

## Desolate 1021

### [The Desolate Era](#)

#### Book 29: Daolord Chapter 38: A Furious Fight

“What a terrifying scimitar.” Ji Ning could sense that the flows of his nine novessence arts were being parted as though they had been split in half. “But my secret arts were formless to begin with!”

If you cut a stream of water with a knife, the water would continue to flow. Ning’s nine novessence arts of lightning, wind, fire, void, and everything else were all types of formless energy that could assume whatever shape he chose.

In the face of that terrifying scimitar, the rampaging flood of the novessence arts was instantly split in half. Despite that, the power of the secret arts didn’t lessen at all, and two dragon-like streams of sword-light continued onwards towards Daolord Kongsan.

“Not good.” Daolord Kongsan’s face paled, and the black mist around him instantly became far denser and thicker than before. Boom! Boom! Boom! Boom! The sword-light formed by the novessence arts were able to transform into many forms. They instantly transformed into eighteen different streams of sword-light, each of which was violent beyond care. Filled with the sword-intent of the Omega Sword Dao’s Blood Drop stance, they forcibly pierced through the black mist!

In truth, Ning’s nine novessence arts were far stronger than Daolord Kongsan’s darkness-based secret arts, and so penetrating them was very simple.

“Heavenbreaker!” As soon as those eighteen streams of sword-light pierced through the black mist, they suddenly transformed. They became like eighteen whips of flowing water that furiously lashed out, striking Daolord Kongsan on his body.

Ever since Ning had come up with his Omega Sword Dao, he had been able to perfectly join together all different types of sword-arts and Sword Daos. This was why his attacks could seem incredibly soft and yet unleash a dominating display of sword-intent.

Boom! Boom! Boom! Boom! These eighteen streaks of sword-light contained both the criss-crossing power of the Yin-Yang stance as well as the ferocity of the Heavenbreaker stance. Daolord Kongsan was forced to instantly transform his body into darkness itself. The sword-light roamed through the darkness unimpeded, causing his form to shudder a few times, but he was able to easily endure the strike.

“What formidable secret arts. Your sword-intent roams everywhere, letting no opening go untouched.” Daolord Kongsan’s face suddenly appeared from that pool of darkness, and he had a cold smile on his face as he spoke.

“It does indeed leave no opening untouched,” the distant Ning said. “My secret arts are formless like water; of course they flow over and into everything. But precisely because of that, they aren’t particularly powerful when I use them to display these sword-arts.”

You could use a stream of water to stab or to whip someone, but there was no way it would ever hit as hard as an actual weapon meant for those purposes. Weapons were both tougher and sharper.

“Omega Sword Dao, Yin-Yang.” Ning’s gaze turned cold. Rumble... instantly, the energy of the nine novessence arts began to crush and grind down upon everything within a hundred million kilometers. Yin and Yang criss-crossed with each other, grinding away at each other and everything between them. Even though Daolord Kongsan had transformed into darkness incarnate, he could still sense how terrifying this Yin-Yang Sword Domain was, and it was suppressing and restraining him from every possible angle.

“Damn.” Daolord Kongsan felt as though he had been trapped in quicksand. Ning’s secret arts were simply too strong, and they were omnipresent; there was no way Daolord Kongsan could completely block them. Or at least, there was no way he could use his secret arts or magic treasures to block them.

“I had thought that by using my nine novessence arts, I would be able to cause him serious injury even though I probably wouldn’t be able to kill him. Daolord Kongsan truly does have a virtually indestructible body. There’s no way to injure him at all.” Ning couldn’t help but sigh. He had already unleashed his most powerful attacks, but all he was able to do was to suppress this foe.

In the end, Ning simply was at too low a level. His Omega Sword Dao might be formidable, but he was still just a Daolord of the First Step.

Daolord Allgod was a grandmaster of formations and had reached a much higher level than Ning was currently at. When he used those nine same arts alongside his formations, his power was much greater than Ning’s was.

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While Ning was sighing to himself, he had no idea just how stunned and furious Daolord Kongsan was. Daolord Kongsan was a venerable Verge-level Daolord who had roamed the Endless Territories for many years... but today, he was actually being beaten down by a Daolord of the Second Step?

“GRAAH!” The endless darkness suddenly released a low, furious growl. Instantly, the darkness quickly began to solidify into a black silhouette that had a noticeably more powerful aura than before, and which was wielding an enormous scimitar.

“Kid, you should feel proud that you’ve forced me to use my supreme attack. Now die!” The blurry black silhouette instantly charged towards Ning as he furiously chopped towards Ning with that enormous scimitar.

This chop caused spacetime to freeze. It was filled with a towering killing intent that struck out from incredibly far away, slamming directly through Ning’s body as it struck against his soul. Ning was still standing at the prow of his distant black vessel, but he could still clearly sense a soul attack of immense power striking at him.

“Hmph!” Within Ning’s sea of consciousness, his soul let out a furious snort. The murderous intent slammed towards Ning’s soul like a wave, but Ning’s soul was completely unmoved. It was comparable to the soul of a Daolord of the Fourth Step, after all, and his heartforce was at the point where he could break through to the sixth stage of heartforce at any moment. Once he did, he would be a true Heartforce Cultivator! Less than 1% of Daolords were Heartforce Cultivators, and so this enormous advantage in terms of heartforce made Ning’s mental and soul defenses incredibly strong.

In addition, Ning had already read an intelligence report stating that Daolord Kongsan had a soul attack, but the attack was only able to confuse and disrupt; it wasn't all that powerful. In the end, Daolord Kongsan was most skilled in close combat!

"Eh?!" The distant Daolord Kongsan looked at Ning both angrily and expectantly.

"Daolord Kongsan, did you really think you would be able to shake my soul with an attack on this level?" Ning laughed coldly.

Daolord Kongsan was shocked. It was true that soul attacks weren't his forte, but the soul attack wasn't a weak one either. Daolord Kongsan felt certain that this mere Daolord of the Second Step had to have a fairly weak soul, even if he did have a fairly high level of insight into the Dao. Logically speaking, the soul should've been an enormous weak point. Even Daolords of the Fourth Step would've been confused and impacted by his soul attack.

"You aren't bad at all, kid. But if you are really so tough, stop running and fight me in close combat!" Daolord Kongsan bellowed angrily as he flew towards Ning.

"Haha, I'm just a Daolord of the Second Step! You want me to fight in you in close combat? Do you have any sense of shame? If I broke through to become a Daolord of the Third Step, I'd be more than happy to fight you in close combat." Riding his black vessel, Ning was able to easily pull away from Daolord Kongsan once more. He also continued to use his nine novessence arts to either slow down or attack Daolord Kongsan repeatedly.

Daolord Kongsan was getting angrier and angrier as this 'fight' continued. Ning continued to flee, and he continued to chase. Ning had it quite easy in this battle, as he continued to attack while fleeing thanks to his overwhelming advantage in speed.

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"If this continues... I really won't be able to do anything to this kid at all." Daolord Kongsan shook his head. "If memory serves, the secret arts this kid is using should be the nine novessence arts of the legendary Daolord Allgod." The reason why hadn't recognized the technique earlier was because he had never personally battled it before, but he had read the description of the techniques within the Spellworld. After having battled against Ning for so long, he had some insights into what it was that he was up against.

"I really wonder how a Daolord of the Second Step like him was able to master such terrifying secret arts," Daolord Kongsan mused. "I heard that in order to master those nine novessence arts, you not only need to have certain insights into the likes of lightning, wind, and fire, you also have to be a grandmaster alchemist; if your alchemy skills are even the slightest bit deficient, you will never be able to master the nine novessence arts. Is this Daolord of the Second Step a grandmaster alchemist?!" Even Kongsan was secretly speechless.

"If he is... there's no way he could've learned alchemy by himself. He either won an incredibly powerful legacy or has an incredibly powerful teacher behind him." After having battled for so long, Daolord Kongsan was starting to grow wary of Ning. This person definitely wouldn't be as easy to deal with as the other Daolords of the Fourth Step he had slain.

“Screw it. I’ll capture him alive first! If he really does have a powerful figure behind him... hmph. I’m a core member of the Dao Alliance. Very few people are qualified to threaten me. When the time comes, I’ll chat with him a bit. I can force the kid to swear a few lifeblood oaths, then let him go.” Daolord Kongsan mused to himself, “But if he doesn’t have any powerful figures behind him, I can do whatever I want to him.”

Whoosh. Daolord Kongsan sent his will outside the grand sealing formation and towards one of the hundred thousand estates located at the margins of Skywood City. Aside from Kongsan, there were a few other incredibly powerful and ancient Daolords who lived in seclusion in those estates.

