

Desolate 1001

[The Desolate Era](#)

Book 29: Daolord Chapter 22: Trailblazing

“The Dao Alliance covers too much territory. It has a total of eight Sacred Cities and is led by the Dao Alliance’s Palace of Immortals,” Daolord Solesky said. “Daolords normally head to the nearest Sacred City. This makes travel much simpler.”

Ji Ning nodded. The distance between each of the cities was incredibly far, and the journey would be filled with many dangers. To physically travel all the way from one Sacred City to another one across so many territories was simply too taxing.

“The closest Sacred City to us... given that you fly a bit faster than me, you should be able to make it there in around a thousand years,” Daolord Solesky said. “I’ve already reported the addition of a new Daolord within Vastheaven Palace to the Dao Alliance. Once you reach the Sacred City, first go and retrieve a Dao Alliance medallion. Otherwise, there will be many places within the Sacred City which you cannot enter.”

“Understood.” Ning nodded. The Dao Alliance did have enemies, such as the Dark Kingdom. There were many places within the Dao Alliance which outsiders simply were forbidden from entering!

“You can enter all eight of the Sacred Cities. The Dao Alliance’s Palace of Immortals, however, is our true core. No one is permitted to enter unless they are invited by the palace itself. Only then can they enter,” Daolord Solesky said. “Generally speaking, fairly powerful Daolords of the Fourth Step stand a good chance at receiving an invitation. Given how formidable you are, Ji Ning, you should be able to get an invitation in the future as well.”

Ning nodded.

The headquarters of the six major forces were all mysterious, inscrutable places. The Palace of Immortals was the most mysterious and the most powerful of the six. Supposedly, it held the secrets behind the reason why the Dao Alliance had been able to maintain supremacy for so long without falling. However, very few knew the truth behind those secrets.

“There’s one more thing I need to warn you about.” Daolord Solesky suddenly seemed to remember something. He immediately warned solemnly, “The Dao Alliance is simply enormous, and so it is quite chaotic as well. It holds many different organizations within it, and the eight Sacred Cities are all led by different organizations. Every single Sacred City has certain ancient, powerful freaks ruling them from the shadows. No matter what, you must not let yourself get dragged into the internal battles of the Dao Alliance. My guess is, once your true power is revealed, they’ll definitely try to recruit someone as talented as you into their fold.”

“The eight Sacred Cities all belong to different organizations?” Ning was amazed. “So there are at least eight different competing ‘branches’?”

“Nine main ones, actually. There are also many smaller organizations as well. To put it succinctly, the Dao Alliance is incredibly chaotic,” Daolord Solesky said. “Supposedly, this involves some of the deepest secrets of the Palace of Immortals. Daolords of the Fourth Step like me and Battlemaster would never

dare to get involved in these matters. Only those old freaks and some truly unearthly Daolords would dare to get involved. Even if you do wish to get involved, you should only do so after becoming a Daolord of the Fourth Step yourself. Otherwise, you'll end up dying without even realizing what is happening. The civil wars that erupt within the Dao Alliance are more vicious than anywhere else."

Ning was speechless.

The reason why the civil wars within the Dao Alliance were so frenzied was actually because the other five major forces in the Endless Territories were too weak; they might occasionally take a few provocative actions against the Dao Alliance, but they would never dare to launch any large-scale wars.

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Whoosh.

A vessel was soaring through the space of the primordial chaos. Atop the flying vessel were Su Youji, Daolord Pillsaint, and the white-robed Ji Ning.

They had already departed from Vastheaven Palace and had embarked upon an even greater journey.

"Master, this doesn't seem to be the way to the Sacred City, is it?" Pillsaint was puzzled.

"We're going to take a detour first. We're going to my homeland first." Ning smiled. "It isn't too far away. We'll go to the Sacred City of the Dao Alliance after that."

"Your homeland?" Su Youji was curious. "Where is it?"

"You'll know when you get there." Ning chuckled. "However, you aren't allowed to tell others as to where my homeland is located."

"Understood," Su Youji and Pillsaint both said. Ning nodded.

It would take a thousand years to get to the nearest Sacred City. By comparison, heading back to the Three Realms, given his current speed, would only take a century!

"Master and Windfiend are planning to leave the Three Realms after making their breakthroughs. They wish to go explore the Endless Territories and gain a better understanding of the greater world outside." Ning frowned. "The spatial tunnel leading from the Badlands Territory to my homeland isn't very stable, and there are many dimensional tears within it. If they aren't lucky, they might end up being sucked into one of the tears and be teleported to who-knows-where."

"It has been so many years, but I've heard no news of Mother Nuwa at all. I'm afraid that she must have been trapped within one of those tears and was teleported away." This was Ning's hypothesis.

That unstable vortex passageway was extremely dangerous. Given Ning's level of power, he could use his sword-intent to suppress and stabilize the vortex, but how could Subhuti and the others possibly be strong enough to do the same?

"It seems I'll have to engage in a bit of trailblazing. I'll have to establish a safe and secure route from the Badlands Territory to the Three Realms," Ning mused.

The many 'safe routes' on the star maps of the Endless Territories had all been discovered by countless generations of exploring cultivators.

"My Primaltwin is in the Three Realms, while I am outside of it. I can sense its rough location," Ning mused to himself. "If I continue to go forwards, I'll reach it sooner or later, and the path I cleared would be safe for future travelers. Since I'm as strong as a Daolord of the Fourth Step and have the Hegemon's armor on me, a bit of trailblazing shouldn't be too difficult."

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A hundred years later, they reached the borders of the Badlands Territory.

"Forward ho!" The flying vessel ventured deep into the unknown, unexplored parts of the endless primordial chaos.

Trailblazing was quite a dangerous decision, as you might encounter certain dangerous locations along the way. Ning only dared to do this because of how powerful he had become.

Ning sat there in the lotus position on the deck of his vessel. He could sense some of the dangers that were located within a certain distance from him. He was the master of the Omega Sword Dao, which was why he could in fact be titled as the 'master of the Dao of the Sword'. The prime essence of the Dao of the Sword filled every inch of the universe, and it served as Ning's 'eyes'. The stronger Ning's soul became and the higher level his insights into the Dao of the Sword reached, the greater distance he would be able to 'see' using the Dao of the Sword.

After much nurturing from the azureflower mist energy, Ning's soul was now comparable to that of most Daolords of the Fourth Step.

Ning raised his head to stare off into the distance. "There is some danger roughly sixty trillion kilometers away from us. Most Daolords who enter that place will perish."

A star map was located across Ning's legs. Ning put down a marking on that star map.

He was marking down the various chaos stars and dangerous areas he encountered and saw on this journey. That way, those who used this map wouldn't worry about getting lost.

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To travel from the Badlands Territory to the Three Realms was quite a long journey. The trailblazing ended up taking more than three hundred years, but along the way Ning was able to sense only one place of incredible danger. The other areas, a bit of vigilance would suffice. But of course, that was only true for someone like Ning; for World-level cultivators, those places were all deathtraps!

"Haha, we're almost there. We are about to reach the Three Realms." Ning could sense that his Primaltwin was fairly close now, and he revealed a smile. "We should make it there in just a few more decades."

Establishing a safe passageway out would benefit the members of the Three Realms for countless years to come. So long as this passageway was kept secret, outsiders would have no idea how to enter and exit the Three Realms securely. Not even Daolords of the Fourth Step would have a way to locate the Three Realms with ease; Ning was only able to accomplish it thanks to his Primaltwin serving as a

guidepost for him. He was able to sense where his Primaltwin was at all times, thus ensuring that he wouldn't get lost.

"Master, in the past three hundred years we've discovered quite a few dangerous areas." Su Youji couldn't help but raise this issue. "The area around your homeland is a bit too dangerous, isn't it?"

"It is rather dangerous, yes." Ning nodded. He too felt that the density of dangerous areas around the Three Realms was abnormally high.

"The universe is vast and mysterious. All things are possible." Ning smiled. Moments later, his face suddenly turned pale as a strange look appeared on his face.

"Eh?" Ning turned to stare in a certain direction.

"Master?" Su Youji and Pillsaint both noticed that something was off with Ning.

Ning just stared intently off into the distance, and the outlines of the azureflower seal actually appeared on his forehead. The azureflower seal was currently resonating with a distant location. Even the azureflower region with his body was resonating!

