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Book 29: Daolord Chapter 29: The Sacred City of Skywood

Ji Ning blinked, then laughed. "Not bad! I'll find a place to let you break through in peace."

"Right." Su Youji nodded quite joyfully. As for Ning, he felt rather speechless. *Oh, Youji... you are breaking through to become a Daolord of the Second Step, but your master is still just a Daolord of the First Step...*

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A short while later, the flying vessel reached a fairly nearby chaos planet, then descended upon it. Ji Ning waved his hand, setting up a simple restrictive formation around the planet. Ning was now on a completely different level of power compared to the past; he would now be extremely powerful even compared to other Daolords, and to encounter a worthy opponent in this region of the primordial chaos was fairly unlikely.

"What?! Youji is about to make her breakthrough?" Pillsaint had a look of astonishment on his face.

"Right." Ning nodded. "So you have to work hard as well."

Pillsaint nodded repeatedly. "I need to refine more pills in order to improve my Dao of Alchemy, but to gain insights from repeated, actual alchemy attempts will require quite some time. Still... since both you and Youji have made breakthroughs already, I really do need to pick up the pace."

"Samsara Daolords... with each step we take, we walk the line between life and death. Do not be rash or push too hard to make a breakthrough. Speed isn't the most important thing." Ning said a few words, then fell silent. Ugh. Judging from the situation, he would probably be slower than both of his subordinates.

Whoosh.

Ning waved his hand, causing an enormous boulder to fly off of a distant mountain of the chaos planet. The boulder landed in front of Ning, who simply looked at it. Crack! The boulder was sheared flat. Ning then sat down in the lotus position atop the boulder, beginning to meditate.

"In the past thousand years, I've only been able to improve my Blood Drop sword-intent slightly." Ning chuckled self-deprecatingly. "It seems I really am going to be slower than both Youji and Pillsaint." He had to improve in all five of his original Supreme Daos and then recombine them once more into a new Omega Sword Dao; this was how his Omega Dao would improve.

Ning's eyelids slowly swung shut, but streaks of sword-light could be seen flickering through the cracks of his lidded eyes. Tiny spatial tears repeatedly appeared and disappeared within a few meters of him as well. Clearly, Ning was visualizing and training in sword-arts.

A long while later...

BOOM! A wind arose in the skies above the chaos planet, and an awesome vortex of chaos energy began to form and be absorbed by Su Youji in large quantities. Clearly, her breakthrough had begun. Pillsaint

watched intently, but Ning simply considered to meditate in the lotus position, continuing to visualize his sword-arts.

This breakthrough took more than three days before everything became calm once more.

“Master.” Su Youji put away her Immortal estate and walked over.

“Haha, you really are different now that you’ve reached the second step. You’ve actually become even more beautiful!” The nearby Pillsaint whooped in delight. He truly had the heart of a child, and becoming a Daolord hadn’t changed him one bit. It was actually because of his pure, guileless heart that he had been able to become a Daolord. The [Seven Leafpill Chapters] had assisted him, but at the core was his own Dao-heart.

Su Youji glanced at Pillsaint, and the latter was instantly enraptured. “Pillsaint, address me as ‘big sister’.” Su Youji continued to stare sweetly at Pillsaint.

“Big sister... big sis-” The spellbound Pillsaint suddenly came back to his senses, then pointed at Su Youji and stammered, “H-Hey...”

Su Youji said smugly, “Pillsaint, it seems your Dao-heart isn’t strong enough yet.”

“Oh man. I am doomed. I was enraptured almost instantly. I am going to be in so much trouble in the future.” A miserable look was on Pillsaint’s face.

“It isn’t that Pillsaint has a weak Dao-heart, it’s that he’s still just a Daolord of the First Step.” Ning arose from his boulder, then stepped down. “Pillsaint’s path is the Dao of Alchemy, which means he will indeed be a bit weaker in combat. You, on the other hand, have the legacy of Feixian the Exalted. It would be laughable if you couldn’t enspell a Daolord of the First Step despite having reached the second step. But Youji, you really shouldn’t do that to Pillsaint too often.”

“I know, I know. I was just excited because I broke through.” Su Youji nodded repeatedly, then looked towards Ning with some excitement. “Master, why don’t you give my charm skills a try?”

Ning revealed a smile. “Go ahead and try.”

Su Youji immediately said, “Then Master, you must...” Halfway through her words, she immediately used her secret arts. She had already been beautiful enough to cause the downfall of kingdoms. Now, her smile made her eyes look like the most enchanting things in the universe. Her gaze was unfathomably deep, making it so that Ning couldn’t help but be drawn to them. Even if he wasn’t, those beautiful eyes seemed to be imprinted onto his mind, stirring and beguiling his inner heart...

Ning’s gaze slowly grew more and more distant.

“Master,” Su Youji said softly, “Come here and take Youji into your arms.”

“Yeah...” Ning mumbled softly, and Su Youji revealed a look of excitement.

“Yeah, no thanks.” Ning stared at her. “Is this what you were trying to accomplish by trying to charming your master!?”

Ning's soul was comparable to that of a Daolord of the Fourth Step, and his heartforce made him superior to many. He was at the cusp of breaking through to the sixth stage of heartforce; just a few slight improvements would result in him becoming a true Heartforce Cultivator. How could a newly ascended Daolord of the Second Step like Su Youji possibly shake his will? However, Ning could sense how truly formidable these secret arts of Feixian the Exalted were. Most likely, once Su Youji became a Daolord of the Third Step she would be able to have a slight affect on Ning for a very brief period of time.

If she reached the fourth step... Su Youji as a Daolord of the Fourth Step would be truly frightening! And yet, this path held both strengths and weaknesses, with the weaknesses being quite obvious; if she encountered a Heartforce Cultivator, she would be in serious trouble.

"I could sense that I wasn't able to beguile you, so I just wanted to joke around with you a bit, Master," Su Youji explained hurriedly. She then mumbled to herself, "Can't I even make a joke?"

"Alright, alright. Time to head out. We're pretty closed to the Sacred City," Ning said with a laugh. "Joking around now is fine, but don't cause any trouble once we enter the Sacred City. That is one of the eight Sacred Cities of the Dao Alliance, after all."

"Understood."

"Don't worry, Master."

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Ning once more began to advance with Pillsaint and Su Youji in tow. They travelled for another two hundred-plus years, then finally reached the fabled city of Skywood, one of the eight Sacred Cities.

"So that's Skywood." Ning stared off into the distance. Although Skywood was described as a 'city', it didn't have any walls. It was actually a collection of staggeringly large edifices which hovered together above the clouds! It was filled with towering palaces, ancient estates, and strange buildings. Every single building glowed with the light of restrictive spells, causing it to radiate with a plethora of colors.

Most dazzling of all were the completely jade-green city gates, which were three million meters tall. Quite a few figures could be seen soaring through the clouds and into the gates, with some figures flitting into the various palaces and estates.

"One of the eight Sacred Cities." Pillsaint was rather excited. "It reigns over or directly influences tens of thousands of nearby territories. I hear that an enormous number of Daolords are here."

"Normally, Skywood City sees over ten thousand Daolords at any given point in time," Ning said.

In terms of raw numbers of Daolords? The Ancient cultivators, the Brightshore Kingdom, the Aeonian race, the Aberrant special lifeforms... no one could compete with the Dao Alliance in this area. Any of the eight Sacred Cities of the Dao Alliance held more Daolords than any of the other organizations held in their main headquarters.

The Brightshore Kingdom's Twelve Palaces had thousands of Daolords (excluding the black-armored ones), but most of them were outside adventuring, and so only a few hundred powerful Daolords were actually within the borders of the Brightshore Kingdom at any point in time. Skywood City, however,

held more than ten thousand cultivators who were training in seclusion... and this represented just a tiny fraction of Skywood's total area of influence.

If all of the Daolords of the tens of thousands of nearby territories were gathered together, there would probably be far more of them! The vast majority of Daolords were wandering the outside world or in their own sects, after all. Only a small amount were within Skywood City.

"Skywood City is controlled by one of the nine great sects of the Dao Alliance, the Skywood Sect," Ning said. "This place is operated in accordance with the laws of the Skywood Sect."

"The eight Sacred Cities are all quite interesting." Pillsaint laughed. "Eight Sacred Cities which are under the control of nine different organizations. The Dao Alliance really is rather chaotic."

"Master, I hear that the governor of Skywood City is also the sect leader of the Skywood Sect, the legendary Emperor Skywood, right?" Su Youji asked curiously. Eternal Emperor Skywood was extremely famous, and she had heard of him long ago in the Brightshore Kingdom.

Ning chuckled and nodded. On the surface, the Dao Alliance had a total of eight mighty Emperors who were the governors of these eight Sacred Cities. However...

Even the likes of the Brightshore Kingdom and the Aeonians had multiple Eternal Emperors, despite being far smaller organizations. Could the exalted Dao Alliance truly have just eight Eternal Emperors? Who would possibly believe such a thing? However, the eight governors of the Sacred Cities had lived for countless chaos cycles and had reigned over their respective Sacred Cities. Without question, they were incredibly strong even amongst Eternal Emperors.

Not even the most powerful of Eternal Emperors were able to shake the positions of the eight governors! Not only were the governors themselves powerful and given great authority within the Dao Alliance, they were also secretly supported by many reclusive old experts. This was why they were referred to as being the nine major organizations which reigned over the Dao Alliance.

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Book 29: Daolord Chapter 30: Ji Ning's Goal

The gates of the Sacred City were towering and dazzling to behold. Ji Ning's group of three flew straight towards the gates. In truth, Skywood City had no walls at all, and so there was no real reason to go through the gates. However, this was the first time Ning's group had ever come to a Sacred City, and they needed to procure a Dao Alliance talisman. Otherwise, they wouldn't be considered true members of the Dao Alliance and would be forbidden entry into many places within the Sacred Cities.

"Fellow Daoists." There was an unprepossessing little pavilion right outside the doors, and a black-robed woman immediately walked out of it with a smile on her face.

"This is our first trip to the Sacred City. We would like to pick up a Dao Alliance talisman," Ning said. The black-robed woman before him had a very weak aura; most likely, she had relied on a Pseudo Samsara Pill in order to break through to become a Daolord of the First Step. Daolords like her would generally be given fairly menial tasks within the larger organizations and sects.

“Oh, a Dao Alliance talisman? Please follow me.” The black-robed woman guided Ning into the pavilion. Within were a number of white-robed men and women, as well as a few alien Outsiders. Judging from their auras, they were at most at the World level.

“Where have the three of you come from, and what school do you belong to? Are you already registered with the Dao Alliance?” The black-robed woman asked.

“I am Darknorth of Vastheaven Palace,” Ning said while producing his Vastheaven Palace medallion. The black-robed nodded, then waved her hand and produced a little book. She flipped through the book, quickly verifying some information about Daolord Darknorth of Vastheaven Palace.

