiled and greeted him, "Hello, Teacher Wang Yan. I have to apologise for taking the liberty to disturb you."

Wang Yan's gaze softened somewhat as he saw that the intruder was Qing Ya. He asked in a low voice, "Do you have something for us, auctioneer Qing Ya? Also, how did you find us here?"

Chapter 98.2: A Top-ranked Auction

Qing Ya apologised, "When you came to the auction last time, you used Shrek Academy's account to settle the bill. Thus, we naturally guessed at your origins. After making a few inquiries, we were able to find where you were. Our Starlight Auction is hosting a top-ranked auction tonight, and an auction like this will only be held once or twice a year. Only our most respected honorable guests receive an invitation from us to attend. Last time, we didn't know that you came from the continent's number one academy—Shrek Academy—and thus we mistakenly neglected you. Our auction's boss has asked me to deliver this invitation card to you. If all of you have some free time tonight, you are welcome to participate in our auction. I believe that there will definitely be a few interesting things at tonight's auction."

As she spoke, she placed an invitation card on the table. Then, she held her smile as she bowed and said, "Then, I won't disturb all of you anymore. Once again, I apologise." With that, she slowly moved backwards and closed the door after her.

Wang Yan squinted his eyes as he saw the beautiful, golden invitation letter, "This Starlight Auction is impressive. Eleven invitation letters, and not one less. They were even able to ignore the Star Luo Empire's blockade around this hotel to deliver this letter. They're truly skilled!"

Dai Yueheng took an invitation letter and glanced over it. "It's actually a top-ranked auction. That auctioneer wasn't wrong—an auction like this is only held once or twice a year. In the past, even I didn't have the qualifications to participate in it. Only my dad, the members of the royal family, large businessmen, and top-ranked soul masters and engineers were allowed to participate in them. There definitely won't be a lack of good things sold there, but they're extremely expensive. The Starlight

Auction should just be trying to establish a good relationship with our academy; they shouldn't have any ulterior motives. Teacher Wang, what do you think about this?"

Wang Yan looked briefly at everyone, and saw a hopeful light in all of their eyes. They were indeed the most outstanding soul masters among their peers, but they were still a bunch of kids. They were similarly interested in new things. Moreover, a top-ranked auction like this couldn't be easily entered!

"Okay. Since everyone's been competing all this while, we should relax for a bit. However, we should keep our eyes open and our mouths shut to avoid trouble. Tomorrow's match is of the utmost importance. Once the auction ends, we'll immediately head back to the hotel to rest."

"Long live Teacher Wang!" Xiao Xiao was the first person to jump to her feet. Huo Yuhao, Wang Dong, and the others all had excited expressions on their faces.

They had been filled with curiosity the last time they had gone to the Starlight Auction. Moreover, the last auction they had attended was merely a low-ranked one which only sold a single soul tool. The auction they were about to attend was different; it was a top-ranked one. What kinds of goods would appear in it? They contrarily had no hopes of obtaining anything from this auction, and wished to participate merely to gain some knowledge.

Wang Yan chided them with a smile, "You rascals! Get your minds back to the topic at hand. I'm going to organise our strategy for tomorrow's match."

The strategic planning they underwent didn't take too much time. After that, they returned to their respective rooms to cultivate all the way till dinner time, when they switched into a set of ordinary clothes. With the invitation letters from the Starlight Auction in hand, the eleven of them went back to the auction house, with Wang Yan leading them.

Astonishingly, auctioneer Qing Ya was already waiting for them by the entrance. Clothed in a black cheongsam, she looked even more elegant and noble under the night lights. Her charming face was filled with a warm smile.

Wang Yan met her gaze, then nodded slightly. "Hello, auctioneer Qing Ya. We meet again."

Qing Ya had a delighted look on her face as she said, "Distinguished guests, welcome."

"How did you know that we'd definitely come?" Wang Yan asked.

Qing Ya shook her head. "I didn't, but I was tasked to receive all of you. Regardless of whether you turned up, I would've waited here until the auction formally started. Guests, please follow Qing Ya."

With that, she shot a sweet smile towards Wang Yan and elegantly led them forward.

Xu Sanshi, who was standing behind them, whispered to Bei Bei with a quiet laughing, "If this lady auctioneer smiles at Teacher Wang a few more times, I'm afraid that his soul will be taken away by her. She truly has a very mature charm!"

Bei Bei glanced at him. "Stupid."

As the two of them spoke, they had already entered the Starlight Auction.

The interior of the Starlight Auction was identical to their previous visit. There was no information about today's top-ranked auction that had spread to the public. Led by Qing Ya, they walked towards its inner parts, quickly passing by the auction hall they had entered last time.

After reaching the end of the corridor, two young ladies who were clad in golden cheongsams walked up to them. They bowed in Wang Yan's direction and greeted him, then exchanged a few words with Qing Ya. After that, a girl turned toward the wall and pressed on it with her right hand.

Immediately, a bizarre scene occurred. Wave-like ripples started to appear on the wall, and a few layers of light gradually stabilised on it.

As the girl pressed her hand on the wall, a pattern of light swept horizontally across it. After that, the wall slowly split into two with a buzz, revealing a path within.

Unlike the dazzling gold outside, this path was pure white. It didn't have the coldness of white, but a unique feeling that was filled with softness and realism.

The floor, roof, and walls were tiled with a semi translucent white jade, below which could be seen faintly hidden patterns. However, these hidden patterns couldn't be seen clearly. Yet, this room was clearly much more refined than the outside passage.

The soft, white light permeated the corridor from all directions, while the two sides of the room had halos of blue light that converged to form a line.

Qing Ya explained softly, "This is the Number One auction that we use to conduct top-ranked auctions. Only our most distinguished guests will be invited here to partake in an auction. I'm only here because of you distinguished guests. Otherwise, there's no way that I'd have the qualifications to enter this place with my auctioneer rank."

Wang Yan didn't bat an eyelid as he said, "Looking at what you're wearing now, it seems like you've been promoted!"

Qing Ya smiled. "I also have to thank all of you for that. I was able to accumulate enough merits to become a black-ranked auctioneer by selling the Ominous Soul-Devouring Knife last time. Everyone, please come inside." With that, she slowly led the way. Two girls in golden cheongsams, who looked to be around eighteen or nineteen, came up to greet them.

After walking a short distance forward, doors started to appear on either side of the walls. Qing Ya took them into one that was numbered seven.

Chapter 99.1: Top Quality Goods & The Princess

This was a room that was roughly two hundred square meters in surface area, and the decorations were as posh and extravagant as they could be. There were exotic wood and jade stones, along with other furniture and decorative items that people could tell with one look were highly valuable. The ornaments around the room were filled with garishness, yet they gave off a feeling of elegance that one simply couldn't help but praise.

This was inside the first auction hall of the great Starlight Auction, in the seventh room, and it was ostentatious.

The entire room was rectangular, and the longer side of the wall was crystal clear with a radiant white hue. This was the only wall without a single decorative element.

The sprawling sofa was made from the skin of an unknown beast, and the long white fur was incredibly soft and tender. Anyone sitting on the sofa would enjoy the comfortable feeling of sinking into the whole thing, and yet there was enough support.

The sofa was large enough to accommodate twelve people. There were also all kinds of refreshments and condiments laid out on the jade table stand at the side. Huo Yuhao quickly realized that he had never even seen the things laid out on the table before, not even a single kind of fruit.

Everybody was just comfortably spreading out on the long sofa. Qing Ya, the auctioneer, and the two other young girls clad in flowing golden dresses stayed back. Qing Ya was standing by the side of the sofa and grinned as she said, "I will explain the rules of our top-ranked auction."

As she spoke, she signaled to the two young girls beside her.

One of the girls stepped over to the smooth wall and tapped lightly on its surface. Instantly, a layer of gentle light started to radiate from the entire wall, which gradually became stronger until the entire wall eventually transformed into an enormous screen.