"Something actually caused a resonance with the azureflower seal!" Ning was both shocked and nervous.

He had encountered quite a few fortuitous benefactors, such as the Paragon of Pills and the almighty Brightshore Hegemon. Both of them were Hegemon-level figures! He had also received the legacy of the deceased Hegemon of the Dao of the Sword. By now, Ning was a very experienced man... but the [Nine Chaos Seals], its azureflower region, and the azureflower mist energy it generated all remained completely outside of Ning's level of understanding.

In addition, it had been Daoist Three Purities who discovered the Nine Chaos Seals floating outside the Three Realms. This entire time, Ning had felt certain that the primordial chaos around the Three Realms had to contain many secrets within them. And yet, all these years he had never been able to discover them.

But now... while he was trailblazing a path to the Three Realms, he had encountered something which resonated with his azureflower seal.

"Let's head over there and take a look," Ning said. Swoosh! The flying vessel began to fly towards the direction where the resonance was coming from.

"What is it, Master?" Su Youji couldn't help but ask.

"From this moment forwards, the two of you need to obey every single word that I say." Ning had a solemn look on his face. The closer they moved towards that location, the stronger the resonance with his azureflower seal became.

After flying for a few dozen days, the primordial chaos in the surrounding area completely vanished, revealing a patch of pure, pristine space. There was no energy at all in this region of space; in fact, even the power of the universal prime essence of the Dao of the Sword had been suppressed and rendered unable to enter this region. And it wasn't just the Dao of the Sword; none of the other universal prime essences were able to enter this place at all.

“Is that...” Ning stared at the vast patch of empty space before him. It was completely pure and pristine, and at its very end he was able to see some golden mist. Upon seeing that golden mist, Ning had a sudden feeling of incredible danger.

“Youji, Pillsaint, the two of you must wait here. Do not move any closer,” Ning barked.

The Desolate Era

Book 29: Daolord Chapter 23: Deluxe Hellgold

“Master.” Pillsaint and Su Youji both started to grow nervous. The area up ahead contained a region of pure space, with nothing within it whatsoever; not even the prime essences of the universe held sway there. And yet, when they stared at that region of pure space the two of them felt their very souls shiver in fear. They had the feeling that if they barged into that place, it was virtually guaranteed that they would die.

“Master, I can sense that this is no ordinary place. Don’t enter rashly,” Su Youji said immediately.

“Master, you should first come up with a method to test it out. Only then should you enter it,” Pillsaint agreed.

Ji Ning stared towards the front, a solemn look on his face. He was supremely confident in his abilities to handle even the likes of Patriarch Clearwind. Although the empty field of pure space in front of him seemed rather special, he was certain it posed negligible danger to him. But that region of golden mist... his subconscious was screaming of danger. Ning knew that the depths of the golden mist had to hold something that was terrifyingly dangerous.

“This region of space is quite extraordinary. All techniques and spells have been kept at bay by it! Even the prime essences of the universe avoid this place,” Ning said. “I can’t scan it with my godsense either, nor can I scan it with my Dao of the Sword at all. There are no other options.”

“Then don’t go in!” Su Youji argued.

“Right, Master! Forget it. Don’t go in.” Pillsaint said the same thing. The endless primordial chaos was filled with dangerous places. If you knew it was dangerous, why did you have to go inside? But Ning only shook his head.

The Nine Chaos Seals remained the most inconceivably powerful technique he had ever encountered. Now that his azureflower seal was resonating so strongly with this location, it was obvious that there was something calling to him from the depths of the golden mist. Ning had already placed his Lifeblood Dao-seal by the side of his avatar in Vastheaven Palace. Even if he died, he would be able to use that Dao-seal to come back to life.

Taking on a bit of risk for the chance to learn some of the secrets of the azureflower seal was worth it.

“Just wait for me here,” Ning barked.

“Acknowledged.” Pillsaint and Su Youji had no choice but to accept his order. “But be careful!” Su Youji added.

Ning nodded gently. Moments later, a vortex-world formed by dark-gold lightning and icy-white water appeared around in the area around him. Swoosh! Ning stepped into the region of pure space, and everything around him for ten thousand kilometers became drawn into that lightning-snow vortex.

Whoosh. Whoosh. Whoooosh. As soon as he entered that region, a stream of invisible energy instantly swept towards Ning. This surge of invisible energy was flowing through the empty region at all times. It seemed almost ephemeral as it passed straight through the lightning-water vortex-world, then brushed against Ning's body. It was able to just barely make it through Ning's Hegemon armor, but it was dramatically weakened in the process. It then brushed against Ning's soul itself, but Ning's soul remained very stable; it was as though a gentle breeze had blown across it.

"A direct soul attack?" Ning was quite wary of this. He immediately turned his head to look backwards, willing his lightning-water vortex-world to stretch out and encompass Su Youji and Pillsaint within it. "No matter what, do not enter this region of empty space. It contains a pervasive force that will directly assault your soul. Ordinary Daolords of the First Step would not be able to endure this type of assault." Ning's voice echoed in the area around Su Youji and Pillsaint.

After issuing the warning, Ning continued to fly through the region of empty space, moving at just two times the speed of light. For him, this was fairly slow. As for Pillsaint and Su Youji, they watched Ning leave with worried gazes as Ning moved towards that region of golden mist.

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A short while later, Ning reached the region of golden mist. This mist completely covered this side of the empty region, and Ning could sense that the thing which was resonating with his azureflower seal was on the other side of the mist.

"What is this mist?" Ning reached out with his hand and formed a stream of sword-light. The stream of sword-light stretched out to become thirty thousand meters long. It delved straight into the golden mist in front of Ning, slicing through it without encountering any impediments at all.

"The mist doesn't seem to be dangerous or offensive, in and of itself," Ning mused. "The sense of danger should be emanating from deeper within the golden mist." Ning then reached out with his right hand, making it expand to become more than thirty meters long before plunging it into the golden mist.

Ning was right to be so cautious. The strong sense of danger coming from his subconscious as well as the marvelous properties of the Nine Chaos Seals ensured that Ning would not dare to be negligent in dealing with this matter. As Ning saw it, anyone capable of creating the Nine Chaos Seals had to be at least as strong as the likes of the almighty Brightshore Hegemon or the Paragon of Pills.

"There really does seem to be no danger here. This is nothing more than a metallic form of energy." Ning was unable to use his godsense to scan the place; his only option was to use these fairly crude ways to test everything out. Whoosh! Ning flew into the golden mist.

With the golden mist completely surrounding him, even Ning was only able to see out to a distance of roughly ten million kilometers. He carefully advanced at the speed of light; ten million kilometers might seem like a long distance, but if Ning moved at his full speed of ten times the speed of light, he'd pass that distance in the blink of an eye. It'd be too risky.

“Eh?” Ning swept the region before him with his gaze. Within this region of ten million kilometers, he saw a strange beast that looked like a giant golden pangolin. Its entire body was covered in armor plates, and it was gracefully flying through the air. Each time it glided through the air, it moved at three times the speed of light.

Ning couldn't sense this creature posing much of a threat to him. “Still, best to avoid it. No reason to cause any unnecessary trouble at a time like this.” With but a thought, Ning suddenly vanished entirely.

Ning had just used the Shadowless evasion skill, becoming one with the golden mist and completely invisible to the naked eye. Given how distant that carapaced creature was, it naturally wouldn't be able to discover Ning.

Ning spent sixteen full hours flying through the golden mist, and the resonance with his azureflower seal only grew stronger. However, he remained within the golden mist region.

“Eh? What's with all the beasts?” Ning swept the area before him with his gaze, only to discover twenty-three golden beasts congregating together roughly ten million kilometers away from him. Some were large, some were small, but all of them caused Ning to feel a hint of danger. “The sense of danger isn't that strong. I should probably be able to deal with them, but... the ones I encountered earlier were all by themselves. Why are twenty-three of them here?”

The strangest environments always gave birth to the strangest and most unique lifeforms or animals. Waterwalker, Bertulu, and others like them who were born with sufficient amounts of intelligence could train in the Dao like any cultivator. These beasts before Ning, however, were fairly dumb and more like bugbeasts; there was no way for them to cultivate at all. Still, the universe had given them their own path to growth and evolution. Although it was guaranteed that there was no way this path could let them gain eternity, it still provided them with tremendous combat power.