“Fellow Daoist Darknorth of Vastheaven Palace, here is your Dao Alliance talisman.” The black-robed woman produced a black talisman and handed it over to Ning, with the talisman having the word ‘Dao’ atop it. It was covered in divine runes that seemed quite mysterious and which ensured the talisman could only be bound once. Ning waved his hand, binding it to him.

“Are these two registered with us already as well?” The black-robed woman asked. Ning shook his head and replied, “They are not. These two are my retainers.”

“Retainers?” The black-robed woman and the nearby World-level cultivators all glanced at Ning with surprise. He had two Daolords as retainers? It seemed as though this ordinary-looking Daolord Darknorth was actually quite an extraordinary figure! They naturally knew nothing of Ning’s battle against Patriarch Clearwind, as neither Vastheaven Palace nor Clearwind Temple had publicized that battle. As a result, very few knew about it.

“If you aren’t already registered with the Dao Alliance, things will be slightly more complicated,” the black-robed woman said. “Please follow me. We need to take some steps to ensure that no spies are able to make their way into the Dao Alliance.”

“I understand.” Su Youji smiled. She and Pillsaint both obediently followed after the black-robed woman. They knew coming here what the rules would be.

Ning’s history was very clean, and Vastheaven Palace had already vouched for him. As a result, he was easily able to acquire a Dao Alliance talisman and be acknowledged as a formal member of the Dao Alliance. As for unknown figures without any backers, they would need to be investigated and swear certain lifeblood oaths to prove their ‘innocence’ before they would be given a Dao Alliance talisman.

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A short while later, a white-robed elder led Ning’s group of three away from the city gates. The four flew through the clouds, and the white-robed man smiled at them. “Seniors, this is your first trip to a Sacred City, so I will explain a bit regarding the rules here. There are restrictive wards and barriers surrounding all of the palaces and estates inside the Sacred City, and you are forbidden from violence within them. If you engage in violence, you shall perish and your Dao shall vanish.”

Ning and the others simply listened. These were iron rules which no one could breach. This was one of the eight Sacred Cities of the Dao Alliance, after all; no one could violate these rules, unless they had the power to challenge the entire Dao Alliance and live to tell the tale.

“Once you leave the protective wards around those various palaces and estates, no one will get involved no matter how violent the battle becomes.” The white-robed elder chuckled. “For example, the four of us are in midair right now. This airspace is not covered by the barriers or wards of any estate, and so we could theoretically be attacked at any moment.”

“How chaotic,” Pillsaint sighed.

“It is a bit chaotic. Wherever there are cultivators, there will always be chaos,” the white-robed elder said. “Also – please remember this, seniors. In Skywood City, the disciples of the Skywood Sect are not to be trifled with, not even the True Gods or Elder Gods. If you kill a member of the Skywood Sect, then you will also be put to death and your Dao shall vanish.”

Su Youji asked, “How can we tell if someone belongs to the Skywood Sect?”

“That’s very easy.” The white-robed elder smiled. “Members of the Skywood Sect are all dressed in unique robes that emanate the unique aura of the Skywood tree. If for some reason they aren’t wearing their robes and they end up being killed, their killers won’t be blamed.”

Ning and the others nodded. The Skywood tree was the sacred tree that stood guard over the entire Skywood Sect. It served as the foundation for the entire sect! Ning and the others were now able notice that there was indeed a unique, ancient, and eternal aura radiating from the robes of the Skywood Sect disciples they had met thus far. It was immediately recognizable.

“Let me tell you a bit more about the important places within Skywood City. Those hundred thousand-plus estates hovering in the air over there all for cultivators to dwell in. They belong to our Skywood Sect, and the three of you can spend a bit of chaos nectar if you wish to temporarily take up residence in one of them. It’ll be fine even if you want to stay for a hundred chaos cycles; all you need to do is pay a bit of rent in the form of chaos nectar. No one will ever dare to disturb you.” The white-robed elder pointed off into the distance, where there was a group of ancient palaces that radiated mighty auras. “That region over there is where our Skywood Sect is located, and the Eternal Emperor resides there as well. No matter what, you must not trespass there.”

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The white-robed elder introduced one place after another to the group.

“We’ll go over there.” Ning pointed at a distant hall that was constructed within the clouds.

“The Spellworld?” The white-robed elder was startled.

“Yes, we shall go to the Spellworld first,” Ning said.

The Spellworld contained countless techniques within it. Every single one of the eight Sacred Cities of the Dao Alliance contained a Spellworld within it, and cultivators of the Dao Alliance were permitted to learn many precious techniques and divine abilities within those Spellworlds for a fee. There were even techniques belonging to Eternal Emperors... and supposedly, Hegemons as well! However, the more rare a technique was, the greater a price one would need to pay to learn it. Nothing in this world was free.

“The Spellworld contains countless techniques. You can choose from them as you please.” A guardian golem was standing in front of the hall, and it said in a calm voice, “Come speak to me after you have chosen.”

“This guardian golem was left here by the Dao Alliance. It is incredibly powerful,” the white-robed elder said immediately. In the end, golems were more loyal than anyone or anything else. If they were assigned to guard a place, they would never allow even the slightest of slip-ups.

“Pillsaint, Youji, the two of you should go inside and take a look as well. See if there’s anything you need. I’m going to enter now.” Ning immediately strode in after finishing his words.

“Sure, let’s take a look inside.”

“Let’s see what this place has to offer.” Both Su Youji and Pillsaint followed Ning inside.

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When Ning stepped into the hall, he felt space twisting around him as though he was entering a different world. This was a world with canyons, with rivers, with towering mountains, and with waterfalls.

Jade scrolls were lying on boulders, floating in the air above deserts, hanging from tree branches, and scattered throughout the world in a casual fashion. This was a world created by an ancient power of the Dao Alliance, and it was quite mysterious and profound.

“Not this one. Nor this one. Nope, not this one either...” Ning stood there at the top of a mountain, stretching out his godsense as he began to scan through the various jade slips. Every single jade slip contained some basic information regarding the techniques which were available as well as the price one needed to pay! Ordinary techniques could be purchased by using a bit of chaos nectar, but truly core techniques were much more difficult to procure.

“Here it is!” Ning suddenly revealed a look of delight. Swoosh! Ning’s body flickered as he instantly flew from the mountain peak to a prairie that was tens of thousands of kilometers away. There was a thatched cottage on this prairies, and there were nine jade slips that had been casually tossed inside that cottage.

These nine scrolls were the [Novessence Water], [Novessence Fire], [Novessence Wood], [Novessence Earth], [Novessence Metal], [Novessence Wind], [Novessence Thunder], [Novessence Light], and [Novessence Void].

“That’s what I need. As a new Daolord, these are the secret arts which fit me perfectly.” ‘Ning nodded slowly. Although he had gained the secret arts left behind by the deceased Sword Hegemon, it was far too hard for him to make any headway into them. Even if he put all of his efforts into training in them, for now it would be very hard for him to reach a high level of power in them. The nine secret arts created by Daolord Allgod, however, were a perfect fit for Ning.

“If I can master the full [Novessence Thunder], I should be able to slay most Verge-level Daolords with it! If I can merge all nine secret arts together, even the likes of Patriarch Clearwind would probably die. Even if he survived, he would be very heavily wounded.” Ning knew that training in the nine novessence

arts was the best choice for him right now, which was why he had spent a thousand years hastening to Skywood City.

Daolord Allgod's nine secret arts were only purchasable within the Dao Alliance. The Brightshore Kingdom had only been able to purchase the five weaker secret arts, with the [Novessence Thunder], [Novessence Wind], [Novessence Light], and the most powerful [Novessence Void] techniques all missing.

Ning glanced at the various techniques, feeling a sense of joy in his heart. These were the nine secret arts which Daolord Allgod had painstakingly created, and when they were used together they were capable of truly unearthly levels of power.

"I'm going to buy them all." Ning waved his hand, collecting all nine jade slips.

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Book 29: Daolord Chapter 31: Killer Technique, the Nine Novessence Arts

Of the nine novessence arts, Ji Ning had already acquired the [Novessence Thunder] and the [Novessence Water]; there was no need to purchase them. He only needed to buy the other seven.

The [Novessence Void] required five million cubes.

The [Novessence Wind] and the [Novessence Light] each cost 1.5 million cubes.

The [Novessence Fire], [Novessence Earth], and the others were all fairly cheap, and the price was the same as it had been in the Brightshore Kingdom – a million cubes.

In total, the cost was twelve million cubes!

"Let's see if there are any other techniques that are a good fit for me." Ning continued his search. The nine novessence arts of Daolord Allgod weren't weak, but they weren't overpoweringly strong either. This was because, even trained to the absolute apex, the techniques were not able to kill an ordinary Eternal Emperor; at most, they would be able to suppress him! The secret arts which the Hegemon had given Ning, however, were able to slay Eternal Emperors. The problem was that it was too hard to train in them.

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Ning picked up those seven scrolls, then spent another three days wandering through the Spellworld. This truly broadened his horizons and let him understand how many formidable techniques there truly were. It really was true that the Brightshore Kingdom could not come close to comparing to the Dao Alliance in terms of number of techniques. The countless generations of Dao Alliance experts had left behind plenty of techniques that were far more powerful than the nine novessence arts.

Still, for the present Ji Ning, the nine novessence arts were indeed still the most appropriate art for him to train in, and they would allow him to unleash the maximum level of power possible.

"Why didn't you spend more time inside?" When Ning exited the Spellworld, he saw Su Youji and Pillsaint waiting for him at the entrance.

“There really weren’t many techniques or spells that we need. Two or three days was plenty,” Pillsaint said.

“The two of us already have our own techniques which we haven’t finished training in,” Su Youji said.

“I have.” Ning walked to the guardian golem, then waved his hand and produced those seven jade scrolls. The golem turned its flaming gaze towards those jade slips, then said calmly, “These seven secret arts will cost a total of twelve million cubes of chaos nectar.”

“That much?” Su Youji and Pillsaint were both speechless.

“Take it.” Ning produced a jade bottle. The guardian golem accepted it, examined it, then nodded as it waved a finger towards the seven jade slips. Instantly, layers of light appeared on the surface of the seven jade slips; the restrictive spells over them had been temporarily removed.

Ning immediately sent his godsense into the jade slips. He first swore a lifeblood oath not to teach them to anyone else, then began to memorize all seven of them.

“I’ve finished memorizing them.” Ning returned the seven jade slips back to the golem.

“Good.” The golem accepted the slips, then waved its hand and caused the restrictive spells to reappear. The golem then gave them a toss, returning them into the Spellworld.

“Let’s go.” Ning was in quite high spirits.

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The World-level white-robed elder belonging to the Skywood Sect had been waiting for them this entire time, and he now continued to lead the way.

“How many places which sell magic treasures does Skywood City have?” Ning asked.