All this fell into Huo Yuhao's eyes as he turned towards He Caitou with an astonished look. He Caitou was the first to speak as he couldn't help but ask, "Is this a soul tool?"

Qing Ya nodded her head and replied, "This is a custom-made soul light screen that we specially obtained from the Sun Moon Empire. It can display images via an esoteric method, but its formation arrays are not activated by soul power – instead, they're activated by a kind of ore from the Sun Moon Empire."

It wasn't just Huo Yuhao and He Caitou who reacted in shock at her statement – the other members of Shrek shared the same confoundment.

What did using ores to activate soul tools suggest? It implied that soul engineers no longer needed to expend any soul power to use soul tools! The value of this to the world of soul tools was simply too great.

Qing Ya was adept at reading people's emotions, and it was only natural that she picked up on the befuddlement from her audience, because she quickly tried to explain. "Don't be too hasty everyone, and wait for me to finish my explanation. Even though this light-directing screen is activated by ore, this kind of ore emanates an extremely weak and gentle energy, and there's no way it can activate offensive or defensive soul tools. All it can do is carry out the lighter tasks of weak soul tools."

Qing Ya gave a most logical and sensible explanation, but the confusion and bewilderment in the hearts of her audience had not been fully dispelled yet.

Perhaps it was true that the Sun Moon Empire had yet to discover a method to activate soul tools without using Soul power. However, this soul light screen was evidence of how advanced the Sun Moon Empire was in terms of the development of soul tools. Wang Yan's speech about the future drifted to the forefront of everyone's minds, and everyone started to feel heavy in their hearts. Times were ever-changing, civilization was always advancing, and soul tools were continuously being developed as well.

The Sun Moon Empire had never been too keen about interacting with other nations, so nobody really knew the exact extent to which the Sun Moon Empire had made advancements in their research on soul tools. Before long, they would be facing the Sun Moon Imperial Soul Engineering Academy.

The Light-Transmitting Screen was becoming clearer. Some images were displayed on either side, while an auction station was presented in the middle. The auction didn't seem very big, but was presented on the screen with extreme clarity.

Qing Ya continued, "In order to protect the privacy of the participants of this top-ranked auction, all valued guests will have their own designated rooms, just like the one everyone is in right now. All viewing and the contest for items up for auction will be carried out inside this room, and I will be responsible for introducing the items up for auction in detail. These two girls will report the quotations during the auction."

"All you have you do is quote the price. Everything in here – the food and refreshments – are complimentary. After the auction, the items will be sent into the room as soon as possible and will be settled with a final overall bill at the end of everything. As our guests, you can grab something to eat before we officially begin the auction." Everybody had just had a meal not too long ago, and nobody was too interested in the foodstuffs. However, the alluring drinks were too tempting to resist, and some of them reached out to try them.

The top-ranked Starlight Auction was worthy of its name. The drinks were not only delicious, they were as nutritious as the food provided to the core disciples of Shrek Academy itself. Huo Yuhao only had a single glass of fruit punch and he could already feel a comfortable warmth coursing through his body.

Wang Yan said to Qing Ya, "Auctioneer Qing Ya, please have a seat as well."

Qing Ya didn't reject this offer, and after tilting her head with a wide smile on her face, took a seat beside him. Wang Yan hurriedly shifted to the side to create some space between the two of them before his face flushed red. He wasn't young anymore, but he didn't yet have a family, and he had never really interacted with girls before – his heart and soul were dedicated to the research and development of soul masters. At this moment, there was a mature and enchanting beauty sitting so close to him and this made him a little uneasy.

Qing Ya covered her mouth as she giggled at the sight of his reaction. Yet, instead of teasing him, she asked softly, "Is this your first time in Star Luo City?"

Wang Yan shook his head and replied, "I've been here before, but every trip was completed in a hurry."

Qing Ya said, "You must be very busy with your work at Shrek Academy."

Wang Yan answered, "It's better if I'm busy with my work. If it's just normal teaching, it won't be so tiring. After all, the members of our academy are all outstanding students, and they don't need too much worrying from us teachers." As he said this, a look of pride flashed across his face, and this was naturally due to Year 2's Class 1.

He had said before, more than once, that Year 2's Class 1 was the most talented class he had ever taught. This was also extremely compatible with his teaching style, which was purely skill-based, and he was also strict and firm with his students.

His students were not only prodigious, one was more hardworking than the other. According to his own estimations, when they ascended to Year 3, the entire class could reach the third ring in mastery. How impressive would that statistic be? His greatest wish at this moment was to have the honor of taking his entire troupe of students to the end, and to ensure that everybody successfully graduated from the academy.

Qing Ya smiled faintly and said, "One look, and I can tell you're a great teacher. The moment you mention your students, there is an obvious exhilaration in your emotions."

All this small talk caused Wang Yan to unwind a little, and his emotions became a lot less tense. "It's because my students are too cute. In reality, as a teacher, my greatest wish is to see my students succeed. As of now, my students haven't disappointed me."

Qing Ya bowed her head a little and said, "I hope you can produce even more extraordinary students."

"Many thanks." Wang Yan returned her well-wishes politely, but he failed to detect the slight unnatural sparkle in Qing Ya's eyes as she stared at him.

Qing Ya giggled as she asked, "Teacher Wang, the Starlight Auction wishes to expand our business into Shrek City. What suggestions do you have for me?"

Wang Yan was slightly taken aback. "The Starlight Auction wants to go to Shrek City as well? That's a good thing! However, there seem to be multiple auctions in Shrek City already, and thus the competition is bound to be pretty vigorous."

Qing Ya chuckled and replied, "The Starlight Auction has never been afraid of competition, as we believe in our own strengths. If we ever have a chance to venture into Shrek City, I wonder if I can contact you?"

"Of course you can." Wang Yan answered her question almost subconsciously.

Qing Ya raised her hand and produced a small gold box. "Do accept this gift from me then. This is a sound-amplifying soul tool, and they are produced in pairs, so I have one as well. As long as we are within fifty kilometers of each other, we can communicate using this. If you need anything from me during your stay in Star Luo City, feel free to contact me!"

Wang Yan accepted this little gift and glanced at Qing Ya. He suddenly noticed that Qing Ya was staring at him with a piercing gaze, and it instantly gave him mixed feelings, so he hurriedly nodded and put the sound-amplifying soul tool away.

Right at this moment, the entire room was abruptly plunged into a layer of golden light, and everybody turned toward the soul screen.

A gentle golden light that wasn't hurtful to the eyes emanated from the screen that had previously blocked everyone's field of view. Pale rays of golden light also shone from the every corner of room, and the calm and comfortable atmosphere was instantly transformed into something more dignified and elegant.

Qing Ya announced, "My honorable guests, our auction is about to begin."

The golden light coming from the screen gradually receded as a charming voice rang out from within. "Welcome to the top-ranked Starlight Auction. Today, we are placing nine exotic items up for auction.

These items will be shown to you, our honorable guests, by their value from the lowest to the highest. We do hope you will enjoy yourselves.”

The soul screen cleared up again, and the platform that had appeared before was now covered with another layer of pale white light. In the middle of the platform was a young girl clad in a lengthy red dress.

This girl appeared to be no more than eighteen, and she was enchantingly pretty – to the point where she rivaled even the looks of Jiang Nannan. Furthermore, she was a few years older than Jiang Nannan, and her body was much more mature. The combination of her flowing red dress and her pale white skin gave onlookers a feeling of perfection – the only strange thing was that the auction station had yet to appear on the platform.

“Greetings, valued guests. I am today’s auctioneer, and my name is Jiu Jiu. I am honored to be here today to host this top-ranked auction. Your time is valuable to us, so we shall begin the auction right away. Subsequently, do feast your eyes upon the first item of the day.”

As she spoke, she flashed a glamorous smile and made an extremely exquisite greeting as she gestured with her right hand. The scene switched right away, and the soul screen on the wall presented the first item up for auction.