“Why are they all gathered here? Is this their home?” Ning felt quite curious, and so he used his Shadowless evasion skill to move closer to them. When he reached a distance of two million kilometers, he was able to see them quite clearly.

The beasts were all scattered in a circular fashion around a golden pearl that was slowly spinning in place. The twenty-three carapace beasts were all swallowing in the energy being emanated by that golden pearl. The beasts were dumb, but they knew that absorbing the energy being given off by this pearl would help them grow stronger.

“Is that...” Ning frowned, then stared in astonishment. “Deluxe hellgold? That's deluxe hellgold! Supposedly, it can be used to serve as the energy core for a golem of the fourth step. D-Damn my luck is good. I actually ran into a pearl of deluxe hellgold!”

Golems with the power of Daolords of the Fourth step were incredibly few in number, primarily because the materials needed to build cores for them were difficult to forge, with all the materials being incredibly rare. Deluxe hellgold was one of the things that could be used to forge such a core. In other words... if you had a pearl of deluxe hellgold, you would have the majority of the ingredients needed to construct a golem-Daolord of the Fourth Step!

There were also a number of other materials that could be used to build an energy core, but all of them were just as incredibly rare.

When deluxe hellgold was used to forge magic treasures, the magic treasure in question could change freely. It could even switch from being a suit of armor to a sharp sword, and it would have the power of a top-grade Eternal treasure in any form. But of course, using such a precious material to forge a magic treasure was a very wasteful act. Generally speaking, people would save it for creating golems! The golem itself would be as tough as a top-grade Eternal treasure, one which could change and transform at will. It would be the perfect meat shield, and Eternal Emperors would use them to keep themselves alive.

“Once I get enough materials, I’ll invite a true grandmaster artificer to work on one for me,” Ning mused. “Many organizations have permanent ‘buy orders’ for deluxe hellgold, with the price set at thirty to forty million cubes of chaos nectar.” There were many major powers who would go out of their way to buy this material, but...

Well. The sellers weren’t fools either. Everyone knew how rare this material was. Generally speaking, sellers would only be willing to trade it for similarly rare treasures. Everyone had chaos nectar; who cared about that? Not everyone, however, would necessarily have high-quality treasures. Some unique ones simply couldn’t be found anywhere else.

If Ning was to acquire this deluxe hellgold, he’d be able to trade it for some treasures which were truly useful towards him. These were treasures that people generally wouldn’t be willing to exchange for chaos nectar, not unless Ning was willing to pay two or three times more than the market price.

“I still haven’t discovered the source of the resonance with my azureflower seal, but I found a pearl of deluxe hellgold.” Ning was rather excited. “The only problem is that it is surrounded by those twenty-three beasts.”

[The Desolate Era](#)

Book 29: Daolord Chapter 24: Rooted Down

Ji Ning stared at the twenty-three beasts off in the distance, his eyes narrowing slightly.

“Kill!” Ning didn’t hesitate at all. He immediately began to quietly approach those beasts. Any major power would’ve made the same decision as he was right now, because only a fool would give up the chance to acquire a treasure like deluxe hellgold without even giving it a shot! It must be understood that even the deceased Sword Hegemon had only left Ning with fifty million cubes of chaos nectar, which wasn’t that much more than the deluxe hellgold was worth!

This pearl of deluxe hellgold was far more valuable than even the Eternal blood had been!

Whoosh. Ning used the Shadowless evasion skill as he continued to stealthily advance. One million kilometers. Five hundred thousand kilometers. Three hundred thousand kilometers...

The physically largest member of the carapace beasts that were absorbing energy from the hellgold suddenly turned its head to stare in Ning’s direction, a look of rage appearing within its deep eyes. Moments later, it let out a furious roar. “RAAAWR!” Its roar was ear-piercing and rent the skies, causing countless streaks of heaven-destroying energy to sweep straight towards Ning.

“Looks like I’ve been discovered. Attack!” Ning’s speed increased dramatically as he sped up to move at ten times the speed of light, and streaks of dark-gold lightning and icy-white water erupted from his body. An awesome vortex-world of water and lightning instantly appeared in front of him, encompassing all of the strange beasts within it.

Boom! Boom! Boom!

It sounded like stones cracking apart. Explosions appeared on the bodies of eleven of the smaller beasts as the carapace-like bodies burst open. Moments later, they disappeared as their bodies were transformed into dust. Nearly half of the twenty-three beasts had died from Ning’s first strike.

“Kill the invader!” The largest beast let out a frenzied howl as the other carapace beasts all charged furiously towards Ning as well.

Clang! Clang! Clang! Ning immediately activated [Three Heads, Six Arms]. He wielded his six Northbow swords in his hands as he blocked multiple strikes from the swarming beasts.

While blocking their attacks, Ning was able to sense several streams of strange, penetrating power be transmitted into his body. The power dug through the Hegemon armor and invaded deeper into his body, making him feel rather numb.

“What a strange attack. Even with the Hegemon armor protecting me, I still feel a bit numb. If I was an ordinary Daolord of the Fourth Step, I probably would actually end up dying here.” Ning relaxed slightly. Different beasts which lived in different environments would have different attacks. Some were born with terrifying illusory powers, while others were born with tremendous skill in formations. Still others were able to move so fast, they could attack at the speed of a hundred times the speed of light.

If Ning encountered a beast whose powers perfectly countered his, he would be in serious trouble. However, although the carapace beasts before him had very strange attacks, Ning feared creatures like them the least. He had a suit of Hegemon armor and a body equivalent to a low-grade Eternal weapon; to harm him through direct attacks was incredibly difficult.

“Kill!” Ning’s sword-arts were arcane and profound, far above the level of these carapace beasts.

Slash! Sword-light flashed, piercing through the head of one of the carapace beasts. Moments later, its head exploded as the internal organs inside of it were reduced to dust.

Slash! Slash! Slash! Ning’s sword was incredibly sharp, and the Blood Drop stance of his Omega Sword Dao contained tremendous penetrative power. The carapace beasts were able to endure Ning’s lightning-water vortex-world, but they weren’t able to withstand Ning’s sword! Soon, just three of the beasts were left in the air. These were the three largest beasts, and they had the toughest carapaces as well, so tough that not even Ning’s sword was able to pierce through them.

“Grrrr.”

“Invader.”

“Detestable invader.” The three strongest carapace beasts were completely enraged by the deaths of their fellows. They attacked even more ferociously than before, and each time Ning clashed against them he could sense that penetrative power seep into his body.

Ning suddenly put away five of his swords, leaving just one behind. His six hands all gripped that single sword as he raised it high into the air, then delivered a ferocious chop with it. The speed of this blow seemed both as slow as a falling leaf and as fast as a flash of lightning. An endless amount of power quickly became to accumulate, making it seem like a volcano that was about to explode.

BOOM! Ning's sword seemed to strike out in a head-on blow, but it actually fluttered out in an unpredictable arc that skirted past the claws of the carapace beasts, then smashed one of them on its head.

Ning was taking advantage of the fact that these beasts had low levels of comprehension and technique. If he was fighting against Daolords of the Fourth Step like Patriarch Clearwind, the latter would be able to block even a maximum-speed attack from Ning.

A low, rumbling explosion rang out and the carapace beast's body trembled. Although its internal organs were very tough, in the end they couldn't compare to those of a cultivator who had trained in a protective divine ability. For cultivators, the strength and endurance of every part of their body was identical. As for these carapace beasts, they had incredibly tough shells but somewhat more fragile internal organs.

Under Ning's most powerful sword-strike, the creature's organs were reduced to smithereens, and it died on the spot. Its body turned soft as it fell backwards, then simply hovered there in the air, its body twitching every so often as blood flowed out of its nostrils.

"Next." It was as though Ning was riding on a sharp sword. With a swoosh, he moved at ten times the speed of light and appeared next to another one of the carapace beasts, and the beast bellowed in rage and fear as he approached.

BOOM! Yet another explosion rang out. The beast had tried to fight back, but so what? It was still struck on the head, and it too fell backwards as all signs of life disappeared from its corpse.

"And that leaves you." Ning turned his gaze towards the largest carapace beast, the one who had been the first to discover Ning.

"Invader, you shall die for invading our racial lands." The carapace beast let out a low growl. Its armored carapace was clearly thicker than those of the others, and it was noticeably stronger as well.