“Big brother Shaka.” Daolord Kongsan instantly sent mentally, “I’m embarrassed to say this, but it seems I’ll need to ask you to help me out and capture the kid.”

Within the estate. A handsome man with long golden hair and a golden suit of armor was seated in the lotus position inside a courtyard, staring at the heavens. He looked like an ordinary cultivator, but in truth he was a terrifyingly strong Aberrant. Amongst the ancient figures who lived in seclusion in Skywood City, he was reputedly the fastest of them all. The Dao Alliance was an extremely welcoming and open organization, allowing members of the Brightshore Kingdom, the Aberrants, and even the Ancient cultivators to live within their cities. Only their mortal enemies, the Aeonians, were refused entry by the Dao Alliance. And of course, the Dark Kingdom.

“Kongsan, he seems to just be a Daolord of the Second Step. You really can’t catch him yourself?” A gleam of purple light flashed through Daolord Shaka’s eyes.

“I really cannot. This kid has way too many tricks up his sleeve, which is why I’ve come to ask you for help, big brother Shaka.”

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### **Book 29: Daolord Chapter 39: Summoning Friends**

“Describe all of his abilities to me in detail,” Daolord Shaka said. He wouldn’t agree to a request like this lightly; he had to first see what sort of abilities this Daolord of the Second Step possessed.

“I’ll narrate to them to you.” Since Daolord Kongsan was asking this man to help out, it wasn’t appropriate for him to hold anything back. He gave a quick explanation, then continued, “Don’t worry, big brother Shaka. I also have the feeling that he probably has a significant background, given how talented he is. To be safe, we should first capture him and then see if anyone comes to save him. If an Emperor comes for him, we’ll ransom him for a pretty price. If no one comes from him, we’ll just kill him.”

Daolord Shaka nodded. “Alright.” Neither of the two were the cowardly, trouble-fearing type. Kongsan was a core member of the Dao Alliance, while Daolord Shaka was a high-level member of the Aberrants. The kid might have powerful backers, but so did they. The only reason they were planning to capture Ning first was to avoid causing unnecessary trouble.

“I’ll agree to help you here,” Daolord Shaka said.

“Thank you, big brother Shaka.” Daolord Kongsan was delighted.

Swoosh! Daolord Shaka instantly transformed into a streak of light that disappeared into the skies as it hastened towards the grand sealing formation.

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Within the sealing formation. Daolord Shaka continued to chase after the fleeing Ji Ning as the two continuously exchanged attacks against each other.

“He can’t do anything to me.” Ning was extremely clear-headed despite the battle’s progression.

“Daolord Kongsan himself knows this quite well. He won’t just let things drag out like this; he must be coming up with a plan! But it won’t matter what he has up his sleeve; I won’t let him do as he wishes.”

“Mm.” Ning immediately sent a mental message, “Send word to the Brightshore Kingdom right away that I am in a grand sealing formation outside Skywood City and am being pursued and attacked by Daolord Kongsan. I would like to ask the fellow Daoists of the Brightshore Kingdom to help out. The duration of this request is a single day.”

“Yes, Master.” The alien World-level retainer who had with Ning this entire time immediately acknowledged the order. This retainer had another clone in the Brightshore Kingdom, and so was able to make the report almost immediately. Moments later, the Brightshore Kingdom sent word to every single Daolord and Emperor within its ranks.

In truth, in recent years Ning had received quite a few distress calls as well, but they were all too far away from him. This time, for example, Ning himself had said that the duration of his request was a single day! If others couldn’t make it here within a single day, there was no point to them even coming. If they were too far away, they would only find at the end of their long journey that the matter had come to an end long ago.

“But asking for the Brightshore Kingdom to help out is just a precaution,” Ning mused. “In the end, it doesn’t have that many Daolords. The number of Daolords it has who can deal with Kongsan are even fewer. Although this is one of the eight Sacred Cities and there should be quite a few members of the Brightshore Kingdom here, it’s hard to say if there are any who can match Kongsan.”

“I suppose I’ll have to wait and see. If there’s nothing I can do, I’ll use up the Hegemon’s Dao-seal,” Ning mused. You always had to have a backup plan.

The Dao of the Sword was an offensive Dao, and so the Sword Hegemon’s Dao-seal possessed terrifying offensive power. Even Eternal Emperors would deeply desire an item of such incredible value. However, the path of cultivation was a long one, and this affair with Daolord Kongsan might be nothing more than a minor bump in this long road. Ning wasn’t willing to use up his Dao-seal unless absolutely necessary.

But of course... if it WAS absolutely necessary, then he would simply use it! Once he used it up, he would win all of the treasures which Daolord Kongsan possessed. However, in Ning’s eyes not even all of the combined treasures Daolord Kongsan possessed were as important as his Hegemon’s Dao-seal.

A short while later...

“Hahaha!” Daolord Kongsan suddenly began to laugh. “Let’s see how much longer you can keep fleeing, kid.” Ning’s face tightened. Daolord Kongsan suddenly pointed off into the distance. Instantly, a golden figure flew through the distant barrier, followed by the barrier once more being sealed shut.

The golden figure was that of a handsome, golden-haired man dressed in golden armor. He glanced at Ning curiously, then slowly shook his head and said, "Kid, it's quite rare and impressive for a Daolord of the Second Step to be as strong as you are. What a true pity."

"Please help me, big brother Shaka, in capturing him," Daolord Kongsan said.

"Shaka?" Ning's face turned pale. "Daolord Shaka of the Aberrants?"

Daolord Shaka was an incredibly famous Daolord of the Aberrants, and that fame came from his incredible speed. He was one of those figures who could go more than a hundred times faster than the speed of light! In speed alone, he was superior to the vast majority of Eternal Emperors. And, as an Aberrant, he was incredibly fast and powerful in close combat as well.

"It seems I'll have to use the Hegemon's Dao-seal after all." A sharp light flashed through Ning's eyes.

"Kid, I recommend you give up," Daolord Shaka said calmly. He had absolute faith in his overwhelming speed.

"Kongsan! Stay your hand!" A cold shout rang out from afar, going through the barrier and reverberating within the world inside it. The people outside the formation were unable to see what was going on inside, but those inside it were able to see and hear what was happening outside with perfect clarity.

"Eh?" Daolord Kongsan and Daolord Shaka both looked outside, as did Ning. Two figures had appeared outside the formation. One was a skinny, white-haired, middle-aged man. The other was a muscular man with a giant greataxe on his back who had a single horn in the middle of his head.

"Kongsan, stay your hand. Release Darknorth!" The skinny, white-haired man said coldly.

"Daolord Soleman? Daolord Skyaxe?" Daolord Kongsan's face tightened.

"Palace Lord Soleman?" Within the formation, Ning revealed a look of delight as well. Lord Soleman was the Vice Palace Lord of the Heartforce Palace! Other Daolords of the Fourth Step might be strong or weak, but every single one who was also a Heartforce Power possessed terrifying power. Daolord Soleman, as the Vice Palace Lord of the Heartforce Palace of the Brightshore Kingdom, was also an incredibly powerful figure whose name alone was enough to terrify countless cultivators. Heartforce Cultivator Daolords simply possessed far too many strange ways to kill people. Sometimes, a single glance from them was enough to slay.

As for Daolord Skyaxe, he wasn't a member of the Brightshore Kingdom; he was probably just accompanying Daolord Soleman and so came over as well. However, Daolord Skyaxe was one of the most freakishly powerful of Daolords who had most likely devised and joined together multiple different Supreme Daos. He was ranked as the number five Daolord of this era in the Endless Territories.

"Darknorth? The kid over here?" Daolord Kongsan laughed coldly.

"Release him," Daolord Soleman barked.

"Soleman, if I release him just because you told me to, I would have no face left," Daolord Shaka said coldly.

“Daolord Soleman, Daolord Skyaxe, next to me is big brother Shaka,” Daolord Kongsan said. Soleman and Skyaxe were outside the formation and so weren’t able to see anything inside of it at all.

Although there was a ranking of power in the Endless Territories, ranks didn’t count for everything. For example, an incredibly powerful Daolord’s abilities might be perfectly countered by a lower-ranked Daolord’s abilities! Palace Lord Dawnstar might be in trouble if he encountered an ancient, incredibly powerful Eternal Emperor, but someone like Daolord Shaka would be able to escape thanks to his incredible speed. Everyone had their own strengths and weaknesses; those who stood at the very top ranks amongst Daolords all had their own pride and rarely submitted to others.

If Kongsan encountered Soleman and Skyaxe by himself... he was strong enough to stay alive, but he’d still feel trepidation. Now that Daolord Shaka, a Daolord even more powerful than himself, was by his side... he felt much more confidence.