“The best one is naturally the Plumesoar Hall belonging to our Skywood Sect,” the white-robed elder said hurriedly. Engaging in the trade of magic treasures could result in significant profits. Daolords would often risk their lives for a few million cubes, but the auction halls of the eight Sacred Cities earned ridiculous profits every day with comparatively little risk. But of course, in the eight Sacred Cities ordinary organizations weren’t even qualified to enter this lucrative trade.

“My question was ‘how many’,” Ning repeated. The white-robed elder said resignedly, “Three in total. The first one is the Plumesoar Hall of our Skywood Sect. The other two places are the Blackwater Pavilion and the Universal Treasures Hall. However, this place is Skywood City; as a result, our Plumesoar Hall has far more treasures than the other two places.”

“Then let’s go to the Plumesoar Hall,” Ning said with a chuckle. Now that he had the secret arts, he needed to buy the treasures necessary to train in them. He was still lacking in Dao lightning and Dao water, for example!

“Plumesoar Hall of our Skywood Sect is over there.” The white-robed elder pointed towards the extremely beautiful, nine-storied tower which rose up into the clouds. An aura of light rose up thirty thousand meters above the tower, and it was protected by layers of protective spells. The Plumesoar Hall was the place where the Skywood Sect stored its countless treasures. It naturally was tightly protected.

“Plumesoar Hall often holds treasure auctions. There will be another one roughly a month from now,” the white-robed elder said. “You can go take a look when the time comes.”

“No need for the treasure auction.” Ning flew straight towards Plumesoar Hall.

Places like Waveshift City of the Badlandss Territory rarely held treasure auctions, but this was Skywood City, one of the eight Sacred Cities of the Dao Alliance. Plumesoar Hall, Blackwater Pavilion, and the Universal Treasures Hall would hold one every so often.

After Ning flew past the protective barriers, he could sense a flood of treasure auras sweep towards him like a tidal wave.

“There really is a mountain of treasures here.” Ning took a glance past the main gates of Plumesoar Hall. He saw an utterly amazing number of magic treasures inside the hall, far more than ten times as much as much as any of the Twelve Palaces of the Brightshore Kingdom. In terms of raw quality, the Dao Alliance had far more of everything than anyone else, be it cultivators, treasures, or techniques.

“Pillsaint, Youji. Now that you have broken through to become Daolords, you’ll need good treasures so that you can unleash your full potential,” Ning said. “Go buy whatever you need, but keep it under five million cubes.”

“Five million cubes?” Pillsaint and Su Youji were both rather shocked.

“Don’t be shy. Pillsaint, you are an alchemist; you not only need a good alchemy cauldron, you also need many valuable ingredients. Otherwise, how can you improve?” Ning continued, “Youji, you are now fairly powerful, but if you have suitable treasures you can become even more powerful.”

The two had sworn to follow him unto death itself; they would be his eternal retainers. There was no way Ning could be too stingy with him, now that he had sufficient resources. If it wasn’t for the fact that he needed a lot of resources in order to train in the nine novessence arts, he probably would’ve been even more generous with them.

“Go on in.” Ning immediately entered the Plumesoar Hall. The conversation between the three had been a silent mental discussion as they didn’t wish for the white-robed elder to overhear it.

“Seniors, I’m going to leave now. If there’s anything you need, you can seek out the attendants within the Plumesoar Hall,” the white-robed elder said loudly. His main mission had been to send these three to the Plumesoar Hall and ensure that they made a good amount of money off the three.

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The Plumesoar Hall contained everything within it. Beautiful women were as common as the clouds, and although they weren’t as beautiful as Su Youji they were still dazzlingly and beguiling. Magic treasures and unique items were everywhere, the cheapest being a few hundred cubes and the most expensive ones being priceless!

“Senior, what do you wish to purchase? The Plumesoar Hall has accumulated countless treasures over endless chaos cycles. We have everything here.” A female attendant was standing next to Ning. She had some red fur on her face, but that just made her look even more bewitching.

“This is the list of treasures which I need.” Ning produced a jade slip, then handed it over. “Let me know what the price will be.”

The dazzling female attendant smiled as she accepted the jade slip, then sent her godsense into it. When she did, her face turned pale. She couldn’t help but raise her head to look at Ning. What an impressive fellow! He was apparently a Daolord of the Second Step, but he wished to purchase this many valuable treasures? All combined, this had to be tens of millions of cubes!

“I’ll go make some inquiries. Please wait for a while, senior,” the attendant said in a soft voice. She then departed to go make the report to her superiors.

As for Ning, he spent some time casually strolling through the Plumesoar Hall and admiring its many treasures. His list had included all of the precious treasures needed for training in all nine novessence arts. And of course, he already had seven types of Dao lightning and Dao water. The main issue was that the ones Ning had were the cheaper ones; in the Brightshore Kingdom, the most expensive type of Dao lightning, the Felworld lightning, needed 1.9 million cubes of chaos nectar! The two types of Dao lightning and Dao water which Ning needed were the most expensive ones. As for the other seven novessence arts, he needed everything!

“Fellow Daoist.” A silver-robed Daolord walked over. When he saw Ning, he sent a mental message to him. “You really need a large number of magic treasures. However, Plumesoar Hall can provide everything you need.”

“Mm.” Ning nodded. These items existed in the Brightshore Kingdom as well. Ning wasn’t surprised that the Skywood Sect, the ruler of one of the eight Sacred Cities, was also able to procure them. “How much chaos nectar will it cost?” Ning asked.

“Some of the Chaos fire and Chaos wind, we can just give to you as gifts. The others, though... in total, it’ll cost roughly 38 million cubes of chaos nectar.” The silver-robed Daolord looked at Ning. He was actually quite curious; would a Daolord of the Second Step really be able to produce that much? It must be understood that even when Vastheaven Palace extorted Patriarch Clearwind for his treasures, it had only been able to gain roughly twenty million cubes.”

“That’s too expensive.” Ning shook his head. “I could purchase these things in the Brightshore Kingdom for less than that.”

“The Brightshore Kingdom?” The silver-robed Daolord was startled. He immediately said, “Then how about 36 million cubes? This is a very low price; I think you know, fellow Daoist, what the rough price for these things are.”

Ning was secretly speechless. If he had purchased these items in the Brightshore Kingdom, the price would have indeed been around 36 million cubes.

“I’ll go pay a visit to the Blackwater Pavilion and the Universal Treasure Hall first. I have to find the best price, of course,” Ning said.

The silver-robed Daolord’s face twitched slightly.

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After haggling for a period of time, they ended up settling on the price of 34 million cubes! There was some competition amongst the three markets, after all; it was indeed possible to lower the price substantially.

“All your treasures are ready. Fellow Daoist, you can simply pay me in chaos nectar.” The silver-robed Daolord looked at Ning.

“Do you accept payment in precious minerals?” Ning suddenly asked.

“Minerals?” The silver-robed Daolord was startled.

Ning nodded. “Right. Minerals. For example, darkspace flamestone.” Ning didn’t really want to do this, but all of his chaos nectar and chaos jewels combined was not enough to reach the price of 34 million cubes.”

[The Desolate Era](#)

Book 29: Daolord Chapter 32: What The Hell?

Although the deceased Sword Hegemon had left him fifty million cubes, he had left ten million of them back in the Three Realms! The Three Realms would need that money for its development. As for the money he had gained from Patriarch Clearwind, that was reserved for the creation of his avatar. The total amount of chaos nectar and chaos jewels Ji Ning had totaled roughly thirty million cubes or so... and he had already promised up to five million for Su Youji and Pillsaint for them to purchase what they needed. Thus, Ning was lacking quite a bit; he’d have to throw in his darkspace flamestone ore.

“Darkspace flamestone ore? Of course Plumesoar Hall would be willing to purchase it. Follow me. A different Daolord is designated as the purchaser for special items and valuable treasures,” the silver-robed Daolord.

“Alright.” Ning followed behind the silver-robed Daolord and began to move deeper into Plumesoar Hall. They travelled through a wide passageway, and a short while later a thin, gray-robed man emerged from another part of the passageway. He glanced sideways at the two of them, then walked past them.

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When the gray-robed man exited Plumesoar Hall, a hint of avarice appeared in his eyes. “That Daolord of the Second Step was actually being invited into the important parts of Plumesoar Hall?” The gray-robed man pondered to himself, “That place is used for selling valuable treasures that are worth more than ten million cubes.” He had been to Plumesoar Hall on multiple occasions, and so he was quickly able to deduce what was happening.

“I never would’ve imagined that a puny little Daolord of the Second Step would have more than ten million cubes worth of treasure.” The skinny gray-robed man narrowed his eyes, both greed and violence filling his thoughts. “I’ve followed Master for countless years and gone into many dangerous locations, but I only have a few million cubes worth of treasure. If I can kill him, all of his treasures will be mine.”

“But the problem is... if he has that much treasure, he definitely must have experienced extraordinary events. Should I attack him or not?” The gray-robed man pondered for a while, then made up his mind. “The path of cultivation is a dangerous path by nature. I am a Daolord of the Third Step, while he’s

merely a Daolord of the Second Step. How strong could he possibly be? I'll attack him. If I win, his treasures will be mine. If I lose, I should still be able to escape."

After having pondered for a while, the gray-robed man decided to give it a try. As he saw it, even if this Daolord of the Second Step was a freakishly talented genius, he should be able to retreat unscathed. The gray-robed man immediately flew towards a nearby cloud-shrouded palace, preparing to keep watch from there. He didn't plan on asking anyone else for assistance. Asking someone weaker to help out was pointless, while someone stronger than him would probably demand the lion's share of the loot. He certainly didn't wish to let that happen.

This was the nature of cultivation. Some cultivators focused on the Dao, tempering themselves through dangerous experiences. Others, however, preferred to plunder the possessions of their fellows. This was the fastest way of accumulating treasures, after all! But this path was a very dangerous path, because you never knew what secret killing techniques or trump cards your target might be holding. There are tradeoffs in all things. Plundering offered great rewards, and so there were still many Daolords willing to engage in such activities. A single successful kill might result in astonishing rewards, after all.

There were a few who were able to keep true to their own hearts and not engage in murder or robbery, with Ning being one of them. If other Daolords didn't cause him problems, he wouldn't antagonize them either.

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Ning had no idea that he had just become a target. He was happily selling off his stockpile of darkspace flamestone for the princely sum of 9.2 million cubes of chaos nectar, and he then purchased a number of things for Pillsaint and Su Youji.

"Now that I have this 'Heartspiral', I am much stronger than I was before." Su Youji happily held the white shell-shaped treasure in her hands, then looked at Ning. "Thank you, Master."