Chapter 99.2: Top Quality Goods & The Princess

No wonder there wasn’t an auction station – the item itself was a magnified projection! It was displayed across the ten-meter-long wall, down to its most intricate details.

Dai Yaoheng asked inquisitively, “Why is this auctioneer following the formalities of the royal palace of the Star Luo Empire?”

Qing Ya glanced at Dai Yueheng with a look a of faint shock and answered, “Fine eyes you have, valued guest. Auctioneer Jiu Jiu is the lead auctioneer of the Star Luo Auction, and its only gold-ranked auctioneer. However, only when the value of the item is over hundreds of millions of gold coins will she don the golden auctioneer’s uniform. At the same time, Auctioneer Jiu Jiu is the youngest sister of the current emperor of the Empire. She has remarked that her status in the auction is as an auctioneer, which is the reason why we don’t address her as ‘Your Highness’.”

Everybody exchanged looks with each other, as this was surreal for them. Even though they had already guessed that the Starlight Auction had an extraordinary background, they never thought it would reach such a level.

A princess from the royal palace as an auctioneer. What did this mean? This meant that the entire Starlight Auction probably belonged to the royal family of the Star Luo Empire.

Still, while they were boggled by what they had just discovered, everybody’s attention was diverted to the item that was presented before them, and Princess Jiu Jiu’s voice could be heard.

The Tyrannical Tiger Soulblade is a Class 8 close-combat soul tool. Its components are extremely valuable, including the right arm bone of a ten thousand year Tyrannical Tiger. It also contains a soul bone skill called the Tyrannical Slash. At the same time, it can boost the offensive powers of compatible soul skills by fifty percent.”

“Do take note, honorable guests, that every strike using this precious close-combat soul tool will produce the effect of a Tyrannical Slash, and this effect will add onto the effects of any related soul skills. At the same time, through the sophisticated workings and direction of the formation arrays, and in addition to the inherent energies contained within the soul bone, the amount of soul power required to use the Tyrannical Slash is only a third of what it normally is.”

“Lastly, the Tyrannical Tiger Soulblade originates from the Sun Moon Empire’s Illustrious Virtue Hall. I think these three words – Illustrious Virtue Hall – are enough to prove its quality. Seven-ringed Soul Sages can use this weapon, and they will be able to challenge a Soul Douluo. You will have five minutes to inspect the item.”

久久公主的介绍一完，房间内不自觉的响起了抽气的声音。这还只是第一件拍品啊！

Once Princess Jiu Jiu completed her introduction, deep breaths could be heard being drawn across the room – this was only the first item up for auction!

It was a Class 8 soul tool, and even though both Huo Yuhao and He Caitou were from the Soul Tool Department, they had never seen this before. Several simple and crisp sentences were enough to bring out the most powerful and attractive aspects of this item.

Even the more experienced Ma Xiaotao, Dai Yaoheng and Ling Luochen betrayed looks of amazement. They had seen Class 8 soul tools in past auctions that they had participated in before, but they were few and far between. Normally, the appearance of a Class 6 soul tool in an auction was already a rare sight. Once in a blue moon, a Class 8 soul tool would be revealed, but even then, they would be the anchoring item to close off the entire auction. Today, the first item was already a Class 8 soul tool, and it was the item with the lowest value in the list of items that were in store – how could all this not overwhelm them with bewilderment and excitement?

One couldn’t underestimate the Tyrannical Tiger Soulblade just because it was a close-combat soul tool. In reality, for high level soul masters, close-combat soul tools were more important than long-range soul tools and stationary soul tools, as they were more complementary to their skills.

The students were unable to help themselves as they got up from the comfort of their seats and stepped up to the screen to inspect this eighth-ranked war blade.

There was a comprehensive description of the item on the screen. The Tyrannical Tiger Soulblade was four feet six inches long, while the blade itself was at least an inch wide. It was modeled like a saber, the hilt extending to the handguard, and it was shaped like a bone. The handguard itself was ten centimeters wide, and was a caricature of a tiger’s head – there was no doubt that this soul tool’s formation arrays were located there. The tiger’s head radiated with a crystal yellow hue, and seemed to have been made from a special jewel.

He Caitou was the most knowledgeable amongst the entire group regarding soul tools. He took but a few glances before a look of awe came over his face. “These... not only do these formation arrays draw from the power of the soul bone, but the entire body is made from Amber Gold! Such extravagance! Besides, it’s quite a large piece of Amber Gold! No wonder they can solidify the energy from the soul bones. Items produced in the Illustrious Virtue Hall are indeed extraordinary.”

Huo Yuhao was beside He Caitou, and he too was observing it intently. Even though it was just an image, he could feel a faint aura of ferocity drafting towards him. The broad blade seemed to shimmer with a terrifying layer of blood.

Huo Yuhao lowered his voice and asked, “Senior brother, what kind of place is the Illustrious Virtue Hall?”

Before He Caitou could respond, Wang Yan lowered his voice as well and answered, “The Illustrious Virtue Hall has connections with Shrek that run very deep, and they hold the highest status in the Sun Moon Empire. Put more accurately, they are a part of the Sun Moon Imperial Soul Engineering Academy. Much like our own inner courtyard, only the most outstanding students from the Sun Moon Imperial Soul Engineering Academy are allowed to enter for cultivation and studies. At the same time, they are the cardinal authority in forging and manufacturing soul tools. All the soul tools produced by the Illustrious Virtue Hall overflow with excessive demand the moment they hit the market. Thus, the Illustrious Virtue Hall is also a substitute representation of a soul tool’s quality.”

Qing Ya smiled faintly and chimed in. “Teacher Wang is right. There are more teachers than students within the Illustrious Virtue Hall, and the most powerful soul engineers are concentrated there as well. Over the years, most of the epoch-making soul tools originated from the Illustrious Virtue Hall. One can well say that the Illustrious Virtue Hall is like the most important ivory tower of the Sun Moon Empire. Their technologies regarding the development of soul tools are also the most advanced on the continent.”

Bei Bei appeared behind Huo Yuhao like a ghost. He was also listening attentively to Qing Ya’s explanation as he tapped Huo Yuhao on the shoulder and whispered, “Keep it up, little junior.”

Only five simple words fell into Huo Yuhao’s ears, but it instilled in him an overflowing feeling of hope. Huo Yuhao thought to himself – how incredible would it be if the Tang Sect could one day receive such exalting praise?

Huo Yuhao hadn’t been so sensitive back when he was still cultivating and studying inside the academy, but following his expedition out of the academy and into Star Luo City for the competition, he had picked up and learned so many things in the process that he would never have been exposed to in the academy. He gradually began to understand the substantial importance of soul tools, and that the manufacturing of soul tools by the Sun Moon Empire were far greater than that of other nations – more than he had imagined.

The thing that staggered Huo Yuhao the most wasn’t the Class 8 Tyrannical Tiger Soulblade before him, but the soul screen that could be operated without the injection of soul power, in spite of Qing Ya’s previous explanation about the weakness of these external sources. However, the Sun Moon Empire had already produced a soul tool that didn’t require soul power to be activated – in that case, what was the difference between the weak and the powerful? It wouldn’t take more than a few years before the Sun Moon Empire would be able to produce soul tools with offensive and defensive capabilities that could be activated without consuming soul power. When that day arrived, the structure of the entire continent would change drastically.

“I have to work harder and become stronger,” Huo Yuhao made a mental note to himself.

“Time’s up. The Tyrannical Tiger Soulblade’s opening price is six hundred thousand golden soul coins, and every bid cannot be less than five thousand golden soul coins. All of you, my honorable guests, are experienced with this, and I trust that we won’t need Jiu Jiu to explain too much. If a bid is unanswered after a minute, the deal is done – let’s begin.”

The screen started to transform into a pale white color. The image of the Tyrannical Tiger Soulblade gradually grew more obscure as it faded into the background, while a giant number that read “six hundred thousand” flashed on the surface of the screen.

“Six hundred and fifty thousand.” Dai Yueheng was the first to bid, before he turned towards Wang Yan. “Teacher Wang, this is my personal decision.”