“Soleman, Skyaxe, the two of you don’t have the right or the power to demand me to release this kid,” Daolord Shaka said.

“Attack!” Daolord Soleman was instantly enraged. “Break this formation apart!”

BOOM! The nearby Daolord Skyaxe was enraged as well. He immediately attacked, and when he did the world itself seemed to tremble, and even Skywood City itself seemed to turn dim. Endless yellow illusions filled the vast area surrounding Skywood City. Moments later, a terrifying greataxe struck out from within the yellow illusions and chopped downwards towards the grand sealing formation. In terms of using raw power to break apart formations, Daolord Soleman clearly wasn’t as strong as Daolord Skyaxe.

“What’s going on? What’s with this terrifying aura?” Quite a few cultivators within Skywood City were surprised by the commotion.

BOOM! The grand sealing formation shook a few times and a few ripples appeared on the surface of the barrier, but it managed to endure the blow.

“Hahaha! Daolord Skyaxe, if I was forced to fight you in combat I would have no choice but to turn tail and flee. It would be a joke, however, if you could overwhelm me even through these formations I’ve set down.” Daolord Kongsan’s voice echoed from within the formation.

“Damn.” Daolord Skyaxe was infuriated.

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“They won’t be able to help you.” Daolord Kongsan turned his head to stare at Ning, still aboard his black vessel.

“If you aren’t willing to just surrender... then we’ll be forced to simply capture you alive. Let’s see what Soleman and Skyaxe can do about it. Last time we met in the Terror Starsea, he caused me to lose face. Does he really think I’ll just give way to him this time?” Daolord Shaka snickered, then transformed into a streak of light that instantly moved more than a hundred times the speed of light.

Aboard the black vessel, Ning let out a long sigh. “It seems I’ll have to use the Hegemon’s Dao-seal after all.” Murder flickered in Ning’s eyes.

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### **Book 29: Daolord Chapter 40: Hegemon's Dao-Seal**

Outside the grand sealing formation. Soleman and Skyaxe were both furious but helpless.

Within the grand sealing formation. Daolord Kongsan was smirking from afar. It looked as though things had been settled! Daolord Shaka had transformed into a dazzling, breathtakingly eye-catching streak of golden light as he charged towards Ning. He truly was moving extremely fast, but Ji Ning was able to see him moving with perfect clarity. There was a sensation of time itself being distorted, which caused Ning to feel rather uncomfortable.

Ning continued to calmly fly forwards on his black vessel, and a dark blue crystalline leaf suddenly appeared in his hand.

Crack! A seemingly simple action, the crushing of a leaf... but the terrifying, overwhelming amount of power hidden within that leaf-shaped Dao-seal was finally unleashed! The deceased Sword Hegemon had paid an enormous price to create this terrifying Dao-seal before his death, and the power within it was truly inconceivable.

“What terrifying power. So this... this is the might of a Hegemon.” When Ning crushed the seal, he instantly sensed a surge of unfathomable power flood through him and come under his control.

He was the guide, the conduit for this power. He had the right to tell it where to strike, and that was where it would strike. He could also allow the power to voluntarily disperse.

“Go, then. Kill them.” Ning turned his gaze to Daolord Shaka, soaring towards him like a streak of golden light, as well as the distant Daolord Kongsan.

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BOOM! An awesome display of power burst forth. It was like the darkness before the dawn was suddenly split by the first rays of the sun which cast its radiance over the land. The streak of sunlight shone down upon the hearts of both Daolord Shaka and Daolord Kongsan!

“NO!!!!” Looks of utter horror appeared on the faces of both of them. As soon as that overwhelming burst of force first revealed its true, terrifying luster, both of their hearts were filled with the utmost terror. They wouldn't feel such terror even in the face of death itself, but the overwhelming power of a Hegemon caused them to feel a sense of uncontrollable terror. This was something which came from the very depths of their souls.

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Outside the formation. The faces of Daolord Soleman and Daolord Skyaxe both changed as well. Although they weren't able to see what was happening inside the formation, a sensation of complete and utter terror filled their hearts.

“Retreat.”

“Retreat immediately!”

This was the only thought which entered their minds: Get as far away from this place as possible!



They could sense that something terrifying was about to happen within the formation! Perhaps the terrifying power within it wasn't aimed directly at them, but they still couldn't help but feel a sense of fear.

Whoosh! Whoosh! Both retreated immediately.

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Within Skywood City.

Most of the cultivators were too distant from the grand sealing formation, and so when Ning shattered the Hegemon's Dao-seal they didn't sense much when its power was unleashed. The two most powerful figures inside the city, however, able to sense it clearly.

"I just sensed an enormous burst of power." Emperor Skywood turned his head, staring towards the distant grand sealing formation.

"Yes. The power is tremendous." The old man with tousled blue hair facing him nodded solemnly as well. "I can sense that it is strong enough to threaten the two of us. Skywood, this is your territory. How could there be such a strong burst of power here? It must have been generated from one of those strange treasures that was brought back from the Terror Starsea. That, or it had to be a single-use Dao-seal or another similar type of treasure which was personally created by a Hegemon."

Emperor Skywood nodded as well, then chuckled. "It's been a long time since I've sensed anything that could threaten me. Let's go take a look."

"Kill!" Ning guided that terrifying surge of Sword Dao power forward.

BOOM! The enormous, terrifying illusion of a greatsword suddenly appeared in the area around Ning. As soon as the greatsword appeared, both space and time were completely squeezed and compressed. Daolord Shaka and Daolord Kongsan were both so terrified that they went numb. This was a level of power which they were completely unprepared to handle!

"Damn, damn, damn! Damn that Kongsan. How could he have offended a freak like this?!" Daolord Shaka's heart was filled with shock, rage, and resentment. "What sort of incredible fortune did this freak stumble upon? How could he have such a monstrously powerful treasure? Not even the protective treasure which the Hegemon bestowed upon me might not be able to resist this terrifying sword."

A translucent bottle suddenly appeared out of nowhere within the palm of Daolord Shaka's hand. Within the bottle was a crystalline speck of sand. Daolord Shaka felt such sorrow that it was as though blood was dripping out of his heart. This was an ancient relic he had acquired after countless years of braving dangerous territories, and was the most powerful protective treasure he had ever acquired. He hadn't expected that he would have to use it up because of his decision to help Daolord Kongsan.

Crack! The bottle was shattered, and the sand within it instantly emitted a softy, blurry glow that covered Daolord Shaka. Whoosh! The light-covered form of Daolord Shaka instantly disappeared without a trace, as though he had never even been here.

"N-no. How could I, Kongsan, die in a place like this? Impossible." Daolord Kongsan instantly produced two strange treasures in his hands. He immediately shattered them without even pausing.

These two different treasures, when shattered, produced two different surges of power. The first surge of power sought to influence the local spacetime and change the trajectory of the impending giant sword illusion. Alas, the surge of power instantly disappeared, because it was powerless against the sword. As for the second surge of power, it was applied to Daolord Kongsan himself. It transformed into an enormous globe of water that covered his body.

BOOM!!!

The enormous sword came slashing down. Space and time both came to a halt as all things were sheared away by its power. It chopped down upon the giant globe of water, which was instantly shattered by this overwhelmingly dominating sword. As for Daolord Kongsan, he had already transformed into darkness incarnate within that water globe. But in the face of that terrifying sword illusion... he melted away like snow in summer. His body of darkness incarnate was completely unable to help him. When the sword-light chopped down, the region of darkness dissipated into nothingness.

Daolord Kongsan had perished!

Whoosh! The enormous illusion of a greatsword continued forwards to chop through the grand sealing formation, easily piercing through it and continuing to charge forwards. It then flew into the skies, out of this everworld, and into the distant primordial chaos.

“Dissipate!” Ning willed it, and that terrifying illusion of a greatsword quickly dissipated. Its power spread out into trillions of tiny streams that swept out in every direction, causing the primordial chaos itself to tremble.

“Daolord Kongsan.” Ning’s body flickered as he instantly moved as though by teleportation through the void to appear at the place where Daolord Kongsan died. Ning glanced at the treasures that lay there in midair, then shook his head. “I didn’t imagine that this sword would shatter even Daolord Kongsan’s storage treasures. A few of the items inside remain, though.” Ning waved his hand, gathering all of the remaining treasures of Daolord Kongsan.

Daolord Kongsan actually had several storage estate-treasures. Some of the weaker ones had been crushed, as had many of the treasures stored within them. However, his top-grade Eternal estate-treasures were scarred but still whole.