BOOM! Ning struck out with a furious chop, his six arms clenched around that single sword as he once more delivered a hammering blow to the skull of the beast. An explosion rang out, and even the space around them began to splinter. The carapace beast was knocked backwards by the force of the stunning blow, but it then raised its head calmly to give Ning a murderous glare.

"What?!" Ning's face tightened. For it to possess unearthly defenses was one thing, but how was it that even a head-on kinetic strike was unable to kill it?!

Whoosh. The carapace beast once more charged forwards, its tail sweeping straight towards Ning. As for Ning, he once more wielded all six Northbow swords as he moved at his absolute maximum speed while using his lightning-water vortex-world to constrain his foe.

Slash! Clang! Boom!

Ear-piercing screeches, low growls, light pants. All sorts of sounds erupted as the space around them was repeatedly torn apart and regenerated as Ning engaged the largest carapace beast in a furious battle.

Whoosh! Two streaks of sword-light shot out almost like a pair of flexible ropes, quickly wrapping themselves around that carapace beast with multiple layers of 'shackles'.

"No! NO!" The carapace beast had been completely bound. It immediately struggled to break free, only to no avail.

"Even I would laugh at myself if you were able to break free from this." Ning revealed a smile. "It seems using 'softer' methods is more appropriate for dealing with crazed beasts like this." Ning had indeed used a pair of Northbow swords to tie up this beast.

The Northbow swords had been forged for Ning by Emperor Gonflame himself, and they were lifeblood weapons that were well-suited towards all aspects of the Dao of the Sword. They could be ferocious, could be insidious, could be unpredictable... and they could be both 'hard' and 'soft' in their fighting styles. They could be 'hard' in striking like a heavy sword, or they could be 'soft' in striking like a whip. This was the nature of the Northbow swords.

"Get in here." Ning produced a gourd, then unplugged the stopper. Whoosh! Instantly, the roaring and struggling carapace beast was drawn flying into the gourd. Moments later, two steraks of sword-light flew out from the gourd and into the scabbard on Ning's back. Ning then waved his hand again as he collected the corpses of the other carapace beasts as well. Clearly, their shells could be used as manufacturing components.

"That's finally done." Ning let out a sigh of relief. It might've looked like a quick victory, but Ning had already used all the tools he had available to win this fight. "The deluxe hellgold." Ning turned his gaze towards that pearl of deluxe hellgold. This was what he really wanted.

Ning stepped forward, reaching out with his right hand and clasping that pearl, then gave it a tug.

Clack clack clack! Countless strands of golden energy in the area around it began to tremble. It was as though invisible ropes were connected to the deluxe hellgold, preventing its removal.

"What's going on?" Ning stared, then gave it another tug. Once again, the deluxe hellgold seemed to be rooted down and immovable. The golden mist for ten million kilometers around him once more began to shudder. Only when Ning stopped tugging did the golden mist go back to normal.

"It seems the golden mist is connected to the deluxe hellgold." Now that Ning understood the connection, he tugged at it one final time with all his force.

BOOM! A massive explosion could be heard as the pearl of deluxe hellgold was torn away and entered Ning's grasp. Ning immediately stored it away into his estate-world.

Rumble...

The endless amounts of golden mist instantly began to roil about as they furiously flooded towards a certain direction, becoming sparser and sparser until it completely disappeared. Soon, the area around Ning became completely pristine, with not a hint of golden mist remaining.

Ning stared at his surroundings in amazement. The golden mist had vanished up to a distance of ten billion kilometers around him. Only outside the ten billion kilometer range could more of the golden mist be seen.

Ning immediately turned to look towards the direction of the resonance with the azureflower seal. Tens of billions of kilometers away, within that golden mist, Ning was able to vaguely make out an enormous silhouette of something that looked like an estate.

“An estate?” Ning’s eyes lit up.

The surrounding area for ten billion kilometers was now completely clear of golden mist. Quite a few carapaced creatures stared at their surroundings in astonishment. Just a few seconds ago, they had been surrounded by golden mist. Why had it all completely vanished? Soon, their gazes turned towards the distant white-robed youth.

“GRWAAAR!”

“An invader!”

“Kill!”

There were thousands of those carapace beasts within this region of ten billion kilometers, and they all glared at Ning as they let out furious roars and charged straight towards him.

[The Desolate Era](#)

Book 29: Daolord Chapter 25: Azureflower Estate

Ji Ning was badly shocked. There were actually thousands of carapace beasts within ten billion kilometers of him? And several dozen were comparable in size to the leader he had fought a short while ago.

“KILL!” One particular carapace beast whose entire body was enormous and pitch-black let out a furious roar, its head upraised and its glaring eyes filled with murder.

Boom! Boom! Boom! The roars generated shockwaves that were visible to the naked eye that smashed through everything before them, reducing everything a hundred million meters ahead of the creature to be reduced into dust.

When Ning looked at the pitch-black carapace beast, a sense of tremendous danger arose within his heart. The sense of danger was far stronger than the feeling Patriarch Clearwind had given him a short while ago. He realized that if he actually engaged this creature in combat, he would probably lose his life here.

“Time to leave right away.” Ning immediately used the Shadowless evasion skill and disappeared without a trace.

The thousands of carapace beasts were all stunned. Due to the strange force permeating this area, even the prime essences of the universe were held at bay here, and Ning was unable to use his godsense to scan the place at all. This meant that the carapace beasts were similarly unable to scan Ning. Even the beast closest to Ning’s location was tens of millions of kilometers away from him; there was simply no way to lock onto Ning’s precise location from such a great distance.

Swoosh! Ning continued to stealthily flee at ten times the speed of light using the Shadowless evasion skill. He secretly celebrated, "Thank goodness there's no way to scan this empty area. Otherwise, there's no way I would've been able to escape."

"GWRAAAAR!" After being unable to locate Ning, the pitch-black carapace beast lifted its head and let out a furious howl that completely shattered space in the area around it. Even carapace beasts which were located close to it all retreated from it in fear.

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Ning began to use his evasion skill to flee towards the direction where the azureflower resonance was emanating from. Whoosh! He once more flew into a region of golden mist. Through it, he could vaguely make out the silhouette of that towering estate up ahead.

"Is that an estate?" Ning continued to fly forwards.

Somethings, things look deceptively close. He was clearly able to make out that estate from far away, but he spent ten hours flying towards it. During that period of time, he encountered two more pearls of deluxe hellgold. Alas, each of those two pearls had over ten thousand carapace beasts surrounding it, as well as a pitch-black carapace beast.

Just staring at the thousands of carapace beasts surrounding the pearl of deluxe hellgold, Ning felt a sense of tremendous danger. He could sense that as soon as he attacked, he would be almost instantly swarmed and killed by the carapace beasts!

The ten thousand-plus carapace beasts had divine runes glowing above their shells. The runes were humming in unison, and the power emanating from them caused even Ning's heart to quail. Clearly, these beasts had a way to join together into a formation. A joint attack from more than ten thousand carapace beasts would probably surpass even one of the most powerful of Daolords!

Previously, Ning had been able to slay those twenty-three carapace beasts because there simply weren't enough of them around; they weren't able to join together into a formation that would threaten him.

"It seems that my decision to take away one of those pearls of deluxe hellgold has put the other carapace beasts on high alert," Ning mused. "Still... to be able to acquire one pearl is already quite lucky."

Ning became more cautious as well. "What in the world is this place? Even the energy of the prime essences of the universe is forced to avoid this empty region, and the golden mist region holds treasures like deluxe hellgold within it. I've found three pearls, but there has to be far more than that."

"And those carapace beasts! The strongest ones are definitely on par with Daolords of the Fourth Step. As for the ones with the pitch-black shells, they can crush the vast majority of Daolords. If all of them gather together, I suspect that even Eternal Emperors would find it hard to gain victory against them." Ning was feeling rather nervous. He hadn't even entered the estate yet, but the outside perimeter was already filled with terrors. What, then, would the estate itself hold?

Whoosh!

Roughly ten hours after acquiring the deluxe hellgold, Ning finally reached the towering estate. The estate itself was emanating an endless aura of golden mist.

“What’s this?” Ning stared at the utterly enormous estate in front of him, and its walls were like mountain ranges. The powerful ripples emanating from the walls ensured that Ning didn’t even think about trying to scale over them.

“The main gates are over there.” Ning immediately flew towards the gates of the estate.