Wang Yan didn’t say anything, and simply nodded in his direction.

The students in the inner courtyard of Shrek Academy had never had any issues with their finances, and they would also bring their savings with them when carrying out similar tasks. Dai Yaoheng himself was the eldest son of the White Tiger Duke, who had been passing down the position for at least ten thousand years – this naturally meant that the amount of money he could use was plentiful.

The moment he quoted his bid, the golden-robed servant girl immediately executed a simple action on the soul screen, and the giant numbers on the screen subsequently changed to six hundred and fifty thousand.

The reason why Dai Yueheng was so moved was that this Class 8 soul tool had something to do with the tiger, and could be used by a Soul Sage. Dai Yaoheng wasn’t too far from his seventh ring, and he could probably break through to that level in the next three to five years. Furthermore, a Class 8 soul tool such as this that was complementary to his abilities didn’t come around too often.

Ma Xiaotao snapped at once. “You think you’re big just because you’re rich?”

Dai Yueheng wasn’t angry at all. He flashed her a faint smile and said, “You are stronger than me, Xiaotao, and you will definitely advance to the seventh ring before I can. How about this – when you become a soul sage, you can use the Tyrannical Tiger Soulblade first and return it to me once I reach the seventh ring. How’s that? If not, it will just be rotting in my possession anyway.” ~~nove-18~~/In

Ma Xiaotao shot him a look and said, “Why do I need your stuff? Besides, it’s still uncertain whether you can win the bid in the end.”

Indeed, the numbers on the screen were already starting to flicker.

Huo Yuhao was a little perplexed. When he was at the Treasure-Appreciation Conference at the Treasure Pavilion with Wang Dong, Wang Dong’s Golden Light Left Arm Bone had been valued at nine million five hundred thousand golden soul coins. This Class 8 soul tool’s opening price was only six hundred thousand golden soul coins, and it even included a tiger-type right arm soul bone – how could the price disparity be so great?

Wang Dong understood him very well, and instantly detected the doubts in his mind. He lowered his voice and said, “Are you thinking about the Golden Light Left Arm Bone? That’s incomparable. Even though soul bones are all precious, a tiny distinction in quality can lead to vastly different values. The description of this blade’s power seems fine, but it probably means that the quality of the soul bone

infused within it isn't too great – otherwise, why would it be used to forge a soul tool? A soul master could just absorb it. As for the Golden Light Left Arm Bone, it gives my abilities an overall boost. Furthermore, I can feel that the reason why its effects on me are still limited is because my level of mastery isn't high enough, just like your soul skills. Otherwise, it would be because I am not yet familiar with handling it. Do remember that the presence of the bone enhances our cultivation speed when we use the Haodong Power. You have to know that an increase of even ten percent in our cultivation speed is already difficult to gauge with money. Besides, this Class 8 soul tool's opening price may only be six hundred thousand, but who knows how much its final price will be?"

Chapter 99.3: Top Quality Goods & The Princess

"Although my Golden Light Left Arm Bone can't compare to a hundred thousand year soul bone, it's still a rather formidable presence among soul bones. It was also the item with the highest value at the Treasure Appreciation Auction held in the Treasure Pavilion. While there are many items in this Starlight Auction house, not all of them can supersede it in terms of value in such a top-ranked auction."

As the two of them spoke, the number on the soul screen had already changed rapidly.

The golden soul coin figure soared and crossed the 1 million mark very quickly. However, the figure increased at a slower rate upon crossing the 1 million mark.

Qing Ya said, "Distinguished guests, this Tyrannical Tiger Soulblade has a rough value of six hundred thousand golden soul coins based on its own quality and without consideration of the craftsmanship of the soul engineer. This is according to careful analysis by our auctionplace. This is also the reason why we raised the starting bid for this item. A conservative estimate of its actual value would be at least 1.3 million golden soul coins. That piece of Tyrannical Tiger soul bone from which it was carved has a slight flaw, but the Class 8 soul engineer that produced it has already removed this flaw during the process of carving the blade. If that piece of soul bone were perfect, this blade might have been even more powerful. However, this would also mean that its price would have been even more astronomical. Personally, I feel that the price of this Tyrannical Tiger Soulblade is very reasonable."

How many of those who came to this top-ranked auction were fools? Just like Princess Xingyun said, they were all connoisseurs, and were clearly aware of the right price of the items. The auction house did not overprice the starting bids, but it was also almost impossible for anyone to obtain any item at a steal.

Dai Yaoheng eventually made up his mind and used 1.56 million golden soul coins to bid for this Tyrannical Tiger Soulblade.

The price of the blade didn't change for a minute. After the bidding ended, golden lights in the entire room burst into bright fireworks. This signified a successful bid.

Dai Yaoheng was also feeling the pinch in his heart. After being a member of the Shrek Guardians for such a long time, his personal savings were barely over a few hundred thousand golden soul coins. However, Star Luo City was his headquarters. Thus, it was not too difficult for him to raise this sum of money.

Princess Jiujiu, who wore a long red dress, appeared on the screen once again. She smiled sweetly as she bowed slightly. She said, "I'd like to thank the guest who won the bid for the Tyrannical Tiger Soulblade

for his support of our auction today. Below, we shall present the second auction item now. Although they can only be expended once, they are very rare. It's not easy to gather this entire set. Distinguished guests, please take a look."

The soul tool screen changed once again, and the screen on the wall was divided into 12 sections. The items in each of the 12 sections looked very similar to one another.

They were all cylindrical objects. One end was cone-shaped, and the other end was the base of the cylinder. This applied to all 12 items. The only difference that they had were in terms of their color. They seemed to be carved from different types of metal.

"Stationary soul cannon shells." He Caitou muttered almost instantaneously, his voice filled with shock.

Princess Jiujiu's voice echoed within the room, "These 12 stationary soul cannon shells are products of the Illustrious Virtue Hall. It took us quite some effort to gather them. Each of them has a different effect and their sizes are according to the standard format. When used appropriately, these 12 shells have the power to threaten the life of a Soul Douluo."

"Using the class of a soul tool to measure them, each one of them contains a precise formation array. The formation arrays are not inferior to a Class 6 soul tool in terms of complexity. Their elements include water, fire, earth, wind, light, darkness, poison, lightning, frost, metal, explosion and paralysis. At least a Class 6 stationary soul cannon shell is needed to fire the cannonballs. For repeated firing, at least a Class 7 stationary soul cannon will be needed. I shall give all of you 5 minutes to appreciate this set of 12 items."

Before she had even finished speaking, He Caitou had already leapt forward quickly. Huo Yuhao followed closely behind him. Although they had not encountered a soul tool of this class, it was still good if they could just admire it!

This was especially so for He Caitou, as he had used a stationary soul tool before. He was more aware of the importance of a stationary soul cannon shell. Thinking about it, the effect of the stationary soul tool in battle must be very immense given that even the Continental Advanced Soul Master Academy Soul Dueling Tournament did not permit the use of it by its participants.

Princess Jiu Jiu's description was not exaggerated. If these shells were all at the Class 6 level, they could certainly threaten the life of a Soul Douluo, and even cause problems for a Titled Douluo.

"They're too exquisite. Little junior brother, the formation arrays are at the tails of the cannon shells. There are accelerator circuits on the surface of the formation arrays, too. Furthermore, these circuits are so huge. Once the cannon shell is released, its speed will be frightening. No wonder a Class 6 and above stationary soul cannon is required to fire them, so as to prevent the bore from exploding."

He Caitou looked at these shells and jumped around in excitement.

Wang Yan walked beside him and asked softly, "Caitou, do you know the value of these shells?"

He Caitou nodded his head without any hesitation and said, "Of course. I've researched them very heavily! Teacher Wang, we must get them. These few years, our soul tool department has focused our research on stationary soul tools. The might of a stationary soul cannon is a huge problem that has stumped us. Right now, our academy can only produce stationary soul cannon shells that are Class 5, at

most. This item is pricey and expendable, but they're something we haven't been able to produce. These shells, will be very useful in our research of higher class shells."