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After putting away Daolord Kongsan’s treasures, Ning turned to glance off into the distance. Earlier, he had seen Daolord Shaka flee. Fleeing wasn’t that impressive, actually. For example, Ning himself had that spacetime disc which the almighty Hegemon had given him. If he had been faced with a similar attack, he might’ve been able to flee as well. But of course, Ning wouldn’t dare say that he was completely certain in his chances, and he wouldn’t be so foolish as to actually test it out.

“Darknorth.” Two distant figures flew towards him from afar.

Ning turned to look at them. It was Daolord Soleman and Daolord Skyaxe. They had fled in terror moments ago, but now they had flown back.

“Senior apprentice-brother Soleman.” Ning hurriedly flew over and said courteously, “Thank you and Daolord Skyaxe so much for coming here to rescue me.”

The Daolords of Brightshore Kingdom all referred to each other as equals of the same generation. Even when Ning was merely at the World level, he still addressed Palace Lord Woodflower as senior apprentice-brother Woodflower.

“Haha, we didn’t really save you; you saved yourself.” Daolord Soleman glanced at the white-robed youth with quite a bit of curiosity. This was his first time meeting Ning; in the past, he had only heard stories of Ning from Solewind. “Darknorth, you sent a request to the Brightshore Kingdom to ask the other Daolords to help out because you didn’t wish to use up that precious treasure, I assume?”

“That treasure was absolutely extraordinary.” The nearby Daolord Skyaxe sighed in praise as well. “It truly was powerful. Anyone who wants to rely on their own powers to survive such an attack would absolutely have to have the most supreme of protective divine abilities.”

Ning nodded. That attack wasn’t necessarily omnipotent; for example, Daolord Shaka had been able to escape. Certain divine abilities that could make the body comparable to top-grade Eternal treasures might also allow for survival! However, such techniques were incredibly rare and valuable, and to actually reach such a level was extremely difficult. Ning had a Hegemon’s legacy, but had still only been able to train his body to the low-grade Eternal treasure level.

“I really didn’t want to use it up, but I had no choice,” Ning said.

“Come, come! I’ve heard about you from Solewind long ago, and it seems you truly are an incredible figure. Come have some wine at my estate,” Daolord Soleman said with a laugh.

“Perhaps other powers from the Brightshore Kingdom will come here as well.” Ning hesitated a bit. “I should...”

He had notified the Brightshore Kingdom for anyone within a day’s travel of Skywood City to come help him fight against Daolord Kongsan. Some of them might be on their way even now. If they arrived only to be unable to locate Ning... that would be inappropriate of Ning.

“Simple.” Daolord Soleman chuckled. “Just send another message through the Brightshore Kingdom. Just say that anyone who can reach Skywood City within a day should come visit Daolord Soleman’s residence.”

“Haha, I was foolish not to think of this.” Ning immediately sent another message to the Brightshore Kingdom.

“Come, come!” Daolord Soleman urged.

“Absolutely.” Ning nodded.

And so Ji Ning, Daolord Soleman, and Daolord Skyaxe transformed into streaks of light and flew towards Skywood City.

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### **Book 29: Daolord Chapter 41: Dao Alliance, Palace of Immortals**

A mysterious place far, far away.

This was a secret realm which was atop a towering tree which was countless kilometers tall. Near this giant tree, there was a lake that was overflowing with spiritual energy, and next to the lake sat a grim-looking man dressed in black imperial robes and who wore a crown on his head. The man was seated in the lotus position. This was Prince Greatjoy, and with every single breath he took he seemed to draw the spiritual energy of the lake into his body.

“Eh?” Prince Greatjoy couldn’t help but reveal a smile when he heard the news his servant brought him. “It seems as though Darknorth has dealt with his problems. How impressive. He was able to hold off Daolord Kongsan long enough to buy time for senior apprentice-brother Soleman to save him.”

“I am now a Daolord of the Second Step. I have gone through many dangerous places and profited from them, but I wouldn’t be able to survive Daolord Kongsan if I fought him head-on. Still... this treasure of mine should allow me to escape through my control of spacetime.” Prince Greatjoy quite smugly produced a fist-sized seed. This seed was quite strange, and it seemed to throw the surrounding field of spacetime into a state of flux.

“All the suffering and trouble I went through in this place was worth it, now that I’ve found this. The real problem for me... is how to get out!” Prince Greatjoy was rather irritated by this. “This is such an enormous place, but there are no other living creatures here save for myself.”

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The darkness of outer space. An enormous beast was roaring furiously within the void, and opposite it stood Waterlord Firesurge. Firesurge was battling the creature in close combat, using vicious, accurate, and cruel strikes. His two hands would occasionally transform into streams of water that were filled with overwhelming amounts of power.

Crunch! The beast was already so heavily wounded that it could no longer fight back. Waterlord Firesurge managed to grip it by the throat using his enormous, watery right hand.

“Do you submit or not? If you do not submit, you will die!” Waterlord Firesurge’s eyes were filled with a sinister, murderous look.

“I’m willing to submit.” The beast hesitated for a moment, then finally lowered its head. Only then did Waterlord Firesurge produce a silver collar which was covered with divine runes. He casually waved his hand, causing the silver collar to fly out and encircle the beast’s neck. Moments later, it vanished entirely. As for the beast, it immediately became far more obedient.

“Eh?” Waterlord Firesurge frowned. “It seems Darknorth has grown much more powerful. He was actually able to buy himself enough time while being hunted by Daolord Kongsan for Daolord Soleman to save him? It seems that the difference between Darknorth myself is still significant. No... no! I have to be the strongest one. Greatjoy, Solewind, Darknorth... I will surpass them all.”

Whoosh. Waterlord Firesurge waved his hand, collecting the beast. His body then flickered as he disappeared into the void.

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Within an ordinary mortal city in an ordinary mortal world. There were a number of roving patrols within this city, as well as a number of small-time merchants and commoners. There were quite a few beggars as well. A bald, thin, red-robed youth was walking through the streets of this city.

“Hey kid!” The youth suddenly walked towards a child beggar, then said in a soft voice, “I can sense the endless rage, hatred, and resentment festering in your heart. I’ll give you a special opportunity. Seize it, and you will have a chance to become the ruler of this kingdom, the most powerful figure here. But of course, it’s also possible that you will descend into the deepest hells, never to recover. Are you willing to give it a try?”

The child beggar was speechless. He glanced sideways at the other beggars and even the passerbys, but no one was looking at him. It was as though no one had even heard the treasonous words the red-robed youth had said to him.

“Me? The ruler of this kingdom?” The child beggar’s voice was clear and crisp, but it was also quavering.

“Right.” The red-robed youth nodded.

“I’m willing.” The child beggar gritted his teeth, then knelt down and kowtowed.

“Then go.” The red-robed youth waved his hand, causing a streak of light to fly into the beggar’s body. Moments later, the red-robed youth disappeared.

“Where’d he go?!” The child beggar frantically scanned his surroundings, but was completely unable to locate that youth. “My body...?” The child beggar could suddenly sense that his body was filled with an overwhelming, shocking amount of strength. He lowered his head and used his finger to poke at the rock beneath his feet... and his finger pierced straight through it. He couldn’t help but feel wildly overjoyed. Moments later, his head started to hurt slightly as an enormous amount of information began to flood into it. This was a cultivation technique.

Far away, in the skies. The red-robed youth, Daolord Solewind, was staring downwards and watching all this happen. He nodded slightly. “I’ve already left behind thirty thousand seeds within this chaosworld. Now, let’s see how this world develops.”

Some cultivators needed to go out adventuring through dangerous places. However, other cultivators did not have to. Daolord Solewind’s path was that of a Heartforce Cultivator, and his path was a different one entirely.

For another example, Daolord Badlands’s path was the Dao of Numerancy. Even as a Daolord of the Third Step, he was already one of the top three divination experts in all the Endless Territories. Once he took one more step and became a Daolord of the Fourth Step, he’d undergo a fundamental change. Most likely, he would be ranked number one in divination in all the Endless Territories. His close combat abilities might not be overly impressive, but he would be ranked as one of the most difficult foes to deal with in the entire universe.

If you wanted to kill him, he would be able to sense it well in advance and have more than enough time to flee and hide. If he wanted to kill you, he would be able to set the most intricate of plots against you, calculating everything with precision. This was why the Dao of Numerancy was so terrifying. However, Daolord Badlands’ path was clearly an extremely difficult one to travel. Otherwise, how could he have

reached such incredible heights in Numerancy despite merely being at the third step? As a result, reaching the fourth step would be extremely difficult as well.

“Oh? It seems brother Darknorth has managed to survive the dangerous situation he was in. Impressive.” Daolord Solewind nodded slightly. “Big brother Soleman is already at the Verge. Compared to him, I’m still lacking as a Heartforce Cultivator.”