"Whee hee hee!" Pillsaint was celebrating his new treasures as well. As for Ning, he felt both happy and resigned. The Heartspiral was extremely powerful, and it was a perfect fit someone who walked the path of charm like Su Youji. However, it had cost him 5.8 million cubes of chaos nectar! Su Youji had lingered over the Heartspiral for quite some time, wanting to buy it but knowing that it cost more than the five million cube limit. In the end, after Ning had finished buying the materials he needed for his nine novessence arts, he saw her staring at the Heartspiral and agreed to buy it for her. As for Pillsaint, he had purchased a good furnace and various alchemical materials, which cost a total of around two million cubes.

"Ugh. I only have a few hundred thousand left." Ning couldn't help but sigh to himself. It really did seem as though he never had enough money on him.

For example, he really wanted to study the full copy of Emperor Heartsword's [Heartsword] technique, but it was far too expensive. The cost of that technique was many times higher than the nine novessence arts; there was no way he could afford it. In addition, Ning had already acquired the first ten stances of the [Heartsword] stance long ago. The truly valuable aspect of [Heartsword] lay in teaching its wielders the mysteries of how to truly merge one's heartforce with one's sword-arts. The first ten

stances would already be plenty for Ning to research, especially given that Ning still wasn't a full Heartforce Cultivator yet. There was no rush.

In the future, as he continued to grow more powerful in his path of cultivation, he would definitely need to perfectly merge his heartforce techniques with his Dao of the Sword. Only then would he grow more powerful. Sooner or later, he would have to acquire the full [Heartsword] manual.

"Time to leave," Ning said with a smile.

"Right." Su Youji held the Heartspiral in her hands very happily.

"Where are we going, Master?" Pillsaint asked.

"First, let's go rent out an estate within the Skywood Sect," Ning said. Skywood City had more than a hundred thousand estates for rent that were made available to local cultivators; all one needed to do was spend a bit of chaos nectar for them. This really didn't amount to much; the several hundred thousand cubes of chaos nectar which Ning had on hand was enough for him to stay here for more than ten chaos cycles. All Ning really wanted to do was to just reside within the estates, giving him a safe place to master all nine novessence arts.

He now had his techniques and his treasures. It was time to master the nine novessence arts!

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"He came out." The skinny, gray-robed man was staring intently at Plumesoar Hall from his distant palace perch.

Ning's group of three had just flown out of Plumesoar Hall, smiles on their faces. They were chatting as they flew through the clouds. Ning was in an excellent mood, because he had come here precisely for the sake of those nine novessence arts! Although he had all but depleted his store of chaos nectar, he had done everything he wanted to do.

"Eh?" Ning suddenly frowned. A thin, gray-robed Daolord was flying straight towards him. It was normal to encounter Daolords in Skywood City, a Sacred City of the Dao Alliance, but what caused Ning to go on his guard was the fact that this Daolord was the one he had encountered earlier in Plumesoar Palace.

Although he was immediately put on high alert, on the surface he continued to smile as he lead Su Youji and Pillsaint forwards.

BOOM!

A black mist suddenly spread outwards, so thick that one couldn't see through it with the naked eye. It instantly covered an area of tens of thousands of kilometers around them, and as it did an invisible surge of power swept across Ning. As for Ning, as soon as he saw the black mist coming he immediately drew Su Youji and Pillsaint into his estate-treasure.

The surge of invisible power struck directly at Ning's soul. If Ning really was just an ordinary Daolord of the Second Step, he would've fallen prey to this trick... but unfortunately, the gray-robed Daolord's opponent was Ji Ning.

“A soul-shaking technique? It doesn’t even match up to Youji’s.” Although Ning didn’t really worry about the attack too much, he was still prepared to unleash his full power in his counter. When a lion hunted a rabbit, it would still strike with full force!

“DIE!” The gray-robed man manifested a total of six arms, each wielding a curved scimitar. The light of his scimitars howled through the air as he chopped towards Ning with them. The area around Ning began to crack and shatter as saber-light appeared everywhere.

“First a secret art to shake my heart, then close combat to ensure my death. What a nasty fellow.” Ning waved his right hand, causing a Northbow sword to appear.

“Break.” Ning stabbed out with his sword. His strike seemed ordinary in every respect. And yet, although the gray-robed man had clearly been the first to strike, Ning’s sword had stabbed through his forehead before his saber-light had even gotten close to Ning.

Fast. Indescribably fast. This was the Blood Drop stance of Ning’s Omega Sword Dao! Of Ning’s five Supreme Daos, the only one which had made further breakthroughs thus far was his Blood Drop sword-intent, and so his Blood Drop stance of his Omega Sword Dao was currently his most powerful strike. He was now a bit more powerful than he had been when he fought Patriarch Clearwind, and the power of this strike was close to Patriarch Clearwind’s killer attack.

“H-how can...” A look of horror and shock appeared in the gray-robed man’s eyes. How could it be that his six scimitars weren’t even able to touch or block this person’s sword? How could his opponent be this fast?

Bang! The Blood Drop stance’s full, penetrating power stabbed deep into the gray-robed man’s body, instantly reducing it into dust. The man died on the spot! It must be remembered that Patriarch Clearwind’s killer attack was able to kill weaker Daolords of the Fourth Step. This attack of Ning’s wasn’t much weaker!

“I never would’ve imagined that I’d be attacked as soon as I left Plumesoar Hall.” Ning waved his hand, collecting the treasures which the gray-robed man had left behind. “Not even cultivators are immune to the allure of treasures...”

BOOM!!!

Suddenly, a surge of terrifying black mist shot out of one of the hundred thousand-plus estates off in the distance. Ning turned to look, only to see a pair of eyes emerge from the mist and stare towards him with a murderous look.

“Seal!” An invisible ripple of power spread out from afar. Although this attack came from a great distance, the region which Ning was in was almost instantly locked.

Ning’s subconscious immediately began warning him that a terrifying threat was approaching, and the level of the threat was every bit the equal of the one posed by the Eternal Emperors Ning had encountered in the Azureflower Estate. Ning’s heart began to tremble. He knew that the situation was dire, and could vaguely sense that the Daolord of the Third Step he had just slain had to have had some sort of connection to a truly major power.

“What the hell is going on?!” Ning had been in a wonderful mood just a few moments ago, but now his face immediately turned pale.

“Hide!” Ning was out of options. He immediately transformed into a streak of light, moving ten times faster than the limits of the Heavenly Daos as he charged right back into the nearby Plumesoar Hall.

The Desolate Era

Book 29: Daolord Chapter 33: Daolord Kongsan

Plumesoar Hall was very close, and so Ji Ning was able to almost instantly fly back inside it. Per the rules of the Dao Alliance, it was absolutely forbidden to engage in acts of violence inside the restrictive spells protecting the various palaces and estates within the eight Sacred Cities. Anyone who violated this rule would be slain and their Dao destroyed!

“This fellow is pretty strong, but he probably wouldn’t dare to violate the rules of the entire Dao Alliance.” Ning relaxed slightly after hiding himself within the Plumesoar Hall. Even figures like Palace Lord Dawnstar or historical legends like Daolord Allgod hadn’t dared to challenge the Dao Alliance! The Dao Alliance’s roots were immeasurably deep, and it was the greatest organization of the entire Endless Territories. Challenge the Dao Alliance? The three Hegemons might have the power to do so, but even they wouldn’t actually carry it out.

“What an enormous disturbance.”

“What is going on?”

The customers and servants inside Plumesoar Hall all stared outside. Although the battle between Ning and the gray-robed man had concluded quite quickly, it had caused quite a disturbance as well. As for Ning, he had no time to waste on the gazes of others; his attention was focused on what was happening outside.

Whoosh. Far away, a ball of black mist suddenly appeared at the margins of the frozen space. Moments later, that black mist solidified into a human figure.

This was a man dressed in long, beautiful black robes. He had fiery red hair and fiery red eyes that were filled with an evil, murderous intent. He was currently staring at Ning, hidden away within Plumesoar Hall. Ning was staring right back at this man. Their gazes collided in midair!

“Quite bold. No wonder you dared to kill the disciple of myself, Kongsan.” Daolord Kongsan stood there calmly in empty space, emanating an aura of transcendent dominance. This was an aura that came from overwhelming self-confidence, which was in turn born from a person having reached an extremely high level cultivation that allowed him to roam the Endless Territories without meeting any superiors.

“Kongsan?” When Ning heard this name, his heart turned cold. His star map had some records regarding some of the more famous Daolords of the Endless Territories. Although the records he had on Kongsan weren’t very detailed, he still had a rough idea as to how strong this person was.

“Daolord Kongsan.” Ning remained within the protective embrace of the Plumesoar Hall’s barriers as he said in a loud voice, “I imagine, given your power, you know what happened just now. Your disciple suddenly ambushed me with the intention of killing me. I didn’t cause any trouble for him! Since he struck to kill, I cannot be blamed for killing him instead. I only struck out with a single sword.”

“He ambushed you and wanted to kill you. He failed and you killed him instead. This is all very normal.” The distant Daolord Kongsan stared at Ning calmly, but Ning couldn’t help but feel a cold feeling in his heart. “He was still, however, my disciple. Since you killed my disciple, I am going to kill you. If you have the necessary patience, you should stay in Plumesoar Hall for the rest of your life. As soon as you leave it, I’ll kill you.”

His voice was very calm, but the murderous intent within it was quite clear and heavy. There was nothing to negotiate.

“Hmph.” Ning narrowed his eyes, then turned and left.

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The cultivators and servants within Plumesoar Hall all watched curiously as they listened to Ning and Daolord Kongsan’s conversation.

“This white-robed Daolord is screwed. He actually pissed off Daolord Kongsan! Given Daolord Kongsan’s temper, he’s going to kill this kid no matter what.”

“Poor bastard.”

“Did he really think he could get away with killing Kongsan’s disciple?”

“But the white-robed Daolord is also quite formidable. He’s clearly just a Daolord of the Second Step, but he was able to kill Daolord Kongsan’s disciple with ease. That disciple had visited Plumesoar Hall on many occasions, often serving as his master’s errand boy. He was still, however, a Daolord of the Third Step. I never would’ve thought that he’d be killed in the blink of an eye. He didn’t even have the chance to beg his master to come save him.”

These cultivators and servants all chatted amongst themselves, with the servants of Plumesoar Hall being especially casual in their words. They might be weak, but they belonged to the Skywood Sect. There was an ironclad rule in Skywood City – disciples of the Skywood Sect were not to be touched! Not even Eternal Emperors would dare to violate this rule within the confines of Skywood City. This type of rule was a joint one shared throughout the eight Sacred Cities.

Whoosh. Ning entered the hall once more. The cultivators and servants turned their gazes towards Ning, and they naturally stopped chattering about him. Ning had a solemn look on his face, and his forehead was furrowed as he frowned. Clearly, he was quite troubled.