"Alright, I understand." Wang Yan nodded his head.

Qing Ya reminded them softly, "Distinguished guests, these cannons are all equipped with the encrypted formation schematic of the Illustrious Virtue Hall. If any of you is buying them for research purposes, please take due care. If the encrypted formation is touched, it may induce an explosion."

"Of course I know that." He Caitou said without any hesitation, "No matter who created such a high-level soul tool, the same logic applies. However, we can reap some information just by looking at the clues on their surfaces..."

He wanted to continue on, but Wang Yan coughed and blocked out his words. He Caitou also realized that he was getting too excited, and quickly refrained from speaking further.

The price of these 12 shells was indeed astonishing, and were true to the idea that every succeeding auction item was more expensive than the preceding item. The starting price for these 12 shells was actually 650,000 golden soul coins.

"Distinguished guests, I don't think that this set of cannon shells from the Illustrious Virtue Hall is too expensive for all of you. Not only can they be used in battle, they can also be kept as souvenirs. It's also not easy for the Illustrious Virtue Hall to produce such a set like this. The most important thing is that they are very rare. The Starlight Auction house can guarantee that this is the first time a set of Class 6 stationary soul cannon shells from the Illustrious Virtue Hall has appeared in our auction house."

The bidding started. Wang Yan did not rush to make a bid, and only watched the screen quietly.

It was not his first or second time taking part in an auction. Even for the most specific auctions, not all the auction items would be able to be auctioned out successfully. There would be situations where a second auction would be held.

Perhaps the value of these 12 shells might be greater than the Tyrannical Tiger Soulblade earlier. However, that was attributed more to their rarity. There were very few who were willing and able to use these shells. Furthermore, the price of the entire set of 12 shells was too high. They were not like close-combat soul tools or long-range soul tools. Once the shells were used, they could no longer be used anymore.

Indeed, Wang Yan's steadiness was rewarded. The figure of 650,000 golden soul coins did not increase. No one was willing to make a bid.

After a minute, Princess Jiujiu regretfully said, "It seems like these 12 shells will not have an owner today. I shall count down the last 20 seconds. If no one makes a bid, this auction item will be put for up for a second auction."

Wang Yan twisted his head towards Qing Ya and asked in a low voice, "How many seconds does it take to make a bid?"

"Bids are processed instantly." Qing Ya replied.

Wang Yan nodded his head slightly, and his eyes flashed with a wise and far-sighted radiance.

“5, 4, 3, 2, 1.”

When the countdown reached 2 seconds, Wang Yan shouted, “I will bid 655,000 golden soul coins.” The smallest raise was 5000 golden soul coins. He did not bid the starting price, but added 5000 golden soul coins.

The price was entered in immediately. At the very last second, the illusory 650,000 figure jumped to 655,000 instantly after it froze.

Qing Ya was stunned as she covered her small mouth. Following that, she raved, “Teacher Wang, you are brilliant!”

Huo Yuhao also understood what had happened. At the very last moment, it was not only Wang Yan who had made a bid. However, the other person had offered the starting price. Under such a circumstance, the increase that Wang Yan had added to his bid had a decisive impact. **novel** **cb**-In

Wang Yan smiled before saying, “I was just taking precautions. I’m lucky to have obtained this set of stationary soul cannon shells by bidding a little higher.”

Qing Ya laughed slightly as she congratulated him; she seemed elated too. The Shrek Academy that she was in charge of hosting managed to succeed in their bid for two auction items consecutively. Not only would she gain a commission, but it would also greatly help her assessment score in the auction house.

However, Shrek Academy did not bid on any of the next 5 auction items. They included a left arm bone, a right arm bone, a right leg bone, a piece of rare metal and a long-range Class 8 soul tool.

What was worth mentioning was the long-range Class 8 soul tool. As a Class 8 soul tool, it required a Titled Douluo to use it. Its name was the Heavensplitting Cannon, and it also came from the Sun Moon Empire. However, it was not a product of the Illustrious Virtue Hall. It was made by a Class 9 soul engineer.

Chapter 100.1: A High Quality Ice Bomb

The powerful Heavensplitting Cannon was similar to the super soul cannon that He Caitou used. However, it was much more powerful, and could only be used once per day. Its full power was the equivalent of a full-force blow from a Rank 95 Transcendent Douluo.

The only reason why it was judged to be a Class 8 soul tool and not a Class 9 one was because it was made from inferior materials. This limited the amount of times one could use the Heavensplitting Cannon to only once per day. At the same time, it needed a long time to recharge, and could only hit a single target. In a battle between combatants of the same class, it was rather useless. In the words of Princess Jiu Jiu, it was a Class 8 soul tool that possessed Class 9 formation arrays.

In the end, this Heavensplitting Cannon was bought by some other buyer at the high price of 7 million golden soul coins.

It was not that Wang Yan did not want to intervene. However, at prices like the ones on display, he did not dare to make the call without serious consideration. After all, his power within the academy was limited. As for the students, none of them could use this item, neither did they have the money to buy it. All they could do was spectate.

Other than the first two items, the rest of the items in the auction were sold at increasingly higher prices. Since they were not particularly enthralled with these items, they decided to keep silent.

Qing Ya, the auctioneer, did not provide any additional prompts. All she did was fairly and impartially explain the functions and abilities of every single item up for auction.

Princess Jiu Jiu appeared for the eighth time on the screen as she said with a smile, "The following two items will be the main stars of today's auction. I believe that every single one of you will be interested in them, so seize this chance. You may only see these items once, and you may not find a second chance to see them on the entire continent. Our eighth auction item is one such example. While it's still a soul bone, it is different from the rest. Please, take a look."

Light flashed, and the image of a soul bone, which was maximized many times over, appeared on the soul screen.

This soul bone was completely emerald green. An emerald green halo swirled and pulsed around it, as if it were filled with emerald-green liquid.

From its external appearance, it appeared to be a left arm bone. On top of its emerald green body, it gave off a faint, white mist.

As it had been magnified many times over, everyone could feel that it was something special. The surface of this jade green bone appeared to be dotted with small crystals. These crystals were clear, and they looked as if they had been carved from some precious metal. The other soul bones that had appeared earlier paled in comparison to this one. Evidently, they were not in the same category. Even Wang Dong's Golden Light Left Arm Bone might not be as powerful as this one, superficially.

"How is this possible...?"

"Bastard!"

Two voices rang out simultaneously in Huo Yuhao's brain. The first one belonged to the Skydream Iceworm, and the second one naturally belonged to the Ice Empress.

Huo Yuhao was startled by their sudden reaction, particularly that of the Ice Empress. He could feel her rage.

"What's the matter, Ice Empress?" Huo Yuhao asked quickly.

The Ice Empress did not respond. Huo Yuhao could feel her rage increasing exponentially.

At this moment, Princess Jiu Jiu's alluring voice rang out. Compared to before, it was a bit deeper and more moving. The allure in her voice was stronger too. "Honored guests, I am proud to introduce this soul bone to everyone. Everyone knows that, to a soul master, the most valuable item is either a hundred thousand years soul ring, or a hundred thousand year soul bone. It is extremely rare for these two items to appear at the same time during an auction. Even for our Starlight Auction, such premium items have yet to exist. After all, no matter who possesses these items, he or she will not choose to auction them off, but instead use them to create an elite."

“The bone that is before everyone is the most premium bone to have appeared in our Starlight Auction in recent years. After we obtained it, we planned on keeping it. Originally, we did not plan to auction it off, because it was too precious and too rare.”

“I believe that everyone can see that this soul bone is an ice-type bone. Before I elaborate any further on its pros, I want to introduce to everyone to its con. Some guests may be curious: why would we introduce the cons of an object as auctioneers? This is because the Starlight Auction values trust above everything else. Furthermore, the downside of this object can also be said to be a strength.”