A short while later, Ning reached the main gates. Directly above the main gates there was an image of an azure flower that was slowly swiveling in midair. It radiated a sacred, natural aura which seemed to whisper that even if the universe itself changed or if time itself ended, this flower would remain here forever.

“What in the...” Ning raised his head to stare at the image of an azure flower. He trembled, a look of shock in his eyes. That azure flower? Only after he had managed to combined all of the Nine Chaos Seals had he been able to manifest the azureflower seal, then gain an azureflower region in his body. The azureflower seal looked absolutely identical to the azure flower image hovering above the gates of his estate.

“It seems as though there has to be some sort of connection between my Nine Chaos Seals and this estate,” Ning mused to himself. “I wonder how Daoist Three Purities ran into those seals in the past. Given the level of power he was at, there’s no way he could’ve travelled from the Three Realms to this place.”

This place was quite a distance away from the Three Realms, and back then Ning obviously hadn’t blazed a trail out from the Three Realms. In addition, even weaker Daolords would perish within the empty region and within the golden mist.

“The gates...?” Ning turned his gaze from the azure flower to the estate gates. The towering estate gates were covered with carvings that looked like tree roots. The carvings looked chaotic and complicated, but when Ning’s gaze towards them he could sense an invisible power surge out from the diagrams and sweep around Ning’s heart.

Whoosh.

Ning continued to stand in front of the estate gates, but he closed his eyes. The deepest pains within his heart were once more dragged out from where he had hidden them.

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“I wouldn’t dare beg that you send my senior apprentice-sister back to my side, Godking; all I hope is that she can live a simple, peaceful life. If you can do this, I will be endlessly grateful.” Ning fell to his knees before the Godking.

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“You are the one who personally consigned her to endless torment within the Infinity Hells! It was you! You personally!!!” The Godking’s furious roars reverberated with Ning’s mind.

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“Didn’t you say...that she’s already dead, and that you killed her? Haha...then, let me let her truly die.”

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“Ahahaha...” The towering figure of the Rahu-Ning raised its head towards the heaven, his wild laughter echoing through the Three Realms’ battlefield.

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“It was my fault. I was the one who consigned you to the Infinity Hells. I was the one who caused your soul to be destroyed.”

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The most agonizing, wrenching memories in his heart were all pulled out and magnified, and the sense of self-recrimination which Ning felt was amplified ten thousand times over. Ning was completely absorbed in his pain and self-blame. He stood there in front of the estate, his entire body trembling. In this moment, his Hegemon armor, his lifeblood weapons, and his protective Dao-seals weren’t able to help him out at all.

Both his soul and his truesoul were trembling. The same wasn’t true for just him; even the black-robed Primaltwin Ning was shaking back in the Three Realms. As for his avatar in Vastheaven Palace, it was also in the same dazed state. It was as though they had fallen into an endless abyss and were sinking deeper and deeper into it.

“Go ahead and die. Once you die, you’ll be together with her once more.” This was what that invisible surge of energy was whispering to him.

Ning’s soul and truesoul were shaking so hard, they were about to splinter apart. If they really did shatter, his true body, his Primaltwin, and his avatar would all fall simultaneously. Not even his Lifeblood Dao-seal would be able to save him. This was a technique available to the truly major powers who stood at the apex of all life.

“I’ve already made my choice. Even if I had to choose again, I would choose the same thing. That was a war! A war which would determine the destiny of all the living creatures of the Three Realms!

“The war has concluded. Both my father and my mother have returned. I, Ji Ning, shall use all the years of my life and all the power that is available to me to find my wife and bring her back. For her sake, I would willingly sacrifice all that I have.

“Nothing and no one will bar my path!”

Still standing in front of the gates, Ning opened his eyes. His eyes shone with a terrifyingly sharp light that reflected the innermost depths of his heart. Nothing and no one would ever be able to stop him on his path, and he would continue on it until death itself came for him!

Boom! Boom! Boom! Ning’s heartforce was surging and growing increasingly powerful as it intersected more and more with his sea of consciousness. Once he experienced a few more things within this universe and accumulated a bit more power, he would be able to break through to the sixth stage of heartforce.

“Thank you, mighty creator of the Azureflower Estate.” The white-robed Ning stared at the gates in front of him. “Thank you for helping me to once more reaffirm my own Dao-heart.”

“This is my Dao, and this is my heart. I will continue on this path until the day I die.” Ning walked forwards.

Boom!

The strange tree-root carvings atop the gates seemed to be able to sense Ning’s terrifyingly strong Dao-heart, a Dao-heart which no one could alter or shake. Only someone with a heart like this would have a chance of truly reaching the apex, would have a chance of standing above all other living beings. The most terrifying of major powers would also need terrifyingly strong Dao-hearts.

The gates to the estate automatically swung open with a rumbling sound. The Azureflower Estate, which had lain silent for countless years, had been opened once more.

[The Desolate Era](#)

Book 29: Daolord Chapter 26: Emperors?

The gates swung open. Ji Ning stood outside the gates, staring inwards. He was able to see that the insides of the towering estate stretched out at least ten billion kilometers, and an awesome, terrifying aura instantly swept out towards him from inside. The aura of power circulated in accordance with a formation and gathered at three particular spots, where three trees were located.

“Is this...?” Ning’s face turned pale when he looked at them.

Three trees. The first tree was in a corner, and its trunk was twisted like a coiling dragon. The entire tree, including its leaves, glowed with a faint blue light. It had three fruits hanging off its branches, and the fruits were snow-white in color and fist-sized. The fruits were surrounded by surges of flowing blue energy.

The second tree was the largest tree and had the most foliage. It was like an enormous canopy of flowers that covered an area of tens of millions of kilometers, and as soon as Ning saw it Ning realized that this tree only had two fruits on it. Both fruits were completely blood-red, and they looked as though blood would flow out of them if anyone touched them.

The third tree was the smallest one, so small it could simply be described as a sapling. It was roughly just three meters tall, and it looked semi-translucent and as cold as ice. Every single leaf was like a work of art, while the sparse branches held nine fruit that glowed with light. Each fruit was like a miniature sun that glowed dazzlingly.

“Is that one of the eight sacred bloodfruits, the ‘skyjewel bloodfruit’?” When Ning’s gaze fell upon the two blood-red fruits located on the second (and largest) tree, he couldn’t help but feel stunned. This was insane. Insane!

The eight sacred bloodfruits... most likely, people like Daolord Solesky had never even heard of them. Ning only knew of them because of the [Seven Leafpill Chapters]. The [Seven Leafpill Chapters] had contained a great deal of information regarding rare ingredients, including the eight sacred bloodfruits. Every single one of the eight was incomparably rare, and a single sacred bloodfruit tree would drive Eternal Emperors wild with lust and could incite warfare amongst Hegemons.

“Skyjewel bloodfruit... that means this is a sacred bloodfruit tree?” Ning stared at the awesomely large tree before him, then turned to look at the other two. The first tree was the one with a twisted trunk that looked like a coiling dragon, while the other tree was the sapling. However, Ning had the feeling that the aura of power emanating from these two trees was every bit the equal of the central sacred bloodfruit tree.

“I only recognize the skyjewel bloodfruit.” Ning shook his head. “I don’t recognize the other two at all.” The only reason he even recognized the former was because of the [Seven Leafpill Chapters]. Otherwise, he wouldn’t recognize any of them at all.

“I wonder... can I take them away?” Ning could feel his heartrate speed up. “Won’t know until I find out.” Ning walked over, quickly arriving at the large tree at the very center. Ning reached out with his right hand, which expanded to become so large that it blotted out the skies itself. His hand was now a million kilometers in size, and it reached out and grabbed the tree by the main trunk, seeking to uproot it! Ning’s movements were very slow; if any danger appeared, he would have ample time to react.

BOOM! Suddenly, a surge of power emanated from the surface of that tree, knocking Ning’s hand aside.

“Seems I can’t take it with me after all.” Ning actually laughed. This was as he had predicted; these three trees had clearly been planted here by the major power who had set up the Azureflower Estate, after all. How could that major power have allowed others to so easily rob him of his trees?

“I wonder if I can harvest the fruit or not.” Ning then reached out to one of the fruits. He was able to easily harvest a completely blood-red fruit. Pop! The fruit fell into his hands.