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The two messages Ning sent out to the Brightshore Kingdom caused quite a few of its Daolords and Emperors to become aware of his troubles. Lord Woodflower and the others let out sighs of relief when they heard the good news. They also realized that word of how Daolord Darknorth of the Sword Palace was able to survive Daolord Kongsan’s assault would surely spread. Soon, he would most assuredly stand at the very peak of power in the Endless Territories. He would become one of the most freakishly strong Daolords in existence.

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Skywood City. The empty space outside and above the city. Two figures appeared within the empty void. It was Emperor Skywood and the blue-haired elder.

“What a powerful remnant sword-intent.” Emperor Skywood said softly, “This is definitely a Hegemon’s sword-intent.”

“A Hegemon’s sword-intent? But none of the three Hegemons of the Endless Territories are skilled in the Dao of the Sword.” The blue-haired elder was instantly puzzled. “Could it have come from the Terror Starsea?”

“Yes. It most likely was generated from one of the curios that can be found in the Terror Starsea.” Emperor Skywood nodded. “Let me take a closer look.”

Whoosh. The surrounding field of spacetime quickly began to flow in reverse... but as it did, some sort of invisible, terrifying power seemed to disrupt the process, causing the technique to dissipate.

“I’m not able to reverse it.” Emperor Skywood frowned when he saw this. “That surge of sword-intent was simply too strong. It completely disrupted the local fabric of spacetime. There’s no way for me to see what happened in the past here.”

“Then take a look at what happened right afterwards,” the blue-haired elder laughed.

“All I can see is what happened after that burst of power.” Emperor Skywood nodded. The Sword Hegemon’s Dao-seal was simply too powerful, disrupting even a temporal inversion spell to scry what had happened here. Everything that had ever happened here since the Sword Hegemon’s Dao-seal was used had been rendered completely un-scryable. Only someone incredibly talented in the Dao of Spacetime, such as the Brightshore Hegemon, might be able to reverse spacetime here.

Instantly, scenes from earlier began to replay, revealing a shattered formation and a white-robed youth waving his hand, taking away Daolord Kongsan’s treasures.

“Those are Kongsan’s treasures. He was the only one who left anything behind?” Emperor Skywood murmured softly, “It seems Kongsan was the only one to die to that strike.”

The scene of the white-robed youth chatting with Daolord Soleman and Daolord Skyaxe played next.

“It seems that Hegemon’s Dao-seal was used by that kid.” Emperor Skywood pointed at Ning’s form.

“Yes. Judging from what they are saying, the kid should be a member of the Brightshore Kingdom.” The blue-haired elder nodded.

Emperor Skywood shook his head and laughed. “The Hegemon of the Brightshore Kingdom often abducts World-level cultivators from other areas, and he has a good eye for talent; he really can pick out quite a few exceptionally talented fellows! This young fellow named Darknorth is a member of our Dao Alliance, but he still ended up being abducted by the Hegemon.”

“The Brightshore Hegemon knows his boundaries. He doesn’t really abduct all that many, and he only goes after World-level cultivators,” the blue-haired elder said.

“Come over here.” Emperor Skywood suddenly turned his head to stare off into the distance. Whoosh! Space and time twisted, followed by a gray-robed elder appearing. The elder said respectfully, “Greetings, Sectlord.”

“You are responsible for overseeing this everworld. Do you know what happened earlier?” Emperor Skywood asked. This was the territory of the Skywood Sect, and so everything here was under their supervision.

“Sectlord, the white-robed youth was Daolord Darknorth of Vastheaven Palace,” the gray-robed elder said respectfully. “He purchased seven of the nine mighty novessence arts of Daolord Allgod, then went to Plumesoar Hall and purchased many treasures that those nine novessence arts need. Finally, he used two treasures, ‘deluxe hellgold’ and ‘skyjewel bloodfruit’, to trade for a flying vessel that can move a hundred times the speed of light.”

“It seems this young fellow has quite a few treasures.” Emperor Skywood chuckled as he praised Ning.

“He actually found skyjewel bloodfruit? Haha...” The blue-haired elder nodded as well.

The gray-robed elder continued, “Outside Plumesoar Hall, he was ambushed by the disciple of Daolord Kongsan. He was able to slay that disciple, a Daolord of the Third Step, with a wave of his hand. As a result, he ended up being chased and assaulted by Daolord Kongsan, who failed in his pursuit and so asked Daolord Shaka for assistance. A short while later, Daolord Soleman and Daolord Skyaxe arrived as well, but they weren’t able to breach the grand sealing formation. As for what happened afterwards inside the formation, there was no way for me to tell. I imagine Daolord Darknorth must’ve used some sort of special killer technique that slew both Daolord Shaka and Daolord Kongsan.”

“Kongsan died, but Shaka probably did not,” Emperor Skywood said. They only saw the scene picking up Daolord Kongsan’s treasures, not Daolord Shaka’s.

“The kid is quite impressive, and he seems to have had some incredible luck.” Emperor Skywood instructed, “Make the arrangements for Daolord Darknorth to be given a Palace of Immortals medallion. He’s qualified to enter it.”

“Understood,” the gray-robed elder said respectfully.

## The Desolate Era

### **Book 29: Daolord Chapter 42: Emperor Blueblaze**

The gray-robed elder departed.

“You actually chose to proactively hand out a Palace of Immortals medallion. It seems you have taken a liking to the kid?” The blue-haired elder said.

“He’s just a Daolord of the Second Step. Once he becomes a Daolord of the Fourth Step, he’ll be of some use to me. Only then would he truly be worth recruiting and befriending.” Emperor Skywood glanced at the blue-haired elder, then sighed. “Blueblaze, my old friend... you are my true helper, my right hand. We’ve experienced life-and-death battle on numerous occasions. Once again, I want to urge you to reconsider. Don’t go any further into the Terror Starsea! The region you’ve delved into is already quite terrifying. If the two of us go any deeper into unknown territories, we can die at any moment.”

“No.” The blue-haired elder let out a sigh. “Aberrants like us are different from members of the Dao Alliance like you. Your Dao Alliance has an incredibly deep and solid foundation; all five of the other organizations combined still couldn’t match you in this regard. That’s why you can relax. We Aberrants, however, have to fight for every scrap we can get.”

“The Hegemon is the cornerstone and the pillar of our race and kingdom; there’s no way he can go out adventuring. As for those other Daolords, most of them are far too weak. That’s why I was chosen to lead this squad deep into the Terror Starsea. This is the best option available to us. In addition... I’ve had enough of this eternal, endless life. If I’m lucky, I might find something within the Terror Starsea that will allow me to become much more powerful! Haha. By then, Skywood, you won’t be a match for me.”

Emperor Skywood was filled with mixed emotions. Compared to them, Daolords lived extremely short lives. Although they were able to dazzle others for a period of time, in the end they would still perish. Very few were able to become Eternal Emperors, and those who were able to become Eternal Emperors who were his equal and who he could view as friends were even fewer.

Although Emperor Blueblaze belonged to a different organization, they truly did treat each other as bosom friends.

“Blueblaze, your protective abilities are indeed quite powerful,” Emperor Skywood said softly, “But you still can’t be too rash. If things look bad, you should flee right away! As for those Daolords under your command? If they die, they die. There’s no need to concern yourself too much about them. Even if they don’t die while adventuring, virtually all of them will be dead 108,000 chaos cycles from now.”

“Haha! I came here to bid you farewell, old friend. I’ve said everything I need to say. It’s time for me to leave. Once I come back from the Terror Starsea, I’ll find you and drink with you again.” When Emperor Blueblaze saw that look on Emperor Skywood’s face, he couldn’t help but laugh. “Hah! Don’t worry. I won’t die that easily.”

While laughing, Emperor Blueblaze transformed into a single blue streak of fire that disappeared into the horizon.

Emperor Skywood stood there in midair. He was silent for a long moment.



“I want to help you, but I cannot decide for the Dao Alliance.” Emperor Skywood shook his head, then flew towards his own estate.

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Within one of the many estates within Skywood City.

Some of the ancient Eternal Emperors living here had their own worries, but the Daolords were focused on the here and now. They did as they pleased with very few long-term concerns, by comparison.

“You, a Daolord of the Second Step, slew Kongsan! Not even I would be able to kill him. Darknorth, I feel confident that when you become a Daolord of the Fourth Step, you’ll be every bit my match. Come, let us drink!” Daolord Skyaxe was bare-chested, and his chest was covered with fur. He picked up an enormous black vessel of wine, and Ning did the same. Ning explained, “I relied on my treasures to win. Big brother Skyaxe, you are ranked in the top five in the Endless Territories. It won’t be easy for me to catch up to you.”