“The most important downside of this soul bone is that it’s an ice-type bone. Everyone knows that most soul bones do not have elemental requirements. Most of them can be used by all soul masters. Their accompanying soul skill will change according to one’s martial soul. This applies even to hundred thousand year soul bones. This type of soul bone is mainstream among soul bones. Other than these mainstream soul bones, there are some special exceptions. These types of soul bones have elemental requirements, and soul masters that do not fit these elemental requirements can never fuse with them. Forcing it will hurt oneself, which can even be fatal. Hence, of the eight items up for auction today, this bone is one such object. Hence, its first downside is its elemental requirement. Only ice-type soul masters can use it.”

When the auction reached its eighth item, Princess Jiu Jiu became evidently more vocal. Her voice, perfect in its intonation and pitch, was even more alluring. Naturally, many were drawn by her description of the object.

“The ice-type elemental requirement is already very restrictive. After all, less than 1% of all soul masters specialize in the ice element. Hence, I must say that while this soul bone is good, it is only good for those who can meet its requirements.”

“Its second flaw is very clear too. However, I believe that it’s actually one of its strengths. Its soul skill is set. The Starlight Auction has invited many soul bone specialists to verify it, and our conclusion is that the soul skill of this soul bone is set. No matter what the martial soul of the ice-type soul master that fuses with it is, its soul skill will never change. This is a strong limitation.”

“As for its final flaw, it’s its age. According to our analysis, this soul bone is between 50, 000 to 70, 000 years old. This is one of its strengths, but at the same time, please don’t try to fuse with it if you do not possess the calibre. If not, you will likely die from it. So these are its three flaws.”

“Are these really flaws?” Wang Yan’s thoughts were evident from his twitching face.

What flaws? These were evidently its strengths. While it was true that its elemental requirement was a severe limitation, all soul bones with elemental requirements were more powerful than those without these requirements. Once a soul master fused with one, its effects would vastly exceed those of one without elemental requirements.

For example, Wang Dong’s Golden Light Left Arm Bone was only so valuable because it could only fuse with a light-type soul master. After fusion, its effects were vastly superior to any ordinary soul bone.

As to its second ‘weakness’, the fact that its soul skill was set was a humongous advantage. Only exceptionally powerful soul bones would have set soul skills!

As for its final flaw, when had the age of a soul bone ever been a flaw? With a few sentences, Princess Jiu Jiu was able to elucidate every single strength of this emerald ice type soul bone under the guise of listing its 'flaws'.

"Now that we are done with its flaws, we shall now talk about its strengths," Princess Jiu Jiu said as her voice turned sincere in an instant.

"As the main auctioneer of the Starlight Auction, and as a princess of the Imperial Household of the Star Luo Empire, I give my solemn word that everything I say is true. Firstly, I want to say that this soul bone is the most perfect one I have seen. Its rarity can be compared to a hundred thousand year soul bone because it did not originate from our continent or any particular country. Instead, it comes from the Extreme North, an area forbidden to us humans. Furthermore, it comes from the core regions of the Extreme North. The owner of this soul bone is a transcendent soul beast of the bitterly cold extreme north, the Ice Jade Scorpion."

The moment Princess Jiu Jiu said the three words 'Ice Jade Scorpion', everyone's gaze fell onto Huo Yuhao. Everyone looked surprised, as they all knew what Huo Yuhao's second martial soul was. No one, however, thought that the eighth item up for auction would be the same as Huo Yuhao's martial soul. Doubtlessly, if Huo Yuhao obtained the soul bone, he would be its best fit.

Huo Yuhao was struck by a sudden realization. No wonder the Skydream Iceworm was shocked, and the Ice Empress was filled with rage. This left arm bone came from her fellow tribesmen! *nove.16-1n*

Princess Jiu Jiu continued, "The Ice Jade Scorpion may not be a familiar name for everyone here. However, I believe that everyone is familiar with something else. The leader of the Ice Jade Scorpions is the Ice Jade Scorpion King, otherwise known as the Ice Jade Empress Scorpion. Among the Ten Great Savage Beasts, it is ranked eighth. Any beast that could enter the ranks of the Ten Great Savage Beasts is top class. Even if we don't take into account its age, the Ice Jade Scorpion is at the top of the pecking order among all soul beasts."

"This soul bone comes from an Ice Jade Scorpion. As they live in groups, it's a miracle that someone could kill one from a pack of them. This is more difficult than killing a hundred thousand year soul beast from the Great Star Dou Forest. What makes this feat even more difficult was that the slayer obtained a soul bone after killing an Ice Jade Scorpion."

Chapter 100.2: A High Quality Ice Bomb

"According to the ancient records, the power of ice is determined by its temperature. The lower the temperature of ice, the scarier and tougher it is. The Ice Jade Scorpion King is recognized as the one who possesses ice of the lowest temperature in the world. Although its clan members are not as outstanding as it is, there are very few others who are able to match up to them in the domain of ice. Hence, I would like to tell all of you that once this left arm bone is infused, there will be an elemental amplification of the martial soul of ice-type soul masters. Regardless of what soul skill is employed, the temperature will be lower than before. This is basically a major benefit, an all-round amplification. It's not too much to claim this as the first advantage of this piece of Ice Jade Scorpion Left Arm Bone, is it?"

“Secondly, the Ice Jade Scorpion is naturally powerful beyond measure. After obtaining this left arm bone, the strength of the left arm of the soul master will increase significantly. As for the magnitude of increase, I’m unsure. This can only be tested by the fortunate, distinguished guest that receives it.”

“Next is the third benefit of infusing this piece of soul bone. Once it’s infused, the solidified skill of this soul bone will also be possessed by the soul master. I shall not beat around the bush any further. This solidified skill is called Ice Explosion. I mentioned earlier that the solidified skill is its weakness and lacks changes. However, I also must clarify that this is also its greatest advantage. Even to the Ice Jade Scorpion, this skill could be considered a divine skill. As long as there’s ice, the might of the Ice Explosion will exist.”

“I have clearly stated all three huge weaknesses and advantages. An ice-type soul master will not regret possessing it. Now, I shall give all of you 10 minutes to appreciate it.”

After speaking for so long, everyone was stunned as Princess Jiu Jiu’s voice disappeared. Only Wang Yan remained sober and in full command of his senses. He turned his head rapidly to look at Qing Ya, asking, “Qing Ya, are there many ice-type soul masters among those who are here to bid?”

Qing Ya’s pretty face flashed with a tinge of awkwardness. However, she did not deny his words, and nodded her head slightly, “Apologies, it’s necessary for our auction house to do this. The items for auction in this top-ranked auction are treasures. Thus, they are naturally allocated to the distinguished guests that need them the most. In fact, the first 7 items on auction are like the appetizers, while the last two items are the main course of this auction. While our auction house does have our own strategy, there was no exaggerated content in Jiu Jiu’s introduction. This soul bone is indeed the most exquisite item.”

Wang Yan nodded slightly as he twisted his head towards Huo Yuhao and Ling Luochen. Then, he said in a deep voice, “There’s only one soul bone. If the two of you can achieve a consensus, I can give it a shot for the both of you.”

Huo Yuhao and Ling Luochen naturally understood what Wang Yan meant. For such a top-ranked ice-type soul bone, it was no longer about money. It was an item that was extremely desirable but difficult to obtain! No matter how many golden soul coins one had, they were just irrelevant numbers without the items that one wanted to get.

There was no need to doubt the value of the Ice Jade Scorpion Left Arm Bone to Huo Yuhao. But similarly, it carried immense value for Ling Luochen too. It was even fair to say that Ling Luochen’s powers would be able to rise a level if she possessed it. She could then reach the level of both Ma Xiaotao and Dai Yueheng. It would also be ideal for her future progress.