“So one sacred bloodfruit has fallen into my grasp, just like that?” Ning was rather amazed. He had just wanted to give it a try; he hadn’t expected to actually succeed. “What about another one?” Ning reached out to try and harvest the other bloodfruit, but this time a wave of power swept out from the sacred bloodfruit tree’s trunk, preventing Ning from succeeding. “So stingy! Still, one is enough. Thank you, senior.”

The sacred bloodfruit tree was currently sending surges of power to the location where the first bloodfruit had been harvested, and the power was slowly taking the form of a bloody ball of mist. Clearly, the tree was beginning to give birth to a new fruit.

A single sacred bloodfruit tree could at most give birth to two fruits at once. Now that Ning had harvested one, it could give birth to a second one, but of course that would take quite some time.

The value of a single fruit was naturally much lower than that of the actual tree, which would be capable of giving birth to sacred bloodfruit over and over. Despite that, it was still a rare reassurance worth over twenty million cubes of chaos nectar. Treasure like this could be pined for but never planned on!

“What about the other two trees?” Ning headed over to try his luck with harvesting once again.

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Uprooting the trees? Impossible. He couldn’t break as much as a single twig on the trees. These three ancient, mysterious trees seemed to possess sentience; they would only permit Ning to harvest a single fruit each! After that, they wouldn’t even let Ning draw near them.

“These three fruits...?” Ning waved his hand, causing three fruits to appear and float in the air in front of him. The first was the completely blood-red skyjewel bloodfruit, the second was a snow-white fruit that was covered by swirls of blue energy, and the third was the fruit that shone like a miniature sun. “The major power who built the Azureflower Estate was quite generous. I won a fortune as soon as I entered this place!

Ning put away the fruit and continued his explorations. Soon, he saw an utterly beautiful arch bridge, below which was a wide stream of flowing water. The water was clear and pristine, but radiated an aura of iciness which caused a layer of white steam to appear above it.

Ning walked onto the arch bridge. He immediately saw that on the other end, atop the distant grasslands a pair of old men were seated facing each other, a chessboard and some chess pieces before them.

“T-there are other cultivators here?!” Ning was stunned. However, the two old men were dressed in exactly the same clothes; both wore grayish-black robes, and they both turned their heads to stare towards Ning’s bridge.

“Seniors.” Ning immediately bowed towards them. The two elders had restrained their auras, making it so that Ning couldn’t secretly investigate them, but when Ning looked at them he felt a sense of incredible danger from them. He knew that if they were to fight, he would probably be at danger of losing his life.

“An outsider has actually arrived in the estate.” One of the two gray-robed elders chuckled as he looked at Ning through his two silver eyes. “It’s been quite some time since I’ve seen an outsider.”

“Hmph.” As for the other gray-robed elder, he had a pair of blood-red eyes. Ning was looking right at him as he stared at Ning, and when their gazes intersected Ning suddenly felt as though he was seeing an endless sea of murder and blood! Ning’s heart shivered when he saw that unfathomable amount of hatred and slaughter. Thankfully, Ning’s heartforce was quite strong and just a step away from sixth-stage heartforce, and so he was able to safeguard his own heart.

“A mere Daolord of the Second Step?” The blood-eyed elder laughed coldly as he swept out with his sleeves.

BOOM! His sleeves suddenly stretched out through the skies, seeming able to sweep away all things and moving so fast that Ning was unable to dodge it before it reached him and struck at him.

“What’s going on?!” Ning had no time to spare. His body immediately blurred as he manifested [Three Heads, Six Arms], and all six of his arms gripped a Northbow sword. His sword-light flashed, then transformed into an enormous black hole. The sky-blotting sleeve lashed down upon Ning’s sword-light, and Ning’s sword-light began to crack as the black hole tottered.

BOOM!

Ning could sense a terrifyingly strong concussive force be applied to his entire body, a force so strong as to completely stun Ning. He flew backwards uncontrollably, flying millions of kilometers past the arch bridge before slamming into the ground with a loud booming sound. He actually rolled over a few times on the ground before slowly beginning to regain consciousness.

“W-what...” When Ning came to his senses, he was terrified by the implications of what had just happened. “Even though I had the Hegemon armor protecting me, I was knocked completely senseless for a few moments. Thankfully, my divine body is comparable to a low-grade Eternal weapon. Otherwise, I probably would’ve died even through the Hegemon armor.” Ning couldn’t help but celebrate his survival. The Hegemon armor had once again weakened the attack to one thousandth of its full power, but that old man had been far more powerful than Patriarch Clearwind when the latter had used his forbidden secret arts!

Ning’s guess was that this had been the attack of someone on the Eternal Emperor level. Ordinary Daolords of the Fourth Step would probably be instantly slain by it! Ning himself was only able to survive because of both the Hegemon armor and the fact that his body was incredibly tough as well. Despite that, he had been instantly stunned and dazed by that attack.

“Eh?” Moments ago, the blood-eyed elder had been smirking. Now, however, he revealed a look of astonishment. “He didn’t die? How?! How could a Daolord of the Second Step withstand my killing strike?”

“Kid, get over here. Let me get a good look at you,” the blood-eyed elder spoke out.

“Stay away!” The silver-eyed old man immediately said. “No matter what, don’t step onto that bridge. The area beyond the bridge is forbidden to me and this old man. If you move past it, he’ll definitely attack you again.”

“Big brother!” The blood-eyed elder said angrily, “Whose side are you on?”

“Second brother, he’s just a young Daolord of the Second Step. He can help relieve our boredom for a time. Why must you move to kill him?” The silver-eyed elder was irritated as well. “We are Eternal Emperors, after all. For you to ignore your own status and try to kill a Daolord of the Second Step... have you not noticed that you are going crazy?”

“Emperors? We aren’t even cultivators any longer. Emperors? Ahaha...” The blood-eyed elder laughed wildly. He laughed like a madman, and his laughter was filled with endless hatred and pain.

[The Desolate Era](#)

Book 29: Daolord Chapter 27: Withdrawal

The silver-eyed elder’s body trembled when he heard this, and a hint of sorrow appeared in his eyes as he let out a sigh. “We still have a chance at gaining our freedom. In addition, the person who caused us to fall to such a state was the master of this estate. It had nothing to do with this young Daolord of the Second Step! Why must you get him involved?”

“The master of the estate? Yes, he’s the one who caused all this,” the blood-eyed elder howled, “And I know that he’s the one we should hate, but what can I possibly do to him? We stand no chance against him whatsoever. He captured us as easily as capturing ants, then transformed us into our current state. I want to take revenge, but I have no chance of succeeding whatsoever. He said that he would give us our freedom once he returned, but how long has it been?! He left more than thirty million chaos cycles ago. He’ll probably never be back!”

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On the other side of the arch bridge, Ji Ning was speechless when he heard the conversation between the two. Thirty million chaos cycles? That was an incredibly long period of time! Even Samsara Daolords were only able to live for 108,000 chaos cycles. Eternal Emperors truly were special, capable of living nearly forever.

And, based on the conversation between those two, it seemed as though they had been effortlessly captured by the master of the estate. As they had put it, he had been able to capture them as easily as capturing ants.

“As expected of someone who created the Nine Chaos Seals,” Ning mused. “He really is unfathomably powerful and inscrutable. If he was able to so easily capture Eternal Emperors, he probably is at least at the Hegemon level of power. Is it possible that there’s an even higher level which he was at?”

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“Kill. KILL. KILL!!! I’ve fallen so hard, why should I show pity for any others? To be able to discover this estate is indeed a tremendous blessing, but I’m going to make sure all of those lucky Daolords end up as dead Daolord!” The blood-eyed elder’s eyes were blazing with that bloody light as his murderous aura surged towards the skies. “That kid had better never step foot on the bridge again. Otherwise, I’ll definitely slaughter him!” His gaze was focused on the distant Ning, and he didn’t disguise his murderous intent at all.

“You... ugh. What’s the point?” The silver-eyed elder sighed when he saw this. As for the blood-eyed elder, he simply snorted.

“Leave, kid. Given that you were able to stay alive when my second brother delivered a killing blow towards you, you probably are one of the most freakishly talented Daolords of your generation.” The silver-eyed elder instructed, “My second brother wishes to stop you, but given your talent you might be able to defeat him once you become a Daolord of the Fourth Step. However, this estate is filled with layers of danger and is much more dangerous than my second brother. I strongly recommend for you to return only after you become an Eternal Emperor yourself.”