“Top five my ass. I’m simply number five.” Skyaxe laughed loudly. The Daolords continued to chat rather casually with each other. For the most part, Ning just listened and responded as Skyaxe and Soleman spoke. They had experienced far more than he did and had visited many places. Just listening to them, Ning’s horizons were broadened. He repeatedly let out amazed sighs. Although he had visited the Archaeus region of the alternate universe, it seemed as though some of the dangerous regions in the Endless Territories were even more mysterious.

“The more you experience, the more you will understand.” Soleman sighed. “However... although adventuring is a good thing, you still run the risk of losing your life. For example, three of us headed out on our latest journey, but only two returned. My old friend Eastroad lost his life. Ugh.”

“Daolord Eastroad died?” Ning was surprised.

“Yes. He died just a thousand years ago.” Soleman nodded.

“There was nothing the two of us could do. We were fleeing for our lives as well; we simply didn’t have the ability to help him out.” Skyaxe slowly shook his head. “Eastroad was just a bit slower than us, and so he was surrounded and killed there.”

Moments later, Skyaxe let out a hearty laugh. “But so what? Even if we don’t die while adventuring, almost all of us will die after failing our Daomerge. While adventuring through the outside world, we’ve visited many ancient sites in search for good fortune that might help us further perfect our Daos, so that our chances during our Daomerge will be better. And I have to say, the adventuring life really is stirring. Those memories are a joy to think back to.”

“The two of us were in the process of disposing of the treasures we acquired on this trip.” Soleman looked at Ning. “After we finish, we plan to visit Eastroad’s homeland and help him take care of it. We didn’t expect to run into you just as we were preparing to leave, junior apprentice-brother Darknorth. If you sent out your message just a short while later, we probably would’ve already left.”

“That means the two of us were destined to meet with brother Darknorth,” Skyaxe laughed.

“Senior apprentice-brother Soleman.” Ning immediately said, “Are you still planning to go to Daolord Eastroad’s homeland?”

“We are.” Daolord Soleman nodded. “When we were in that deadly trap, we each told the others what our greatest regrets and hopes were. We agreed that the survivor would ensure that the wishes of the deceased were carried out! The one thing Eastroad was worried about prior to dying was what would happen to his homeland.”

Ning nodded. “Senior apprentice-brother Soleman, I’m just journeying through the outside world, with no plans to go to any particularly dangerous areas for now. Leave it to me to take care of Daolord Eastroad’s homeland. I’ll make the arrangements for it.”

Soleman and Skyaxe had helped him out. Although they hadn’t been able to breach the formation and rescue him, for them to hurry over and try was already an act of kindness. Ning naturally wanted to help them out and repay them. As for Daolord Eastroad’s homeland, the ‘Eastroad Territory’, Ning knew about it.

“You?” Daolord Soleman and Daolord Skyaxe exchanged a glance.

“If you were an ordinary Daolord, I probably wouldn’t feel comfortable about it.” Daolord Soleman laughed. “We’re planning to send some of the treasures we acquired during our last expedition to his homeland, after all. Given that you killed Kongsan and acquired virtually all his treasures, I feel confident that you probably wouldn’t pilfer any of the treasures we’re planning to gift Eastroad’s homeland.”

Ning let out a resigned chuckle.

“Since you’ve made the offer... I’ll accept it. Thank you for helping out,” Daolord Soleman said.

“Don’t worry about it at all.” Ning smiled.

“I’ll have to trouble you to deliver these treasures. As to what you plan to do with them once you bring them to Eastroad’s homeland, that’ll be up to you to decide.” Daolord Soleman handed over a storage bracelet, which Ning accepted.

A short while later. “An emissary from the Skywood Sect has arrived.” Daolord Soleman turned his head to glance towards the outside region, only to see a gray-robed elder walk towards them.

The gray-robed elder looked towards Ning, then said, “Per the sectlord’s orders, I’ve come to deliver this Palace of Immortals medallion to Daolord Darknorth.” As he spoke, he sent a medallion flying towards Ning.

“What’s this?” Ning reached out to accept it. The medallion was pitch-black and cold. It was covered with many complex runes, but it had only a single word atop it – ‘Soldier’.

The gray-robed elder immediately turned and left. As for Ning, he was quite startled. This was rather abrupt.

“Congratulations, junior apprentice-brother Darknorth. This is a medallion of the Dao Alliance’s Palace of Immortals... but of course, it is only the most basic ‘soldier’ medallion.” Daolord Soleman chuckled. “Once you become a Daolord of the Fourth Step, you’ll earn a ‘commander’ medallion. By then, you’ll be allowed to pay a visit to the Palace of Immortals. It might be of benefit to you.”

“Oh? A ‘commander’ medallion?” Ning was curious.

“The Palace of Immortals is quite a special place. The lowest-ranking members all have ‘soldier’ medallions, but almost all of them are formidable Daolords of the Fourth Step. The most talented and powerful of Daolords will have a chance to earn a ‘commander’ medallion.” Daolord Soleman explained, “The Palace of Immortals is a very mysterious place... but for now, you are nothing more than a pawn. There’s no point in you visiting it. Only once you gain a ‘commander’ medallion would it be worth it.”

“Mm.” Ning nodded. All places were the same. The higher your status was, the more would be made available to you.

“Generally speaking, these medallions are only issued by the Palace of Immortals. It sounds as though the sectlord of the Skywood Sect, Emperor Skywood, personally gave you this one. He’s one of the highest-ranking members of the Dao Alliance and has the authority to do this. It seems as though he’s noticed you. This is a good thing for you, but it could also be a bad thing.” Daolord Soleman chuckled. “While you are still weak, you should avoid the internal squabbles of the Dao Alliance.”

“I understand.” Ning nodded.

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Ning had come to Skywood City for the sake of the nine novessence arts. He had only spent another two years here due to Daolord Kongsan and all the other accompanying issues. Now that everything had concluded, he departed after spending another two days at Daolord Soleman’s place. He left Skywood City, heading towards the Eastroad Territory.

### [The Desolate Era](#)

#### **Book 30: Ancient Cultivator Chapter 1: Border Territory ‘Eastroad’**

A black flying vessel was soaring rapidly through the Endless Territories. Using spacetime transfer arrays might allow you to skip 99% of the journey, but there were still some areas you had no choice but to slowly fly through. The distance would be comparatively short, but you would still need to fly for decades or even centuries.

Aboard the black flying vessel. Ji Ning, Pillsaint, Su Youji were sipping wine and relaxing here.

“Daolord Eastroad died? He was such an incredible Daolord, and yet he died, just like that.” Pillsaint shook his head and sighed.

“It is probable that after another 108,000 chaos cycles, every single Daolord of our generation in the Endless territories will be dead! If even two or three can survive, I would be amazed,” Su Youji said. To live past 108,000 required you to become an Eternal Emperor, but generally speaking only the weakest, most unremarkable Daolords of the Fourth Step would have a shot at it!

They had very weak Daos, and so they had the best chance at the Daomerge. However... after becoming Eternal Emperors, they would become the punching bags of the Endless Territories! Daolords of great power would furiously chase after them, hoping to kill them in order to make a name for themselves. Thus, all of the weaker Eternal Emperors would soon die. Only the slightly stronger ones or the ones who had special protective abilities would be able to remain alive.

“108,000 chaos cycles is a very, very long period of time. Haha. Ordinary mortals are only able to live a hundred years, while many plants and crops only survive for one harvest.” Ning chuckled. “I’ve been training for far less than even a single chaos cycle; in fact, I’m not even close to 0.01% of a chaos cycle yet. If I can be a dazzling figure for 108,000 chaos cycles, I’ll be satisfied. But of course, if I can succeed in my Daomerge and gain eternity, that would be even better.”

“Haha, Master, if you succeeded and became an Eternal Emperor, you would probably become a Hegemon,” Pillsaint said.

“He would definitely be a Hegemon.” Su Youji’s eyes were shining. “I’m excited just imagining him as a Hegemon.”

“Alright, alright. Don’t get too crazy now.” Ning shook his head. Most likely, more than a few of the most talented cultivators all dreamed of becoming Hegemons, but that really was nothing more than a dream. How many would actually be able to succeed?

“Eh?” Ning suddenly nodded slowly. “Time to deal with that Daolord of the Fourth Step.”

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Within Ning’s estate-world. There was a grassy area here with a green-robed alien woman seated within it. She had long, graceful green hair and a pair of silken blue eyes which were filled with worry.

“Master actually died. How could this have happened?” Although Daolord Kongsan had died quite a few days ago, the green-robed woman still felt stunned. She had her own direct connection to Kongsan, and so as soon as he died she immediately knew.