To have been targeted by Daolord Kongsan was indeed quite troublesome. Still, Ning wasn’t really afraid of him. The deceased Hegemon had given him two Dao-seals, after all, which contained the power of a full-force strike from the Hegemon. If push came to shove, he would just use one of them up! However, Ning knew exactly how valuable those two Dao-seals were. They were priceless treasures! The Sword Hegemon had only been willing to pay the price necessary to make them once he realized that he was definitely going to die. These two Dao-seals would be protective, life-saving talismans for Ning for a long time to come. Ning wouldn’t use them unless he truly had to.

“Senior.” The female attendant who had received Ning earlier walked over to him once more.

“Right. I heard that in a month from now, Plumesoar Hall will be holding a treasure auction?” Ning suddenly asked with a laugh. The nearby guests and attendants were all secretly amazed. This Daolord of the Second Step was still able to laugh at a time like this?

The female attendant immediately replied, “Yes, senior. A month from now, Plumesoar Cloud will indeed hold a treasure auction. Quite a few treasures will be up for sale this time, and the reserve prices will be much lower than in the outside world. You might find something which is both cheap and useful.” The low reserve prices of the treasure auctions was a main reason why they were so attractive to cultivators.

“I’m being targeted by Daolord Kongsan, so I can’t leave for now. I have nothing better to do, so I figured I’d go check this treasure auction of yours out,” Ning laughed. “Give me a private room. I’ll wait a month for that treasure auction to begin.”

“Done.” The female attendant nodded repeatedly. “Please follow me.”

There were some very cheap seats for each treasure auction, but there were also private, secluded rooms. If you wished to purchase some extremely valuable treasures while keeping your identity private, you would generally use one of those private rooms. No one would disturb you so long as you remained inside – this was one of the rules which Plumesoar Hall had established long ago.

The attendants and guests once more began to speculate as they watched Ning leave with the female attendant.

“The white-robed Daolord looks pretty calm.”

“Agreed. He knows that Daolord Kongsan is outside waiting for him, but he’s still able to relax and take part in the treasure auction.”

“In my opinion, he’s probably going to stay inside this hall for a very long period of time.

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Ning couldn’t be bothered to respond to the gossip going on around him. Soon, he and the attendant both reached a private room. Daolords lived for extremely long periods of time; for them to arrive a few months early for a treasure auction was quite commonplace.

“Senior, while you are in this private room, no one will disturb you unless you summon them first. Not even the members of Plumesoar Hall itself will disturb you, to say nothing of Daolord Kongsan,” the female attendant said.

“I have faith in the Skywood Sect.” Ning nodded. “Now, there’s something I need you to do for me.”

“Please tell me what you need, senior” the female attendant said.

Ning nodded slowly. “I need an intelligence report regarding Daolord Kongsan’s abilities, the more detailed the better. It needs information on all his techniques and secret arts, as well as information on his previous opponents. I need as much information as your Skywood Sect can provide.”

The female attendant couldn’t help but feel shocked, but she nodded. “As detailed as possible? The price will be quite high. It’ll probably cost around a hundred thousand cubes of chaos nectar.”

“A hundred thousand is fine.” Ning nodded. The more powerful a cultivator was, the more expensive intelligence reports about them would be. The Brightshore Kingdom’s star map held information on virtually all the Daolords of the Endless Territories, but that information was fairly cursory in nature. To procure much more detailed individual intelligence reports was extremely difficult.

“Give me a moment,” the female attendant said respectfully, then retreated.

Within the private room. Ning was originally there by himself, but moments later Pillsaint and Su Youji appeared by his side.

“Master, what happened?” Su Youji immediately asked.

“Why did you put the two of us into the estate-world?” Pillsaint was puzzled as well.

“We encountered a bit of trouble.” Ning narrated what had just happened to them. Su Youji and Pillsaint’s faces instantly turned pale.

Su Youji said worriedly, “From what you are saying, it sounds as though this Daolord Kongsan is extremely powerful. What should we do?”

“Haha, no need to worry too much. We have all the food and drink we want here. Why worry about him?” Ning picked up a nearby canteen of wine and poured himself a cup, then began to sip it in a relaxed manner as he glanced sideways at Pillsaint and Su Youji. “Don’t just stand there like idiots. Sit down and have a cup with me.”

Su Youji and Pillsaint were both feeling rather nervous, but they still sat down. After a short period of time drinking together, the sound of the door being knocked rang out. “Come in,” Ning said.

The female attendant was outside. She handed a jade slip to Ning, then said respectfully, “Senior, all the information we have regarding Daolord Kongsan is here.” Skywood Sect not only engaged in the treasure trade, it also engaged in the intelligence trade.

“Mm.” Ning put down his wine cup, then picked up the jade slip and began to read it carefully. As he read through the information, he tossed a storage treasure to the outsider woman. “You can leave now.”

The attendant looked through the storage treasure, then left obediently. “If there’s anything that you need, just summon me whenever you wish, senior.”

Ning nodded, and she shut the door behind her.

“Kongsan.” Ning picked up the jade slip once more, studying all of the information regarding Daolord Kongsan which was within that jade slip.

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Book 29: Daolord Chapter 34: Secret Arts Mastered

Ji Ning began to frown as he stared at the jade slip. What a formidable figure. He was so strong that he was most likely ranked amongst the second tier of Verge-level Daolords.

Based on what Ning knew, the first-tier Verge-level Daolords included the likes of Palace Lord Dawnstar, Daolord Allgod, and other similar figures. Palace Lord Dawnstar had once slain an Eternal Emperor with three chops of his saber, while Daolord Allgod had sent Emperor Melobo fleeing in terror.

It must be remembered that Emperor Melobo was not only an Eternal Emperor, he was also an Awakened member of the Aeonian race who was still alive today. Ordinary Eternal Emperors simply couldn't compare to him in power... and yet, in the face of Daolord Allgod, he was only able to flee. In a true duel, Daolord Allgod was a bit inferior to Palace Lord Dawnstar in ferocity of attacks, but he was actually superior in tenacity and endurance. The Dao of the Sword and the Dao of the Saber were offensive Daos, after all!

"Daolord Kongsan is a bit weaker than Palace Lord Dawnstar, but not even Palace Lord Dawnstar would be able to slay him." Ning frowned. "He's skilled in the Dao of Darkness and can transform into darkness itself. He's virtually unkillable. His ability to transform into darkness means that he has incredible control over space! When fleeing, he's able to move at thirty-six times the speed of light. The darkness, by nature, is inscrutable and mysterious. This Dao can be used to affect the soul, but its particularly dangerous in close combat."

"He's an untamable, unruly figure with no clan and no sects. He is also an extremely selfish person, and at least sixteen Daolords of the Fourth Step have died to him. He's currently living in an estate within Skywood City." The more Ning read, the bigger his headache became.

Daolords who were skilled in combat weren't terrifying. Daolords who were skilled in staying alive were! Kongsan was one such person. His ability to dissolve into darkness made him virtually unkillable, and he was incredibly fast and skilled in spatial teleportation. He could flee whenever he wished, but was also dangerous in close combat. He had no obvious weaknesses!

.....

"Master?" Su Youji called out softly.

"Master, is Kongsan a tough nut to crack?" Pillsaint asked.

Ning put away the jade slip, then nodded. "A very tough nut indeed. He's one of the toughest Daolords to deal with. Not even Palace Lord Dawnstar would be able to kill him."

"He's that powerful?" Both Su Youji and Pillsaint were shocked. Palace Lord Dawnstar was the most powerful Daolord of the Brightshore Kingdom.

"No, he's just very skilled in staying alive. His attacks are nowhere near Palace Lord Dawnstar's level." Ning had already come to a decision on what to do. "Pillsaint, Youji, I need to train for a while. Help stand guard over me, and don't let anyone in Plumesoar Hall disturb me."

"Understood," Pillsaint and Su Youji both said in unison. Ning then waved his hand, causing a stooped, thatched cottage to appear next to him.

Ning's body flickered as he flew into the thatched cottage. This was actually a small temporal acceleration estate-world, and by using up a bit of Immortal energy Ning would be able to maintain a rate of a hundred times the normal flow of time.

Within the thatched cottage. Ning was seated here in the lotus position. With a wave of the hand, he caused a series of black gourds to appear. Each black gourd contained Dao lightning, Dao fire, and other similar materials that he needed to train in the nine novessence arts.

Pop! Pop! The stoppers popped out of two of the gourds. Instantly, two streaks of Dao lightning flew out towards Ning. One was a streak of gray lightning that was filled with endless destructive power, while the other was a streak of white lightning that seemed to emanate an endless aura of hope. These two streaks of Dao lightning instantly surged into Ning's body and were easily absorbed into their respective lightning bases.

"I now have all nine lightning bases I need. Time to give it a try. If my prediction is correct, I should stand a good chance of mastering the full novessence thunder." Ning immediately began to try it out.

Crack! Bang! Boom!

It was a scene of utter chaos.

Bang! Boom! Crack!

Explosions rang out unabated.

You couldn't force things when trying to control them; you had to find and follow the flow, then slowly nudge them together, making it so that although they seemed to remain as wild and unruly as ever, they were acting in accordance with the will of an incredibly sly hunter and were drawn into one 'trap' after another. Ning spent a full two months guiding and nudging the octessence thunder and the Felworld lightning, and during this period of time he could not slack of in the slightest.

"BOOM!!!" In the end, a sudden explosion blasted out as the novessence thunder was formed! This was a streak of beautiful black lightning, and its black surface was covered with tiny silk strands that were like a layer of fur. The novessence thunder was like a living creature, like a dragon that happily swam through Ning's Jindan chaos region with ease.

Ning let out a sigh of relief. He opened his eyes, then stretched out his right hand. Whoosh! A stream of soft black divine lightning appeared within the palm of his hands. It looked like a streak of gentle and reserved black lightning, but it actually held an incomprehensible amount of power inside.

"This streak of lightning is able to slay Daolords of the Fourth Step by itself?" Ning couldn't help but sigh. Daolords of the Fourth Step generally possessed incredible divine bodies and were garbed in Dao armor, but the novessence thunder was capable of slaying them! Of course, it could only slay 'ordinary' Daolords of the Fourth Step, but that did not detract from how terrifying it was.

"The novessence water is easier to master than the novessence thunder. Time to train in it." Ning gave himself one day of rest, then continued in his training. This time, he focused on mastering the [Novessence Water] technique."

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It had taken him two months to master the [Novessence Thunder], but only half a month to master the [Novessence Water]. He took over a month to master the [Novessence Fire], as Ning wasn't nearly as

talented in fire as he was in thunder and water. The [Novessence Earth] took more than two months, while the [Novessence Metal] took more than three months.

.....

Ning mastered one secret art after another, spending the most time on the [Novessence Light] technique, as he knew very little regarding the Dao of Light. This took him nearly two years before he was able to master it. The [Novessence Void], the most powerful and thus the (theoretically) most difficult of the novessence arts, Ning was actually able to master in just eight months.