Ning stared at the two from the other side of the bridge. Both his azureflower seal and his azureflower region were shaking from the powerful resonance. Clearly, the thing which was calling to them was emanating from deep within this estate. But given that two Eternal Emperors were guarding the bridge, and that one was filled with the desire to kill him...

“The difference in power is too great. If I tried to force my way through, he’d probably bind and capture me.” Although Ning deeply desired to enter the depths of the Azureflower Estate, the difference in power was quite apparent.

“Go, go,” the silver-eyed elder said.

“Kid, even the outside perimeter held three sacred trees. There are even more treasures inside the estate. Don’t you want to go in? Ahaha, I’m sure you must.” The blood-eyed elder stared at Ning intently. Ning hesitated for a moment, then turned and left. He soon departed from the main gates of the Azureflower Estate.

The blood-eyed elder and the silver-eyed elder both watched as Ning disappeared off into the distance. "The kid is pretty decisive," the silver-eyed elder praised.

"And what good is that? The master of this estate left behind many fortunes, but he also left behind many dangers. The two of us were nothing more than ants to him, and it was so easy for him to capture us and put us here to serve as his guards. Some of the other Eternal Emperors he caught were much more powerful than us, but all of them were assigned to the deeper parts of the estate." The blood-eyed elder smirked.

The silver-eyed elder nodded. When he thought about what had happened all those chaos cycles ago, he couldn't help but once again shiver in fear. They had been the two weakest Eternal Emperors which the master of the estate had caught.

"But that kid was quite talented as well. If he can become an Eternal Emperor, he might just be able to defeat all of the servants which the master of the estate left behind," the silver-eyed elder said.

"Keep dreaming. Do you know how hard it will be for a freak like him to gain eternity? Hell, if he succeeds he'll probably become a Hegemon!" The blood-eyed elder shook his head.

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Outside the Azureflower Estate. Ning emerged from the estate feeling both excited as well as impatient. He really wanted to delve deeper into the estate and find the true source of that resonance with his azureflower seal! Alas, he couldn't even handle the two Eternal Emperors at the outside perimeter.

"I wish to save Yu Wei, but that path will be a difficult one. This estate, however, might just prove to be one of the major fortunes which I will need to succeed." Ning turned to stare at the azure flower image once more.

This place was indeed a source of tremendous fortune. Ning's subconscious was whispering to him that if he succeeded in traversing this place, he would undergo a truly earth-shaking transformation. This place might enable him to ask the most ancient of powers to come and bring Yu Wei back to life.

"Can't be impatient. Time spent sharpening the axe will be earned back with interest when you go out to chop the wood. I'll return once I become a Daolord of the Fourth Step," Ning mused. He didn't have any confidence in being able to become an Eternal Emperor! This didn't have anything to do with a weak Dao-heart; rather, it was because far, far too many freakishly talented Daolords had failed in this final step. Ning knew exactly how difficult it was, and it would be even harder for him because his path was that of the Omega Sword Dao. Most likely, it would be far more difficult than the paths which Bertulu, Solewind, and the others were going to walk. For peerless geniuses like them, becoming an Eternal Emperor was incredibly difficult. If they succeeded, they would become Hegemons.

Ning was in control of an Omega Sword Dao. How difficult would his path to eternity be? Still, he was fairly certain in his ability to become a Daolord of the Fourth Step. By then, challenging the Azureflower Estate would be much simpler.

"At least..." Ning stared at the azure flower image floating in front of the gates. "Here, at least, I can see a hope of saving her. The next time I come here, I'll definitely make it into the depths of the estate."

Ning left, but when he left his heart was filled with hope.

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The void of the primordial chaos. A flying vessel was advancing through the chaos once more, with Ning seated in the lotus position atop the deck of the vessel, attuning himself to the surrounding area while recording down the various danger zones on the star map in his hands.

Su Youji was seated next to Ning and was pouring his wine for him, a lovely smile on her face. Although trailblazing was somewhat dangerous, it really wasn't that concerning for someone on Ning's level. That trip to the Azureflower Estate had been far more dangerous! When Ning had returned from the estate, Su Youji had asked about what he had found. Ning's response was this: "I nearly died in there."

Su Youji and the others still felt twinges of fear when they thought back to that answer. Now that Ning was back by her side once more, she felt at peace.

"Master, that place was far too dangerous. In the future, you should avoid places that are excessively dangerous," Su Youji said.

"Don't worry. I probably won't go back for a long time," Ning said.

"You shouldn't go at all," Su Youji said hurriedly.

"Next time, I'll be confident in my abilities to survive. For now, I'm not good enough." Ning shook his head. In the Endless Territories, he was definitely one of the major powers now; he had even been able to survive a killing blow from an Eternal Emperor, after all! If word of this spread, his reputation would definitely increase dramatically. However, Ning's goals were much higher than merely this. Not even the most freakishly strong of Daolords would be able to revive an extinguished truesoul, after all.

Time flowed on, and more than thirty years passed in the blink of an eye.

"Haha..." Still seated in the lotus position within the flying vessel, Ning suddenly put down his star map and rose to his feet with a laugh.

"What is it, master?" Pillsaint and Su Youji were both confused.

"The trailblazing is complete. We've arrived." Ning smiled. "I'm familiar with this region. We have now blazed a trail from the Badlands Territory to my homeland."

With his Primaltwin serving as his goal, Ning was able to spend three hundred years to reach the Three Realms without getting lost.

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The primordial chaos outside the Three Realms. Ji Ning's chaos estate.

A white-robed Ji Ning led the peerless beauty Su Youji and Daolord Pillsaint into his chaos estate, where a black-robed Ning was awaiting them.

"T-this..." Su Youji and Pillsaint both had looks of astonishment on their faces. Before coming, they had both sworn oaths never to divulge anything regarding Ning's homeland to anyone else. The trailblazing, the region of empty space, the Three Realms... they were not permitted to discuss anything they saw. However, they were still stunned by what was before them.

“What’s wrong, Pillsaint, Youji? Don’t you recognize me?” The black-robed Ning laughed.

“A Primaltwin?!” Su Youji and Pillsaint couldn’t help but blurt out these two words. There were very few Daolords who had Primaltwins.

The white-robed Ning waved his hand, causing a painting to fly out and towards the black-robed Ning. This painting contained an estate-world inside of it, and it was filled with the countless secret arts, divine abilities, cultivation techniques, and other techniques which Ning had acquired from Vastheaven Palace. It also contained the various treasures he had obtained from Daolord Blesswind and the other enemies he had faced, along with chaos nectar, chaos jewels, and more. There was at least ten million cubes worth of chaos nectar and chaos jewels here! Ning estimated that this should be enough to establish a solid foundation for the Three Realms.

“It is time for the Three Realms to truly rise to prominence.” Ning nodded.

[The Desolate Era](#)

Book 29: Daolord Chapter 28: Three Realms Archives

The world of the Grand Xia. Swallow Mountain. Brightheart Lake.

Ji Yichuan and Yuchi Snow were being accompanied by their granddaughter, Ji Brightmoon. They had started to journey through the Three Realms, with even Uncle White travelling alongside them as well. As a result, Brightheart Lake was now a bit quieter than it usually was.

Whoosh! The black-robed Ji Ning suddenly descended from the skies.

“Young master.” Autumn Leaf immediately ran over when she sensed his presence.

“Elder sister Autumn Leaf.” The black-robed Ning smiled merrily as he called out to her. “Where are Little Qing and Xiaoyu?”

“The two of them went out to have some fun as well. I have no idea where they went,” Autumn Leaf said.

“All of them have gone out. Why don’t you join them, elder sister?” Ning continued, “Don’t stay at Brightheart Island all the time.”

“Someone has to stay on the island. Who knows when you might end up paying a visit?” Autumn Leaf smiled. “See? You ended up paying a visit today.”

Ning chuckled. There were some words that didn’t need to be said. Autumn Leaf had taken care of him ever since he was small, and the two were even closer than actual siblings.

“Come with me, elder sister.” As Ning spoke, he began to walk towards the inner depths of Brightheart Island. Autumn Leaf followed from behind, and they quickly arrived at one of the inner mountains on the island. Ning stood there halfway up the mountain, then gestured with his hand. Whoosh! A seemingly ordinary Immortal estate suddenly descended upon the mountain.