An ice explosion sounded very simple. However, as a soul master, how could Ling Luochen not understand its significance? Simply put, this ice explosion was comparable to the corpse explosion unleashed by that Envoy of the Death God that they had met. This Ice Explosion might even be more powerful. To an ice-type soul master, it was nothing to conjure a little bit of ice. If this Ice Explosion move was controlled well after it was set to explode, its might would render it a divine skill!

Huo Yuhao’s spiritual sea was a mess. After a brief moment of resentment, the Ice Empress demanded that Huo Yuhao obtain that soul bone by hook or by crook upon hearing the words ‘Ice Explosion’. The

reason was very simple, but not even the Starlight Auction House knew about it. To the Ice Jade Scorpion clan, this Ice Explosion skill was rarely seen. Even As the Ice Jade Scorpion King, the Ice Jade Empress Scorpion did not possess such a skill among her gifts.

Huo Yuhao immediately understood when the Ice Empress explained the strength of this skill using one sentence. The Ice Empress said that she could challenge the leader of the Three Heavenly Kings if she possessed this skill.

However, could Huo Yuhao really say so? He couldn't.

As he saw the radiance of hope in Ling Luochen's eyes that was very difficult to mask, Huo Yuhao's words stuck in his throat.

This soul bone was comparable to a hundred thousand year soul bone to an ice-type soul master. No one would be able to give it up so readily! Ling Luochen definitely wanted it. Without a doubt, this soul bone must be extremely costly. Besides its price, Huo Yuhao was also unwilling to let the mood of his senior change because of him. They were comrades, and still needed to fight alongside each other in the following competition.

After sensing Huo Yuhao's hesitation, the Ice Empress gradually calmed down as well. "Idiot, just give it to her first."

"What?" Huo Yuhao was stunned, "Didn't you ask me to obtain this soul bone at all costs?"

The Ice Empress laughed coldly and said, "I was feeling gloomy just now, and my thoughts were not clear. Do you think that the soul bones produced by Ice Jade Scorpions can be absorbed so readily by anyone? Everything in that auctioneer's introduction was just conjecture. How is anyone clearer than me about the special characteristics of Ice Jade Scorpions? Although she's right in most of her description, there are some parts that were wrong too. This is also why this soul bone is a great problem to ordinary soul masters. Her mistake lay in her claim that fusing with this soul bone can increase the ice-type power of one's body. Do you know why she's wrong?"

Huo Yuhao laughed bitterly. "You are making me anxious. Look at Senior Ling's eyes. Stop beating about the bush."

The Ice Empress snorted before saying a few words to Huo Yuhao.

"What? So this is it?" Huo Yuhao was appalled. Following that, he became much more relaxed from his initial uneasiness and said, "This is much easier then."

"Qing Ya, I have a question." Huo Yuhao did not look at Ling Luochen's shining gaze, but instead looked towards Qing Ya.

Qing Ya smiled and nodded at him without despising him at all. They had dug deep into the profiles of all the students from Shrek Academy who were here to compete. Among all the students, Huo Yuhao was one of the few that they monitored closely. Qing Ya was fully aware of his brilliant performances during the competition. With the strength of his ice-type martial soul, he had relied on his strength as a two-ringed Soul Grandmaster to achieve decisive impacts during the competition. He was also touted as the future hope and star of Shrek Academy.

“Please feel free to ask, my distinguished guest.”

Huo Yuhao said in a deep voice, “Can you halt this auction temporarily? There’s something wrong with your auction item.”

After he spoke, everyone present was stunned. They did not expect him to raise his suspicions with the auction house instead of discussing how they should share the spoils if they obtained the soul bone with Ling Luochen.

Qing Ya creased her eyebrows slightly and replied, “My distinguished guest, that’s impossible. All our auction items have been through stringent checks and tests. They are all problem-free for sure. Which auction item are you referring to anyway?”

Huo Yuhao said, “I’m referring to the Ice Jade Scorpion Left Arm Bone that was just presented. I’m also doing this for the name of your auction house. If such an item is auctioned out for an exorbitant price, it won’t do any good for the reputation of your auction house. If you can’t make a decision, please ask someone who has the authority to come out now.”

Qing Ya furrowed her brows even further and turned to Wang Yan, as if she was looking for his help.

Wang Yan laughed gently and said, “Qing Ya, you don’t have to look at me. I trust in the judgement of my students. Furthermore, if there’s anyone who has the right to claim that this 8th auction item is flawed, it’s him. We won’t put you on the spot either. Yuhao, please let Qing Ya take a look at your martial soul.”

Huo Yuhao nodded and turned around. He stripped his jacket off and passed it to Wang Dong. After that, he removed his top and revealed his firm upper body.

As his soul power surged, a white soul ring rose from beneath his feet. The temperature in the entire room dipped at an alarming rate. Following that, a tattoo of a huge scorpion appeared on his back.

This tattoo was too big, such that the curled part of the scorpion’s tail was hidden underneath his pants. However, most of the tattoo could be seen on his back. Wasn’t it the Ice Jade Empress Scorpion?

Of course, it was needless to say that Qing Ya was unable to tell what the tattoo was. Even for Wang Yan, who had decades of experience in the research of martial souls, he could not differentiate between the Ice Jade Empress Scorpion and an Ice Jade Scorpion.

“This, this is...” Qing Ya was stunned as she looked at Huo Yuhao’s back.

Wang Yan said, “Qing Ya, the martial soul of this student of mine is the rare Ice Jade Scorpion. It originates from the same soul beast as the soul bone that is on auction. Hence, I believe his judgment when he says that this soul bone is flawed. For the sake of the reputation of this auction house, I think it’s best for you to ask for advice from your superiors.”

Qing Ya did not hesitate any further, and nodded her head. She said, “All distinguished guests, please wait for a moment.” After she finished saying that, she turned and walked out. It was no longer under her authority to make any decisions if there were problems with the auction items. After Huo Yuhao revealed his martial soul, she was convinced, but needed some time to seek advice from her superiors.

After less than a minute, Princess Jiu Jiu's voice rang out on the big screen again, "Due to the value of this auction item, our auction house has decided to extend the time for its appreciation by a further 10 minutes. This will allow all of you to make a more informed choice."

Ling Luochen walked up to Huo Yuhao and whispered, "Is there really something wrong with this soul bone?"

Chapter 100.3: A High Quality Ice Bomb

Huo Yuhao nodded his head slightly and said a few words to her in a low voice. Ling Luochen was dazed for a moment. Following that, her expression changed. Finally, she sighed in exasperation and mumbled, "What's meant to be yours will be yours. What's not meant to be yours won't be yours. We can't force things."

Huo Yuhao comforted her, "Senior, I am not 100% confident either. If we are able obtain this soul bone, you can try it first. If it doesn't work out for you, you can then pass it to me."

Ling Luochen shook her head and touched Huo Yuhao's head. She said, "There's no need to. I was just being greedy. I believe your words. If possible, you can cultivate a few times with me in the future when you have the time."

Before Huo Yuhao even opened his mouth, Wang Dong forced his jacket towards him. "Put it on. What are you trying to achieve by being naked? Do you want our eyes to suffer?"

As he interrupted, they deviated from the subject that they were on.

At this moment, the door opened, and Qing Ya returned to the room. What was unexpected was that the person who followed her was Princess Jiu Jiu, the chief auctioneer of the Starlight auction House, who still wore her long, red dress.

Upon seeing her, everyone stood up. As she was a princess and this was the Star Luo Empire, everyone had no choice but to accord her the respect she deserved.

At close range, the beauty of this princess was astonishing. Her almost flawless face left everyone dizzy. Fortunately, this room already had a ravishing beauty in Jiang Nannan, which relieved a little of the amazement that everyone felt.

Princess Jiu Jiu bowed slightly to everyone, then asked anxiously, "Who is the distinguished guest that claims that our Ice Jade Scorpion Left Arm Bone is flawed?"

Huo Yuhao nodded and said, "It's me."

Princess Jiu Jiu sized him up for a moment before saying, "What's the problem? You are an Ice Jade Scorpion soul master?"

Huo Yuhao nodded his head and said, "Yes. There's nothing wrong with this soul bone."