“I’ve actually mastered all nine of the secret arts?” After finishing the [Novessence Void], Ning himself felt a bit amazed at what he had accomplished. He would’ve been satisfied if he had been able to master the [Novessence Water], which was fairly weak and which he was quite familiar with. He never would’ve imagined that after a bit of effort, he would master all nine of the novessence arts!

Daolord Allgod had used these arts to roam the Endless Territories. They really were a killer combination! And he, Ji Ning, had actually mastered them?

Daolord Allgod had originally claimed that one would have to first become a Daolord of the Fourth Step, then become extremely skilled in alchemy, lightning, light, water, etc. before one would be able to master this technique! As for Ji Ning?

As for the Dao...

He wasn’t exactly skilled in the Dao of Metal, the Dao of Wind, the Dao of Wood, and many of the other Daos. However, the fifth stance of the [Brightmoon] sword-art, the Shadowless sword-intent, required him to be able to merge himself into all of his surroundings. Thus, when he had been in the inner reaches of the Genesis Lands of the alternate universe, Ning had personally visited all of the corpses of the many deceased Eternal Emperors and had meditated on the auras of their Daos.

He was very familiar with the auras of all types of Daos, and he had learned how to merge himself into them. This was part of the reason why his Shadowless sword-intent allowed him to merge into all things. Thus, although Ning wasn’t skilled in the Dao of Metal or the Dao of Wood, he was at least familiar with them. This familiarity with them, their strengths, their weaknesses... it was all a prerequisite for Ning to be able to merge into them and disappear within them.

This was exactly what the nine novessence arts required, for the user to be very familiar with the various elemental properties. One had to follow their flow and go with the grain in mixing them together like alchemical ingredients in a pill.

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On this day, within a nondescript private room inside the Plumesoar Hall of Skywood City, one of the eight Sacred Cities of the Dao Alliance, Ji Ning silently and soundlessly mastered all nine of the novessence arts, arts which would cause countless Daolords to blanch with fear!

“This was rather unexpected. Still... since I’ve mastered all nine of the secret arts...” Ning pondered for a moment. “I might not need to waste the Hegemon’s Dao-seal after all.”

“Right now, those nine mighty novessence arts are my greatest trump card. I need to find a way to make them unleash the maximum amount of power possible,” Ning pondered. The Hegemon’s two Dao-seal were trump cards that could only be used one time each, while the nine novessence arts were his own arts that could be used as many times as he chose. He naturally had to enhance them as much as he could. If he just used them for their raw power, they would still be quite strong, yes, but this wasn’t their full potential. If he could use those nine novessence arts as nine swords and then use his Omega Sword Dao’s Yin-Yang Sword Domain, the power of the novessence arts would be vastly greater.

“My Omega Sword Dao’s Blood Drop sword-intent has made a breakthrough, but the Yin-Yang sword-intent has not. I hope I will be able to make some breakthroughs soon. That way, my nine novessence arts will be able to unleash even greater power. Daolord Allgod was a grandmaster in the art of formations, which was why he was able to use those nine secret arts to form a terrifying formation to attack his foes. This was what allowed him to crush Emperor Melobo.”

Clearly, Ning wished to upgrade the power of his nine novessence arts as best he could.

“However, I’ve just finished mastering these nine arts. I need to rest a bit first.” Whoosh. Ning’s body flickered and emerged from the thatched cottage. He waved his hand, putting it away.

“Master.” “Master.” Pillsaint and Su Youji were seated outside the private room, and they immediately turned to stare towards Ning.

“What is it?” Ning laughed.

“The treasure auction has already begun. It’s gone on for several days,” Pillsaint said, then added worriedly, “Master, how do you plan to deal with Daolord Kongsan?”

“No need to worry.” Ning walked out of the private room, then stared downwards through a window. At this very moment, a loud and exciting treasure auction was occurring below them.

Ning sat down relaxedly, then picked up a nearby cup of wine. He sipped at it as he watched the treasure auction.

[The Desolate Era](#)

Book 29: Daolord Chapter 35: An Exchange of Goods

The treasure auction was in progress. In order to attract more Daolords, each treasure auction would have a few incredibly rare and valuable items that normally would never be sold and would only be traded for similarly valuable items. During the treasure auctions, however, they could be purchased for chaos nectar. Only, the price would be incredibly high.

“Haha...” Ning couldn’t help but laugh as he watched. “In the end, there’s a limit to how useful magic treasures can be.” There were some unearthly treasures which would allow a Daolord of the First Step to contend against a Daolord of the Fourth Step, but treasures could only help up to a certain point. Treasures that could unleash the power of a Daolord of the Fourth Step were generally worth more than ten million cubes of chaos nectar, and as their power increased their cost would skyrocket.

Ning noticed one insanely powerful and insanely expensive treasure known as the ‘Kingdom Blade’. This was a formation, and anyone who had this formation could spread it across a hundred million kilometers with a single thought. Within the formation, countless streaks of saber-light would appear,

and these attacks were so powerful that ordinary Daolords of the Fourth Step would be instantly slain by them. Even Daolords who weren't killed would still be heavily constrained! Ning estimated that this formation was definitely on par with his own novessence thunder attack.

The bidding for this formation started at the reserve price of eighty million cubes of chaos nectar, and in the end it was sold for 120 million cubes.

"Treasures like this are all external sources of strength." The nearby Pillsaint nodded sagely. "Artificing and alchemy all have their limits as well. Earlier, I saw a treasure in Plumesoar Hall which could unleash the power of an Eternal Emperor, but treasures like that would never appear in a treasure auction. Without question, they can only be traded for."

Ning nodded. Treasures could generally be used multiple times, whereas Dao-seals would be consumed after a single use as all they did was unleash the power which had originally been sealed into them. As a result, Dao-seals were much easier to make than magic treasures. The Sword Hegemon's Dao-seals and the almighty Brightshore Hegemon's spacetime disc were all single-use items.

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A few days later, yet another incredible treasure appeared within this treasure auction. Generally speaking, each treasure auction would have ten or so treasures like this.

"Fellow Daoists." The ancient elder standing before the dais called out in a loud voice, "This treasure is an important item which was personally forged by Emperor Milcloth."

The many Daolords seated below were all stirred. Even Ning's eyes lit up as he stared downwards from his private room. Emperor Milcloth was one of the top three artificers of the entire Endless Territories.

Whoosh. A palm-sized black flying vessel suddenly appeared in the air above the elder's hands. Although the flying vessel was small, it naturally emanated an aura of such terrifying keenness that anyone who saw it knew it had to be incredibly fast.

"This is a flying vessel which is perfectly suited for soaring at high speeds. The Emperor forged it just a short while ago, and has yet to even choose a name for it. The person who purchases it shall have the right to name it." The elder smiled, but the Daolords didn't really care about this. What a treasure's name was didn't matter; what really mattered was the amount of power it could unleash.

"This magic treasure can move a hundred times the speed of light," the elder said softly, but his quiet words drove the many Daolords below him into a state of frenzy. "The reserve price is 60 million cubes."

"60 million cubes." A deep voice instantly rang out from one of the private rooms up above.

"65 million cubes." One of the Daolords seated in the corner of the main hall below, a golden-robed man, calmly made his offer.

"68 million cubes."

This was one of the eight Sacred Cities, after all. It had many Daolords within it. Evasion-type treasures were extremely valuable to begin with, with vessels that could move at ten times the speed of light generally costing more than ten million cubes. Ones which could move at a hundred times the speed of light could generally only be traded for.

Although there were technically a number of master artificers in the Endless Territories who were capable of creating evasion-type treasures that could move at a hundred times the speed of light, the actual creation process was extremely difficult. Powerful Daolords were extremely interested in treasures like this, as there were very few who could move at a hundred times the speed of light. In fact, there weren't even many Eternal Emperors who could move at that speed.

"Eh?" Ning suddenly rose to his feet within his private room.

"Master?" Pillsaint and Youji both looked towards Ning, but Ning walked towards to the window, then pushed it open. Outside was that female attendant, who had been awaiting his summons this entire time.

"Senior." Although she had been waiting here for months, she immediately addressed him with respect.

"I wish to use a treasure to trade for that flying vessel which is currently being auctioned off," Ning said.

The female attendant was startled. That was one of the top ten treasures of this treasure auction! She immediately said, "I've already sent your request forwards. A Daolord will arrive shortly."

Whoosh. Just as she finished saying this, a figure suddenly materialized directly in front of Ning. It was the silver-robed Daolord who Ning had interacted with just a few months ago.

"Fellow Daoist, you truly do business on a grand scale." The silver-robed Daolord smiled, quite amazed by the white-robed youth in front of him. The man looked like a Daolord of the Second Step, but he was able to kill Daolords of the Third Step as easily as crushing an ant. He had already brought forty million cubes worth of business to Plumesoar Hall. Now, he was planning to acquire that flying vessel?

"Come inside and chat," Ning said.

"Wait outside," the silver-robed Daolord instructed the female attendant, then followed Ning into the private room and shut the door.

Within the private room. The silver-robed Daolord walked to the windows as well. He glanced downwards, then said merrily, "That flying vessel can move at a hundred times the limits of the Heavenly Daos. That's the maximum speed any flying vessel can obtain, and they are generally only exchanged for goods of similar value, never sold. When they do appear during our treasure auctions... the price has already reached seventy million cubes, but I wager it'll at least hit ninety million cubes. Plumesoar Hall will never engage in a losing business transaction, no matter what."

Ning nodded. He also felt certain that the final price would be at least ninety million cubes. "I know that Plumesoar Hall has more than a single flying vessel that can move that fast," Ning said. "I wish to trade for one."

"Trade?" The silver-robed Daolord's eyes lit up. He delighted in engaging in this type of trade. Flying vessels of this quality were generally only traded for similarly valuable treasures, as only the most valuable of items could possess such amazing properties.

"Ordinary treasures won't cut it," the silver-robed Daolord reminded softly.

"Take a look for yourself," Ning said, then waved his hand, causing a golden pearl with a flowing surface to appear within it.

“Deluxe hellgold?” The silver-robed Daolord’s eyes lit up. This was a core for creating a golem equivalent to a Daolord of the Fourth Step. Items like this could only be hoped for, not hunted down. “But a single pearl won’t be enough.” The silver-robed Daolord shook his head.

Ning waved his hand again. This time, a small, light green jade bottle appeared within it. A single blood-red fruit that looked like an actual drop of blood flew out from the jade bottle and hung there in the air.

“I-is that...” The silver-robed Daolord’s face began to turn pale as he stared at the item. A sacred bloodfruit? A skyjewel bloodfruit? This thing was even rarer than the deluxe hellgold, because sacred bloodfruit trees were generally controlled by the ancient, truly supreme powers of the Endless Territories. Even Hegemons would fight over such trees! Thus, the sacred bloodfruit which came from these trees would generally fall into the hands of Hegemon-level individuals. Although every single major organization was willing to spend roughly twenty million cubes to purchase a single sacred bloodfruit, those ancient powers who owned them cared little for chaos nectar and would generally only exchange them for other valuable treasures.