“Master had incredible powers aimed at keeping himself alive. Normal Eternal Emperors would be able to do nothing to him.” The green-robed woman was rather restless and nervous. “Then what should I do? Will that white-robed Daolord kill me?”

“No... I can’t just die like this...” The green-robed woman’s heart was filled with fear. Previously, she had been happy to be captured rather than killed, as that meant the enemy might negotiate with Daolord Kongsan and ransom her. But now that Kongsan was dead... there was no one who would come to save her. Her destiny was completely within Ning’s hands.

Whoosh. A white-robed figure suddenly manifested off in the distance. The green-robed woman couldn’t help but turn her head to look at him, only to see him walk towards her. He said calmly, “From that look on your face, I imagine you already know that Daolord Kongsan is dead. You now have two options. One, I kill you. Two, you submit to me and follow me.”

The green-robed woman’s heart unclenched. Her greatest fear was that Ning would kill her without even bothering to speak with her. She hurriedly rose to her feet, then respectfully knelt down in front of Ning. “Naia is willing to submit and forever serve you, Master. All of Naia’s magic treasures are yours to take.”

“Your magic treasures remain your own.” Ning wouldn’t go so far as to take the possessions of this new retainer. He smiled. “From this day forth, you shall be my third Daolord retainer. Also – my Daoist monicker is Darknorth. It’d be rather embarrassing if you didn’t even know the name of the person you were serving.”

“Understood,” Daolord Naia said respectfully. In her heart, she repeated the name ‘Darknorth’ over and over.

From this day forth, Daolord Naia became Ning’s retainer as well.

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Daolord Naia swore a lifeblood oath and was then summoned out of the estate-world by Ning to the black flying vessel.

“The three of you should get acquainted with each other.” Ning smiled as he pointed at the green-robed woman. “She is Daolord Naia, formerly the eldest disciple of Kongsan. From this day forth, she shall be one of my retainers as well.”

“A Daolord of the Fourth Step?”

“A retainer?” Both Pillsaint and Su Youji were rather excited, and they began to engage Daolord Naia in a casual conversation.

Daolord Naia was a taciturn person, but she wasn’t a bad person by nature. Ning had purchased the most detailed intelligence report the Skywood Sect had regarding Daolord Kongsan, and so he had naturally learned some information regarding his disciples as well. Kongsan’s eldest disciple, Daolord Naia, had been introduced in detail. She had loyally followed and served Kongsan, not causing any trouble or going out of her way to commit sinful deeds. She was a very obedient and loyal subordinate.

“It seems as though she is not a villain by nature. I suppose I can accept it.” This was the reason why Ning had been willing to take her own as a retainer. If she was a very vile person, Ning probably would’ve slain her without a second glance.

And so, Ning led Su Youji, Pillsaint, and Naia on their journey. They first visited the Brightshore Kingdom, making use of its spacetime tunnels to travel to a very remote part of the Endless Territories which was closer to the Eastroad Territory. This was an extremely long journey. Fortunately, Ning had a vessel which flew at a hundred times the speed of light, and had also saved a great deal of travel time by using the Brightshore Kingdom’s spacetime tunnels. And so, after five hundred or so years they finally reached the distant Eastroad Territory.

“The Eastroad Territory. This puts us at the outermost borderlands of the Endless Territories.” The black flying vessel flew out of a chaos star and into the primordial chaos. Ning and the others were aboard the vessel, and they stared at the vast territory before them. This was the Eastroad Territory!

“Master.” Daolord Naia said respectfully, “The Eastroad Territory, as one of the outermost border territories, is a place of great danger. There are also sinister forces hidden here! When Daolord Eastroad was alive, his fame and reputation sufficed to stun and overawe the entire territory, ensuring that those sinister forces wouldn’t dare to cause any trouble. But now that he is dead... I’m afraid his homeland will never be so stable again.”

“This is the reason why his greatest concern was for what would happen to his homeland after he died,” Ning said.

“The borderlands of the Endless Territories...” Ning glanced off into the distance. “Outside the borderlands is the Great Dark, right?”

“Right. The Great Dark.” Daolord Naia nodded.

“An endless sea of darkness... darkness without end...” Pillsaint let out a sigh as well, and Su Youji had a complex look on her face.

The Endless Territories was the region where countless cultivators, Aberrants, Aeonians, and others all lived. But what was outside of it? Aside from some incredibly dangerous places like the Terror Starsea, outside the Endless Territories lay the endless darkness of the Great Dark. There were no chaos stars there, nor chaosworlds, nor light, nor spacetime transfer arrays. There was nothing more than silent, deathly still darkness. Darkness without end! How long did the darkness stretch? No one knew, because it was simply too vast. Daolords would not dare to traverse it... but Eternal Emperors, who had endless longevity, would.

Emperor Mirrorsnow, Emperor Waveshift, and other mighty figures were all filled with curiosity about the Great Dark, and so they had entered it and began a drifting journey through it. They had unlimited lifespans, which was why they dared do such a thing... but despite that, they had still yet to return.

“More than one Daolord has given it a try,” Ning said softly. “Those Daolords sent their avatars to explore the Great Dark, but to the day they died their avatars were still mired in the endless darkness.”

“How terrifying,” Pillsaint murmured.

“It’s not that terrifying. In the end, the Great Dark is just a dead region,” Daolord Naia said. “By contrast, the Terror Starsea is truly frightening. The Terror Starsea is similarly endless, but it is filled with countless dangers and unlimited possibilities. Not even the three Hegemons dare to barge into it rashly.”

“The Terror Starsea is the number one deathtrap that we know of.” Ning smiled. “But enough of that. When we’re all tired of living, we can go pay the Terror Starsea a little visit. For now, let’s stay away from places we aren’t supposed to visit. Come. Our mission this time is to help Daolord Eastroad pacify his homeland.”

Pacifying this territory would not be an easy feat. This was a borderlands territory, which meant that the Dao Alliance’s influence here was virtually negligible! Some of the surrounding territories being controlled by the Aberrants, the Aeonians, and even some other sinister forces. Some even suspected that outside invaders, such as the Dark Kingdom, were present.

In short, the borderlands were amongst the most chaotic places in all the Endless Territories.

## [The Desolate Era](#)

### **Book 30: Ancient Cultivator Chapter 2: Danger Lurking Everywhere**

The Eastroad Territory. The Eastroad Everworld. A black flying vessel was soaring through the air above the Eastroad Everworld.

“The territories controlled by the Dao Alliance will generally have spacetime transfer arrays within the everworlds.” Pillsaint stood at the prow of the ship, staring at the vast everworld before him. He sighed, “But the Eastroad Everworld doesn’t have a single one. We had to fly for years to get to this place.”

Ji Ning chuckled. It was true that all ordinary everworlds had spacetime transfer arrays. The Badlands Everworld, the Vastheaven Everworld... they all had one. But the Eastroad Everworld did not! It had taken them three years of hard flying after entering the Eastroad Territory before they reached this everworld.

“Let’s go to Eastroad City first,” Ning said. Swoosh! The flying vessel tore through space, blinking through it as it advanced rapidly.

A short while later, the most bustling city within the entire Eastroad Everworld, ‘Eastroad City’, appeared within their field of vision. This was an extremely large city with many cultivators in it.

“Restrain your auras, the three of you,” Ning instructed. “Especially you, Naia. You are a Daolord of the Fourth Step; your aura is going to scare these ordinary cultivators silly.”

“Yes, Master,” Daolord Naia said respectfully. As a Daolord of the Fourth Step, her aura was as vast and boundless as the heavens themselves. With each step Daolords took, they trod the line between life and death. With each breakthrough, their auras would undergo fundamental transformations! Daolords of the First Step and Second Step were fairly weak, and so even if their auras emanated outwards they would at most caused World-level cultivators to feel a sense of pressure. But a Daolord of the Fourth Step would cause them to absolutely quiver in fear!

Whoosh. The flying vessel soared downwards. A short while later Ning put it away, leading Naia, Pillsaint, and Su Youji towards the gates of the city. There were twelve World-level cultivators at the gates who were standing in two groups to each side, watching the cultivators enter Eastroad City.

“They seem very cautious.” Ning was a bit surprised.

“It might be because this is a borderlands territory, which is why their cities are so strictly guarded,” Su Youji sent mentally.

Ning and the others chatted casually as they entered the city gates. When the twelve World-level cultivators noticed Ning’s group of four, their leader’s face tightened. The leader gestured to a subordinate and said, “Report immediately that four suspicious Daolords have appeared in Eastroad City.”

“Understood.” This subordinate had a clone and so was able to immediately report this to the main sect.