"Oh?" Princess Jiu Jiu's huge beautiful eyes flashed with a chill, and she said in a low voice, "Why is there nothing wrong with it again?"

Huo Yuhao said, "I am referring to the soul bone when I say that nothing is wrong. The person absorbing the soul bone is the one with the problem. This soul bone can't be absorbed by just anyone."

As the royal princess and chief auctioneer, Princess Jiu Jiu was a very restrained person. But now that she was pressed for time, and this concerned the success of the auction, she could not help but feel anxious. Her tone hardened. "I know that not everyone can absorb this soul bone. Only ice-type soul masters and those with a cultivation capable absorbing soul bones of 50,000 years and above can try. Are you pointing out this problem?"

Huo Yuhao said, "The limitations of this soul bone don't end there. I believe that Your Highness doesn't really understand the Ice Jade Scorpion clan. As the strongest species in the Extreme North, the Ice Jade Scorpions have always been very proud. Furthermore, they currently possess the strongest ice available. Hence, there is always a special requirement in order to absorb everything that they produce, including soul rings and soul bones."

As he spoke till this point, Huo Yuhao reviewed what the Ice Empress had said to him earlier, "To absorb the soul bones of us Ice Jade Scorpions, you humans will need Ultimate Ice, regardless of what type of soul bone you want to absorb. Without the Ultimate Ice physique, it's impossible to absorb a soul bone produced by an Ice Jade Scorpion. This is the pride of the Ice Jade Scorpions!"

He had also related this reasoning to Ling Luochen, which had dispelled her desire for this soul bone.

"What is the special requirement?" Princess Jiu Jiu calmed down. Before entering, she had already known who was inside the room. The members of Shrek Academy never spoke without thinking.

Huo Yuhao said in a deep voice, "Ultimate Ice. Without an Ultimate Ice physique, it's impossible to absorb this soul bone."

"That's impossible." Princess Jiu Jiu reacted almost instantly, "Since when have the requirements for a soul bone been so high? Doesn't this mean that no one can absorb it?"

Huo Yuhao calmly said, "This is the pride of the Ice Jade Scorpions. Furthermore, it doesn't mean that no one can absorb it just because it's difficult to. I'm saying all this out of goodwill, as I don't want the credibility of your auction house to be undermined. Whether you believe me or not is up to you. I have said my piece. Your Highness, you can continue with the auction."

Princess Jiu Jiu creased her brows and clenched her fists subconsciously. One could see her internal struggle at this point.

It was true that Huo Yuhao's words were one-sided. However, Qing Ya did mention to her that Huo Yuhao's martial soul was an Ice Jade Scorpion. It was normal that he would know a lot about the soul bone of an Ice Jade Scorpion. However, this would spoil her original plan. Moreover, it would be a major flaw in this top-ranked auction.

Not forgetting her status as the chief auctioneer, she took in a deep breath and calmed down. After greeting Huo Yuhao with a palace formality, she said, "Thanks for telling me all this. Time is tight, and I will deal with this matter immediately. If I'm being rude, I hope that everyone can forgive me." After she finished, she turned around and left in a hurry.

Qing Ya only returned to the room after seeing Princess Jiu Jiu out. She wore a gloomy expression.

Wang Yan smiled and tried to comfort her. "Qing Ya, this has nothing to do with you. Don't fret too much."

Qing Ya shook her head and said, "This concerns the credibility of our auction house! It's also a very big thing. The starting bid for this soul bone was initially going to be set at over 10 million golden soul coins. There has never been a case of anyone having any problems with our auction items that cross the 10 million mark."

Wang Yan replied, "It's better to discover earlier than not to discover it at all. At least there's still room to rectify the problem, since it's yet to be auctioned out."

On the other side, Princess Jiu Jiu went further in after she exited the previous room. She came before a door that was numbered 1 at the very end of the hallway. Without even knocking on the door, she pushed with her right hand, and the door slid open to one side. She walked in hurriedly.

"Brother, we have an issue."

There was only one man seated in this room. He was tall and upright, and he wore a long, black robe. Besides him, there were no other people around, not even maids. However, if one saw the appearance of this man, he would be horrified. That's because this man was the Star Luo Emperor.

After he saw Princess Jiu Jiu entering the room, the Star Luo Emperor said in a low voice, "I know that something has gone wrong. Otherwise, you wouldn't have extended the time for the guests to appreciate the item. What's wrong?"

Princess Jiu Jiu repeated Huo Yuhao's words to him.

After hearing her words, the Star Luo Emperor shook his head and laughed after a momentary daze. "I still wanted to deliver them a favor, but who knew that this favor would be lacking? Go and settle it. In a while, I will go to meet them, and deliver this favor properly."

Princess Jiu Jiu nodded as she understood his hint. "Brother, are they worth it? If we do it this way, the auction house will sustain considerable losses."

"Of course they are. We can even kill two birds with one stone. It's necessary to improve our ties with Shrek Academy. In recent times, the Sun Moon Empire has not been very attuned to peace. The Illustrious Virtue Hall has also produced items that have invoked a sense of crisis within me. Once there's movement by the Sun Moon Empire, we'll be the first on the receiving end. When that time comes, Shrek Academy will be the first to be able to help us. Furthermore, the youth that I noticed even once sparked a conference within the Sea God's Pavilion. He has twin martial souls and an ultimate ice martial soul. Doesn't that make it necessary for us to build up our ties with him? More importantly, he is under the rule of our empire as indicated in his registration information in Shrek Academy. For such a talent, I believe that he'll grow closer to us even if we don't use him. Go, we don't have much time left."

"Alright." Princess Jiu Jiu's eyes flashed with radiance, and her mind floated with the image of Huo Yuhao's confidence earlier. She couldn't believe that he wasn't even 13 years old. But he was very calm earlier!

After the 20 minutes of appreciation time was up, Huo Yuhao was surprised that the auction was not affected by his words earlier. It continued to be held.

The starting price of the Ice Jade Scorpion Left Arm Bone reached over 12 million. Every increase had to be no less than 50,000 golden soul coins. For such a high price, everyone from Shrek Academy was stunned.

After Wang Yan gritted his teeth and made 2 bids, he couldn't carry on anymore, and had to give up. While Shrek City was wealthy, the taxes that it collected in a year was only a mere few hundred million golden soul coins. For such a treasure that was priced in the millions, it could be the treasure of a city. The amount of money involved meant that Wang Yan was not exactly in a position to make any calls.

The greatest source of money for Shrek Academy did not come from the taxes collected from Shrek City. They came from the monetary rewards obtained when the powerful individuals from Shrek Academy carried out missions or hunted soul beasts outside. For example, if the Sea God's Pavilion in Shrek Academy was willing to act, it was not difficult to hunt and kill a hundred thousand year soul beast. The value of a hundred thousand year soul beast was very difficult to measure in terms of money.

However, in the past thousand years, Shrek Academy had toned down this aspect of their work. The most important reason for doing so was because they did not want to rile up the Great Star Dou Forest. If it did, the situation would be dire. Even if Shrek City could be preserved, the surrounding cities and villages around the Great Star Dou Forest would still be destroyed. Hence, Shrek Academy did not hunt and kill soul beasts in the Great Star Dou Forest even though it was lucrative. They would only do so to help increase the soul rings of their students if they needed one.

The price of the soul bone soared. It indeed attracted a lot of attention. When the price of the soul bone reached 15 million, the sudden shout of a figure caused everyone to be appalled.

30 million!

The number 30 million had appeared on the soul screen. Who said numbers were simple? By looking at this frightening number, all of the Shrek's Seven Monsters started to breathe more anxiously. This figure was enough to buy a mid-sized city! The number referred to golden soul coins too, and not silver or bronze soul coins. The purchasing power of a golden soul coin was enough to buy 150 loaves of bread. It was not simple for even a country to fork out such a sum, but right now, this figure was used to bid on a soul bone. Who could be so wealthy?