“These two treasures combined are still a bit lacking.” The silver-robed Daolord looked closely at Ning.

“A pearl of deluxe hellgold and a skyjewel bloodfruit, if sold on the treasure auction, should have a reserve price of at least sixty million cubes of chaos nectar,” Ning said. “Tell me, what do you think the final price would be?”

The silver-robed Daolord was startled by the question.

“Although flying vessels that can move at a hundred times the speed of light are rare, there are a number that are available for sale,” Ning said. “If you aren’t happy with my offer, I’ll go take it somewhere else.

“Y-you are seriously such a...” The silver-robed Daolord laughed helplessly. The deluxe hellgold and the skyjewel bloodfruit were indeed quite intriguing, but a flying vessel that could move at a hundred times the speed of light was also extremely valuable. The two really were worth roughly the same.

“Fine. Plumesoar Hall is willing to enter this deal with you.” The silver-robed Daolord nodded, then glanced downwards. By now, the bidding war had already reached a price of 90 million cubes, but the bids were clearly slowing down.

“95 million cubes,” the silver-robed Daolord called out.

“95.5 million cubes,” a different Daolord gritted his teeth and called out.

“98 million cubes.” The silver-robed Daolord wasn’t interested in wasting time; he immediately raised the price once more.

Ning, Su Youji, and Pillsaint were all a bit surprised. The silver-robed Daolord glanced at the three of them, then chuckled. “Making bids on our own treasures is actually quite common. If the real bids on the best treasures aren’t high enough, we’ll just ‘buy’ some of them ourselves.”

Ning and the others couldn’t help but let out startled laughs. It seemed as though Plumesoar Hall really did refuse to lose money on any of these treasure trades.

In truth, to the massively powerful organizations within the Dao Alliance like the Skywood Sect, chaos nectar wasn't really all that valuable. Deluxe hellgold, sacred bloodfruit, and other similarly rare cosmic treasures were much more worthy of collection. Deluxe hellgold wasn't that alluring; it was the skyjewel bloodfruit which caused this silver-robed Daolord to agree to this trade, because the Skywood Sect just so happened to need it to go with a number of other valuable ingredients for pill-refining.

In the end, the flying vessel was 'won' at the price of 98 million cubes. The deluxe hellgold and the skyjewel bloodfruit was given to the silver-robed Daolord, while the flying vessel entered Ning's hands.

"If you have other rare items, feel free to bring them to Plumesoar Hall." The silver-robed Daolord smiled. "We have many precious treasures, including even Dao-seals which mighty Eternal Emperors poured all of their effort into. Those can all be traded for."

"Not a bad idea." Ning smiled, then picked up the flying vessel and nodded mentally to himself. Just using the nine novessence arts against Daolord Kongsan probably wouldn't be enough, as the man was capable of transforming his body into darkness and making it virtually indestructible. But now that Ning had this flying vessel, he would definitely be guaranteed of being able to escape whenever he chose.

Although the deluxe hellgold and the skyjewel bloodfruit were important, one was an artificing ingredient while the other was an alchemical ingredient. Ning neither understood artificing nor specialized in alchemy. Use skyjewel bloodfruit in alchemy? Not even Daolord Allgod would necessarily be qualified to engage in alchemy on such a level.

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Book 29: Daolord Chapter 36: Into Battle

Skywood City. The fiery-haired, fiery-eyed, black-robed Daolord Kongsan was seated in the lotus position within the protective formations of Plumesoar Hall, his eyes closed as he waited quietly. He had been waiting before the doors for more than two years already. So long as Ji Ning dared to emerge, he would immediately sense it.

"Is Daolord Kongsan going to just wait there?"

"What else can he do? That white-robed Daolord has been hiding inside Plumesoar Hall this entire time, refusing to come out. No matter how strong Daolord Kongsan is, he wouldn't dare to challenge the Dao Alliance." The attendants inside the hall were all gossiping amongst each other.

"If the white-robed Daolord stays inside Plumesoar Hall for an entire chaos cycle, will Daolord Kongsan wait here for an entire chaos cycle?"

"Hard to say! However, the white-robed Daolord seems to be just a Daolord of the Second Step. This is a critical period of time for him as a cultivator. There's no way he's going to just hide in there forever, right?"

"It might slow down his cultivation, but at least he'll stay alive if he continues to hide in there! If he leaves, he's dead."

They all continuously whispered amongst each other about this. These attendants were all World-level figures, and they were quite interested in the grudges which elite Daolords held against each other. Whenever such elite Daolords battled against each other, news of it would quickly spread far and wide.

The stories of how Daolord Allgod hunted Emperor Melobo were passed down for countless generations. Although the affair between Ning and Daolord Kongsan wouldn't be talked about for nearly that long, it would still be the talk of the town for a brief period of time.

On one side was a monstrously strong Daolord, Daolord Kongsan. On the other side was a mere Daolord of the Second Step who was so talented he had easily slain a Daolord of the Third Step; his true power was most likely that of a Verge-level Daolord as well.

Both were at a high level of power, which naturally made for a good story.

"Eh?"

"Is that..."

"Am I seeing things?"

The attendants of Plumesoar Hall all stared in astonishment at the white-robed figure who had just emerged from the inner hallways, carrying a black sword scabbard on his back. That face... those clothes... that aura... it was the person they were talking about, the mysterious white-robed Daolord!

"He actually came out? He actually dared to come out?"

"Is he suicidal?"

"There's no way he's coming out to die. He has to have something up his sleeve." These attendants all watched curiously, alongside a good number of guests. Most of the guests were Daolords, and a few were even Daolords of the Fourth Step. However, none of them dared to get involved in a matter like this. Daolord Kongsan had been waiting here for more than two years already! This alone testified as to how badly he wished to kill the white-robed Daolord.

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Ning glanced at the attendants and Daolords, chuckled, then flew towards the entrance of Plumesoar Hall. As soon as he stepped outside, he saw the black-robed Daolord Kongsan seated in the lotus position by the doorway.

"Daolord Kongsan, you certainly are quite a patient man," Ning said.

Daolord Kongsan opened his eyes. The sharpness of his fiery eyes would cause ordinary Daolords to feel a sense of oppression in their hearts. He cracked his lips into a cold, strange smile. "I thought you would hide inside for a few chaos cycles, kid. I didn't expect you to come out so soon."

"If I stayed inside for several chaos cycles, would you really have waited here the entire time?" Ning was surprised.

"I'm a very patient man," Daolord Kongsan said calmly. "To me, time doesn't really matter. When my life is about to end, I shall go and prepare for my Daomerge."

"You sound as though you really have nothing interesting in your life." Ning shook his head. Wait here for several chaos cycles? How long had Ning been cultivating for?! Daolord Kongsan might be patient enough to wait that long, but Ning himself definitely was not.

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The attendants and guests within Plumesoar Hall all watched curiously as the two figures outside chatted with each other. One was dressed in beautiful black robes, the other was dressed in white clothes. One had a dominating and rather evil aura, while the other looked unassuming and reserved but was clearly a freakishly talented Daolord who had simply hidden away his sharpness.

“The white-robed Daolord doesn’t look scared at all.”

“Their words are tit for tat against each other.”

The customers all listened quietly, and many of them couldn’t help but feel admiration for the weaker white-robed Daolord.

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“Nothing interesting in my life? You don’t understand. Waiting is a way to temper one’s Dao-heart, and as such is a form of cultivation.” Daolord Kongsan wasn’t the slightest bit irritated, and his eyes remained as cold as ice. “What, are you going to stay within the protective barriers this entire time?” Both of them were inside the barriers of Plumesoar Hall, and combat was forbidden here.

“I’m not as bored as you. I wouldn’t waste time coming out here just to tease you a bit.” Ning shook his head. “I’m going to be leaving now. Follow me if you can.” Swoosh. Ning transformed into a streak of light, instantly flying outside the protective barrier.

“Hmph.” Daolord Kongsan’s aura expanded dramatically as he instantly disappeared into a cloud of black mist which surge out of the barrier formation and swept towards Ning.

Ning, in midair, glanced backwards at the mist. The mist was a roiling mass of darkness that was rolling straight towards him. Just looking at the mist alone caused Ning to feel a powerful sense of danger.

“It isn’t the right time to fight you just yet,” Ning mused to himself. With a wave of his hand, Ning caused a black flying vessel to appear next to him. This vessel was shaped like the tip of a sword, and it emanated an aura of incredible keenness. Whoosh! Ning entered the vessel. “Let’s go.” Now that Ning was in control of the flying vessel, it suddenly exploded with speed and went from zero to a hundred times the speed of light.

“What?” A human face immediately appeared within the roiling black mist behind Ning, and it stared straight at the vessel. “He actually has a flying vessel that can move at a hundred times the speed of light?”

A hundred times faster than the limits of the Heavenly Daos. What did speed like this mean?

Even Dao lightning ‘only’ moved at this speed! This was a level of speed which Samsara Daolords generally were unable to aspire to. There were many freakishly talented Daolords who weren’t even close to being this fast, even when they reached the Verge. Kongsan himself, for example, could only move at thirty-six times the speed of light! Palace Lord Dawnstar had reached incredible heights in the dao of the Saber, but if he merely relied on his Dao to travel even he would only be able to move at fifty times the speed of light.

Even those who were skilled in speed-oriented Daos such as the Dao of Lightning, the Dao of Wind, or the Dao of Light were rarely able to reach a hundred times the speed of light. To exceed that level of speed? You had to reach an absolutely unimaginable level of insight into a speed if you wished to do so.

For flying treasures, vessels like the one which Ning had purchased represented the apex of speed possible for treasures! Flying treasures could at most move at a hundred times the speed of light. If you wanted to go faster than that, you'd have to focus on your own training and cultivation. The vast majority of Eternal Emperors weren't able to move that fast!

"A hundred times the speed of light?" Daolord Kongsan was truly stunned, but moments later his murderous intent began to boil once more. "Excellent. It seems this kid has many treasures on him, far more than most Daolords of the Fourth Step."

It must be remembered that Daolord Kongsan had sixteen verified kills of Daolords of the Fourth Step. He loved to kill others and seize their treasures. "No wonder he dared to come out. Unfortunately... he's still too young." Daolord Kongsan smirked. "Activate!"

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Ning was controlling his flying vessel to advance at high speed. He flew out of Skywood City in the blink of an eye, but suddenly...

"Activate." A cold voice echoed for countless kilometers around him. Rumble... the formation-bases which had been hidden throughout this area suddenly showed themselves, emanating pillars of light that towered to the heavens. An enormous amount of power began to gather, and this area quickly became a completely sealed region that was separated from the outside world.

"What?!" Ning's face paled.