“Mm.” Ning stared at the gates to the Immortal estate. Moments later, three words suddenly appeared directly above the gates: Three Realms Archives.

“What’s this?” Autumn Leaf was a bit puzzled by what she was seeing.

“From this day forth, this shall be the most important place in all the Three Realms,” Ning said. “This place is filled with countless techniques, divine abilities, and secret arts. All of them are quite formidable, and those who are weak will find it difficult to understand them.”

“Come forth.” Ning waved his hand. Instantly, a muscular golem wielding a shield suddenly appeared. This was Moksha, the golem comparable to a Daolord of the Third Step which Ning had captured when he was in the Sacred Immortal Realm.

“Master.” The golem immediately called out with respect. After breaking through to become a Daolord, Ji Ning had defeated and tamed even the four golems which Emperor Mirrorsnow had bestowed unto him. This completely convinced Moksha of Ji Ning’s power.

“Your appearance will scare everyone on my island. Change into the appearance of an ordinary cultivator,” Ning ordered with a laugh.

“Yes.” Moksha’s body instantly blurred as he transformed into a bald, gray-robed man.

Ning nodded. “From this day forth, you shall guard the Three Realms Archives! No one is permitted to enter this place unless I have given them permission. This woman here is my elder sister, Autumn Leaf. She is permitted to enter the archives and study all of the techniques within it whenever she wishes.”

“Young master, you can’t just do whatever you want. This will be an important place for all the Three Realms,” Autumn Leaf said hastily.

“I am the creator of the Three Realms Archives. So what if I decide to let you view everything in it right now? Just don’t teach its contents to others,” Ning said. “Right now, there is no specific system or rules for studying in the Three Realms Archives. Later, I’ll chat with my master and set down a few rules. When there are no rules, there’s no such thing as rule-breaking. Later on, though, all of you including Brightmoon and my parents will have to abide by the rules.”

“I understand that much.” Autumn Leaf nodded. Even Ning’s closest family members would have to follow some basic rules. However, they would definitely be given the most latitude, with virtually all of the techniques available for them to study. The only true rule was that they couldn’t teach these techniques to others without a good reason!

This was how things worked in any organization within the Endless Territories. Once your secret techniques were taught to others, it was very possible that unforeseeable and uncontrollable developments would occur.

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“T-This place... this is a sacred place for studying the Dao.” After Patriarch Subhuti flipped through several of the techniques, he ended up being consumed by them for several days before he regained his normal clarity of mind. The first thing he did was let out an excited sigh.

“Vastheaven Palace built up this collection over the course of countless years. Even in the Endless Territories, a repository like this would be considered a sacred place for cultivators.” Ning smiled. “There are enough techniques here for someone to train all the way to the Samsara Daolord level without

pausing. The Three Realms is just a single chaosworld, after all, and I suspect only a few will end up reaching the World level. In the end, very few of us shall end up as Samsara Daolords. I trust that those who do will venture into the Endless Territories and seek out their own fortunes there.”

“Right.” Subhuti’s face was covered with joy. “The Three Realms’ future is absolutely unimaginable. Haha! My disciple, you have established a foundation for the Three Realms. I once thought that after Mother Nuwa left, she would eventually return to us and help us. Who would’ve thought that you got it done before she did?”

Ning said, “I wasn’t able to find any trace of Mother Nuwa in the Endless Territories, and the Badlands Territory and the surrounding territories haven’t seen any powerful female cultivators similar to her appear. My guess is that when she left the Three Realms through that vortex passageway, she was suddenly trapped into a spatial breach that teleported her to a foreign location.

Mother Nuwa, despite having no guidance and no good techniques, had been able to develop her own technique and force her way into becoming a World Goddess! She was definitely every bit as talented as Ji Ning. Once she reached the greater world outside the Three Realms, just a few simple pointers would result in her powers skyrocketing. Logically speaking, she should’ve become a Samsara Daolord long ago. And yet, Ning had found no trace of her whatsoever.

Subhuti had a worried look on his face as well. “Everything is up to destiny. Ugh. For Elder Gods and Ancestral Immortals, passage through the vortex tunnel will result in almost certain death. Even World Gods will be trapped within spatial tears if they aren’t lucky. We can’t just let our cultivators be trapped here in the Three Realms forever, can we?”

“Do not worry, Master. I spent a few years and used my ability to sense my Primaltwin’s location to blaze a trail from the Badlands Territory to the Three Realms.” Ning smiled as he took out a star map. “Please take a look, Master.”

“From the Badlands Territory to the Three Realms?” Subhuti revealed a look of surprised joy, hurriedly taking the map from Ning’s hands. He was so excited by what he saw, even his white beard began to flutter as he began to roar with laughter. “Disciple, with this route through space the cultivators of our Three Realms shall be able to enter the Endless Territories. Windfiend and I were worrying about this matter just a short while ago. The two of us were planning to explore the Endless Territories after we break through to the World level, but we were worrying about that vortex.”

“Oh, right.” Subhuti immediately said, “This star map is extremely important. Every single person who views it must swear a lifeblood oath to never divulge the existence of the trail you have blazed to others.”

“I absolutely agree,” Ning said. “It’s entirely possible that I might make powerful enemies as I wander through the Endless Territories! Once the Three Realms are revealed, they might suffer reprisals from certain crazed enemies of mine.”

There were some Daolords who were borderline insane, especially the ones who had failed their Daomerge. They would engage in slaughter on such a scale that they might wipe out all of the living things in multiple territories. This wasn’t unheard of! By comparison, wiping out Ning’s homeland in order to take revenge on him was nothing.

“Mm.” Subhuti nodded solemnly.

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Ning and Subhuti discussed this matter, then set down the rules for allowing the Three Realms to be able to continue to propagate stably in the future. Subhuti and Windfiend both spent a hundred years reading through the Three Realms Archives, and they benefited greatly from it. Finally, they were going to break through to the World level! They could’ve broken through long ago, but the techniques, divine abilities, and secret arts inside the Three Realms Archives were simply too alluring, which is why they delayed for a period of time.

First had come Pangu, Nuwa, and Ning. Now, both Subhuti and Windfiend took that next step and reached the World level. Just a few decades after reaching the World level, they decided to leave the Three Realms together via the route through the primordial chaos which Ning had created to the Badlands Territory.

“Master. Windfiend.” Many of the Immortals and Fiendgods of the Three Realms had come to bid them farewell. As for the black-robed Ning, he said, “The Endless Territories are filled with endless dangers. World-level cultivators are not yet at a level where they can go wherever they want. I recommend you stay in the territories around the Badlands Territory for now and temper yourselves first.”

“Don’t worry. I heard that the Badlands Territory has nearly a hundred thousand chaosworlds as well as many ruins left behind by Daolords. That’ll be more than enough for us to roam through,” Subhuti laughed.

“One of us is a master of spacetime, the other is a master of space. We two old farts might not be particularly talented in other areas, but if we work together we should be able to keep ourselves alive,” Windfiend laughed as well.

The two were both very relaxed. The reason why they had nearly fought to the death in the Three Realms was primarily because Old Man Yuan and Lord Demonheart had been causing trouble in secret. Windfiend had wanted to go out exploring long ago, and Subhuti was also filled with this same desire. Long ago, back when Ning had been very weak, the two had already reached the apex of power; one was the number one spacetime master of the Three Realms, the other was the fastest person in the Three Realms. By now, they had reached even higher levels. If they joined forces, there really were very few World-level cultivators capable of killing them.

“Have a safe journey.”

“Be careful, Subhuti.”

“Master.”

The Immortals and Fiendgods all bade them farewell, then watched as they began their journey into the outside world.

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Time flowed on.

A flying vessel was soaring through the primordial chaos, with Ning's true body at the helm. After blazing a path to the Three Realms and handing the archives over to his Primaltwin, he had left and led Su Youji and Pillsaint to the next part of their journey. By now, they had spent over a thousand years on this trip to the nearby Sacred City of the Dao Alliance.

"Right. We should arrive in a bit over two hundred years." Ning sat on the deck of his flying vessel, staring forwards into the endless void before them.

"Master." Su Youji suddenly appeared out of nowhere.

"Hm? No longer training?" Ning looked at her.

"I can sense that I am about to break through and become a Daolord of the Second Step." A hint of excitement was on Su Youji's face. "Although I wasn't as impressive as you, I was still pretty fast, right?"