"Ahahaha..." The black mist once more reformed into the black-robed Daolord Kongsan. He said with a cold laugh, "Kid, did you really think you were a match for me? I knew that you would only leave once you were fully prepared... but did you really think that you were the only one who could make preparations? I've already set up four rings of formations in the area outside of Skywood City. No matter which way you fled, you'd still end up inside one of them. Space has been completely locked within this formation; no matter how fast you are, you won't be able to escape. The only path still open to you... is the path to hell!"

Ning stood there within his flying vessel. He stared at the distant Daolord Kongsan, then let out a chuckle. "Daolord Kongsan, I didn't expect that you would surreptitiously set up four sealing formations while keeping watch on the gate."

"I had thought that you would arrange for attendants of Plumesoar Hall to keep an eye on me, which was why I stayed at the gates." Daolord Kongsan shook his head. "While keeping them distracted, I ordered my eldest disciple to quietly set up these formations. Now, it seems, the subterfuge was unnecessary. I overestimated you."

"You certainly went to a great deal of trouble." Ning shook his head.

"I'm impressed at how calm you are, given your situation." Daolord Kongsan laughed coldly. "Prepare to die."

Boom! He shot through the air at high speeds, his robes fluttering with an aura of dark mist that made him move incredibly fast, but no matter how fast he was he still couldn't move as quickly as Ning did.

Swoosh! The black vessel easily and quickly pulled away from him, and Ning's voice rang out once more. "Daolord Kongsan, even though we are both inside this formation, you won't be able to catch up to me or do anything to me."

"Is that so?" Daolord Kongsan suddenly barked, "Disciple, come out!"

Whoosh. A figure suddenly emerged on the other end of the sealing formation, passing through it and appearing within the sealed region. This was a female green-robed alien Outsider, and the area around her was flooded with green mist that caused space itself to hiss and crackle.

"Disciple, stand guard on the other side while I chase him down from this side. We'll catch him and kill him." Daolord Kongsan said these words aloud, not worried that Ning might overhear them.

"Yes, Master." The green-robed woman immediately assented to his orders.

[The Desolate Era](#)

Book 29: Daolord Chapter 37: Captured

"Trapping me between the two of you?" Ji Ning glanced at the two sides. No matter which way he flew, either Daolord Kongsan or his eldest disciple would be able to move closer to him. His free space would slowly lessen no matter what.

"Oh, my dear Daolord Kongsan... your eldest disciple is quite formidable, and if I hadn't mastered the nine novessence arts I wouldn't be able to do anything to her... but now?" A cold light flashed through Ning's eyes.

Whoosh. The green mist twisting around the green-robed woman began to spread out as a number of long ropes began to reach out in every direction, with her at the very center. Every single rope-type magic treasure was able to stretch out a hundred million kilometers, and she was charging straight towards Ning. Clearly, she wanted to use these ropes to further lower Ning's area of free mobility. As for Daolord Kongsan, he transformed into that endless black mist that billowed straight towards Ning.

"Daolord Kongsan, do you really think your eldest disciple will be able to capture me?" Ning's voice rang out.

"Even if she can't, she can at least tie you down," Daolord Kongsan replied coldly. "There's nowhere for you to run. No matter where you go, you will die."

The green-robed woman was quite strong, fairly close to Patriarch Clearwind in power when he wasn't using his killer attack. As Daolord Kongsan saw it, no matter how freakishly talented this Daolord of the Second Step was, even if she failed in capturing him she would still be able to slow him down.

"Is that so?" Ning smiled coldly. Swoosh! His black vessel began to flee at high speeds, and perhaps by accident it moved closer and closer towards the green-robed woman.

Daolord Kongsan wasn't surprised in the slightest. In the end, Ning had to choose a direction, and Kongsan's eldest disciple was naturally a bit weaker than Kongsan himself. It made sense for Ning to move in her direction.

"Disciple, kill him if you can. If you can't, slow him down. Once I arrive, I'll crush him to death," Daolord Kongsan sent mentally.

"I definitely won't disappoint you, Master," the green-robed woman replied.

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The green-robed woman was moving closer and closer to Ning. Whoosh! Whoosh! Whoosh! Her magic ropes stretched out through the skies like giant pythons which coiled and lashed out against Ning.

"Ahahah!" Ning stood there at the prow of his black vessel, his two hands gripped around a single sword. He struck out, sending a dazzling streak of sword-light out ten million kilometers and striking against one of the ropes.

Daolord Kongsan was skilled in close combat, and for now Ning wasn't confident in fighting him up close. But this eldest disciple? She was the perfect match for Ning. In the end, his close combat skills had the greatest latent potential for further development. His nine novessence arts were more powerful, true, but they had already reached the level of complete mastery. In the future, he would only be able to strengthen it by making it fit into his sword-arts, but there was a limit to how much stronger they would grow.

"This kid..." Daolord Kongsan couldn't help but feel shocked by what he was seeing from afar. "What incredible sword-arts."

Ning and the green-robed woman had moved closer and closer to each other, and the two had entered close combat. The green-robed woman actually reduced the range of each rope to be merely a million kilometers, causing them to grow noticeably more powerful. When the ropes were too long, they would naturally become harder to control and thus would be weakened.

Ning brought out all six of his swords, fighting to his heart's content and actually holding the upper hand.

"He's actually slightly more powerful than my disciple?" Daolord Kongsan's face tightened slightly as he picked up the pace. "Keep him tied down, disciple."

"Don't worry, Master. The kid has extremely profound sword-arts, but he's on par with me at most." The green-robed woman didn't want to admit defeat in the face of a Daolord of the Second Step.

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Time slowly trickled on. The green-robed woman's techniques were softer and more insidious, and a battle on this level gave Ning a few deeper-level insights into his own Dao of the Sword. Life-and-death battles, especially ones against different types of opponents, were of great benefit to him training in the Dao of the Sword.

“Hm?” Ning glanced backwards, only to see that the fast-moving black mist was about to reach him. “A pity.” Ning turned to look back at the green-robed woman, then laughed, “I wanted to tussle with you for a bit longer, but your Master has arrived.”

“A pity indeed.” The green-robed woman spoke out as well. “You are a freakishly talented Daolord who should’ve been able to rise to the heavens and stun the Endless Territories... but today, you shall die and your Dao shall vanish.”

Ning shook his head. Suddenly... boom! Boom! Boom! Boom! Boom!

One surge of incredible power after another began to blast out from the area around Ning, each contained unbelievable amounts of force. Generally speaking, Daolords of the Fourth Step would immediately die if touched by a single one of these streaks of power, and there were nine of them roaming around in the skies. Moments later, they swiftly began to twine around each other, transforming into two dazzling streaks of sword-light.

The novessence fire, novessence water, and rest of the Five Elements techniques all joined together under the leadership of the novessence water. Water supported all things without complaint, and was able to tolerate everything.

The novessence thunder, novessence wind, novessence light, and novessence void were led by the novessence void. The novessence void technique was the most powerful of the nine novessence arts, and it was actually capable of commanding all eight of the other arts. For it to merely command three was simplicity itself.

The two groups transformed into two enormous streaks of sword-light, which then gave birth to the Yin-Yang Sword Domain of Ning’s Omega Sword Dao.

“What the hell is that?!” Daolord Kongsan was still trying to catch up, but his face instantly tightened when he saw this. He could tell that this was a technique of incredible power, but for a brief moment he wasn’t able to recognize it. The Endless Territories held far too many secret arts, and in the past he had never battled against experts who had mastered the nine novessence arts.

“B-but...” The green-robed woman’s face turned completely ashen as she called out, “Master, save me!”

“He won’t make it.” Ning glanced at the green-robed woman. Whoosh! The two enormous streaks of sword-light formed into an awesome, enormous vortex that instantly encompassed and surrounded the green-robed woman. She frantically tried to use her ropes to defend against them, but the power of the nine novessence arts when applied through the Yin-Yang Sword Domain of Ning’s Omega Sword Dao was simply too powerful. There was no way she could possibly endure such an attack, and her magic treasures were knocked flying away like duckweed in a raging river.

As for the green-robed woman, she frantically tried to use other spells or magic treasures to buy herself some time, but alas they were all knocked flying away. In the blink of an eye, the enormous whirlpool had ground its way to her body.

“NO!!!” The green-robed woman let out a resentful howl. She truly couldn’t accept this outcome. Her master was an extremely selfish and vicious man, but for the sake of growing and improving herself she had still chosen to become apprenticed to him.

Now, she was a Daolord of the Fourth Step. She was planning on helping her race survive and flourish. She couldn't die. She couldn't die!

BOOM! She had tried everything she had, but there was nothing she could do in the face of this overwhelming disparity in power. Her skills were stronger than those of ordinary Daolords of the Fourth Step, but there was no way she could possibly endure Ning's killer strike. Her body was instantly disintegrated, and as she died a hint of agony and despair flashed through her eyes.

"Eh?" Moments later, she was stunned... because part of her body was actually left undamaged. Although the terrifying vortex of sword-intent surrounded her, it no longer pressed the attack. If it did, she would be totally destroyed.

"Hurry up and get in here. Otherwise, I'll take your life." Ning tossed out a gourd which instantly flew to the green-robed woman's side and sent out a surge of overwhelming strong sucking power towards her. What remained of the green-robed woman's body didn't dare to resist, and it allowed Ning to suck her into the gourd. If Ning was going to capture her, at least she wouldn't die right away.

Ning waved his hand, causing the gourd to return to him. He then turned to look at the attacking Daolord Kongsan. "Daolord Kongsan, your eldest disciple is now in my hands," Ning said.

"Damn." Daolord Kongsan had an ugly look on his face.

"Withdraw immediately and I'll spare her life," Ning barked.

"Withdraw?" The baleful look in Daolord Kongsan's eyes only grew stronger. "No one can threaten me. She's just one disciple. Today, I shall take your life no matter what."

Seeing this, Ning just shook his head. What a madman. The information which the Skywood Sect had given him was quite accurate; Daolord Kongsan was an exceedingly selfish man who didn't really care about his disciples, only himself. The reason he had chosen to kill Ning was not because he cared about his disciple or felt sorry for him, but because he felt as though his personal dignity had been affronted by his disciple's death.

"If that's the case, let's fight." A fierce light flashed through Ning's eyes. "Kill!"

Rumble... those nine novessence arts once more formed into those two enormous streaks of sword-light, and they illuminated each other as they intertwined and lashed out through the skies towards the distant Daolord Kongsan.

"Attacks on this level are useless against me." Daolord Kongsan was filled with a desire to kill, and he revealed his true form as the black mist roiled around him. He stretched out with his right hand, producing an enormous, pitch-black scimitar within it.

Slash!

The enormous scimitar swept out, carrying a hint of black light on its edge. Space itself parted in a natural way in front of that edge, but not a single iota of his power leaked out. It was like space was nothing more than butter, with his knife cutting neatly through it.

The scimitar chopped out towards those nine rampaging novessence arts as the two began their midair clash.