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Ning began to frown as he walked through Eastroad City. “Something is wrong.” Ning could sense that the mood in this city was off. Many of the cultivators were clearly speaking privately to each other through mental messages. Although Ning couldn’t tell what they were saying, he was able to tell that they were doing this.

Ning swept the area with his gaze, only to see several distant Elder Gods and Ancestral Immortals who seemed to be sending stealthy mental messages to each other. Ning immediately sent out his godsense,

covering them with it. Although he was now a Daolord with powerful godsense, if he tried to use it to scan World-level cultivators they would probably notice something was off. Once they did, they would definitely stop talking.

“The Eastroad Sect is finished.”

“Right. The mighty Eastroad Sect is about to be annihilated, just like that. What a shame.”

“I heard from Master that the founding Patriarch of the Eastroad Sect, ‘Daolord Eastroad’, is already dead. He was someone who stunned and awed the surrounding territories and ruled over the Eastroad Territory for countless years... but he died, just like that.”

“Logically speaking, the Eastroad Sect should’ve hidden the news that Daolord Eastrod had died. How could word have spread so quickly?”

“Who knows? There has to be some sort of plot behind it. However, the news of him being dead is probably true. Otherwise, the Eastroad Sect wouldn’t act in such a craven fashion.”

This was what the Elder Gods and Ancestral Immortals were quietly whispering to each other.

When Ning heard this, his face tightened. What? The information had already leaked out? Factoring in the time they had taken to travel to his place, Daolord Eastroad had died roughly two thousand years ago. To cultivators, two thousand years was an extremely short period of time. Logically speaking, there was no way the Eastroad Sect would’ve so foolishly spread word of this. They would’ve done their best to hide it for as long as they could... but now, even Elder Gods and Ancestral Immortals knew of it. It seemed as though word had spread long ago.

“The two of you.” Ning suddenly intercepted two nearby World-level cultivators. With but a thought, he completely sealed off the surrounding area while covering them with a flicker of his murderous sword-intent. However, none of the nearby cultivators were able to even see this happening.

“S-senior.”

The two World-level cultivators were so frightened, their legs went soft. One could imagine how terrifying Ning’s sword-intent was. Their hearts quivered just having that sword-light flicker around them.

“Master?” Su Youji, Pillsaint, and Naia were all rather puzzled.

“You’ll know shortly,” Ning said, then cast his gaze towards the two World-level cultivators before him.

“Tell me, what has happened recently in the Eastroad Territory?”

“Senior, did you just arrive here?” The shorter cultivator said hurriedly, “Something major truly has happened. Roughly one or two thousand years ago, it was suddenly reported that Daolord Eastroad, who ruled over the Eastroad Territory for countless years, has already perished.”

“Who made the report?” Ning asked. One or two thousand years ago? So roughly eight hundred years after his death, the word had been leaked already?

“I don’t know the answer to that,” the short cultivator said.



“You don’t know?” Ning frowned, sending a strand of his baleful intent towards the two. The nearby tall and skinny cultivator hurriedly said, “Maybe the Ninedust Sect!”

“Right!” The shorter cultivator hurriedly agreed, “It is very likely that this information was leaked by the Ninedust Sect. The Ninedust Sect has been applying a great deal of pressure in recent years. It seems as though they intend to take over the Eastroad Territory.”

“The Ninedust Sect?” Ning was startled.

Daolord Eastroad had established the Eastroad Sect and then unified this territory, but the surrounding area was still quite chaotic. There were a number of powerful organizations here, with the most dominating one being the Ninedust Sect. The Ninedust Sect already had nine Daolords when it was first established! By now, its sectlord and three of its vice sectlords were all Daolords of the Fourth Step. However, Daolord Eastroad himself was so overwhelming powerful that the Ninedust Sect was unwilling to offend him, even though they didn’t fear him.

“The Ninedust Sect has been causing a great deal of trouble during the past thousand years, and the Eastroad Sect actually lost one of its Daolords during this period of time. It now only has a single Daolord left,” the short cultivator said.

“Another Daolord of the Eastroad Sect died?” Ning’s face tightened. “Which one?” The Eastroad Sect originally had three Daolords; Daolord Eastroad, Daolord Overgold, and Daolord Thunderheat. Daolord Overgold and Daolord Thunderheat were Daolords of the Third Step, with Overgold being a bit stronger.

“It was Daolord Overgold who died,” the shorter cultivator said. “I heard that he died while adventuring, but for him to die just a few centuries after word spread of Daolord Eastroad’s death... how could there be such a coincidence? It is very likely that the Ninedust Sect sent out major powers to kill him outside.”

“So that means the Eastroad Sect only has one Daolord left?” Pillsaint was rather flabbergasted, while Ning, Su Youji, and Naia were all rather surprised as well.

This had originally been a fairly simple mission, because Daolord Overgold was quite strong; with the formation around their headquarters helping them and some treasures Ning’s group was bringing, he should’ve been able to keep himself alive. Now it seemed the situation was much worse than they had imagined.

“The two of you can leave now,” Ning said. He didn’t really care if these two World-level cultivators told others of this conversation.”

“A-a-alright,” they stuttered.

Ning, Su Youji, Pillsaint, and Naia were all rather irritated and frustrated now. “This is going to be a bit more tricky than we expected.” Ning frowned. “Word of Daolord Eastroad’s death spread less than eight centuries after he died. There’s no way the Eastroad Sect itself would’ve been so foolish as to leak this information. An enemy must have done it, after they acquired this information through Numerancy divination or other intelligence-gathering methods. A short while later, Overgold died while adventuring as well. It might’ve been an actual coincidence, but it’s also possible that he was murdered. If he was murdered... then the real goal was to further weaken the Eastroad Sect.”

“Right.” Pillsaint, Su Youji, and Naia all felt irritated as well.

“Let’s gather some more information first.” Ning continued to advance through Eastroad City, and the more he investigated the more he learned. The Ninedust Sect really was about to take over the Eastroad Territory, and the Eastroad Sect really did only have Daolord Thunderheat protecting it.

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Half a day later.

“For now, go into my estate-world. Otherwise... if multiple Daolords pay a visit, with one being a Daolord of the Fourth Step, the Eastroad Sect will probably be frightened. They are no doubt quite nervous right now,” Ning said to Su Youji and the others.

“Yes, Master.” Su Youji and the other two acknowledged the order. After they entered the estate-world, Ning flew by himself through the air towards the Eastroad Sect.

Just a short while later, the skies around him turned dark as multiple layers of formations around the Eastroad Sect were activated in a dazzling, awesome display of multicolored light.

Ning soon flew to the main gates of the Eastroad Sect, where he was forced to come to a halt.

### [The Desolate Era](#)

#### **Book 30: Ancient Cultivator Chapter 3: Within the Eastroad Sect**

“Please stop, Daolord!” The Eastroad Sect’s gate-guarding disciple hurriedly called out to Ji Ning.

Ji Ning smiled as he came to a halt, then said, “Hurry up and send word that I come bearing the last will of Daolord Eastroad. I would like to ask Daolord Thunderheat to come meet with me.”

“You come bearing the will of the old Patriarch?” The gate-guarding disciple was shocked. Could it be that the old Patriarch really had prepared something for them? But why hadn’t he said anything to them before he died? Perhaps it was because he had died so suddenly that his avatar didn’t even have a chance to tell them about it. He immediately said, “Wait here for a brief moment, Daolord. I’ll send word right now.”

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Within the Eastroad Sect.

Daolord Thunderheat had a violet complexion and curly whiskers, making him look like quite a barbarous figure. In reality, he was a very steady and experienced figure who had been running most affairs in the Eastroad Sect for countless years now, while Daolord Eastroad and Daolord Overgold were out adventuring. Who would’ve imagined that both of them would end up perishing, one after the other?

“Ugh.” Whenever Daolord Thunderheat thought of this, he couldn’t help but sigh.

“Master, the Eastroad Sect was built up over the course of countless years. We can’t just abandon our foundation like this.” Two yellow-robed disciples were next to Daolord Thunderheat, and the white-haired one was the one who just spoke.

“Anyone who wishes to destroy the Eastroad Sect will pay a heavy price for it.” The other disciple, a pudgy man who was similarly filled with a baleful look in his eyes, agreed.

Daolord Thunderheat shook his head. “The Patriarch was an incredibly, freakishly powerful Daolord. Over the course of countless years, he established an incredibly deep and solid foundation for our Eastroad Sect, but... if we want to protect it, in the end we’ll have to rely on our own power. The Ninedust Sect is just worried about some desperation attacks that we might unleash, which is why they’ve only been threatening us while not actually attacking us. But as more time passes... in the end, sooner or later we will be annihilated.”

“Master...” The two disciples felt both rage and grief.

“The two of you are merely at the World level. You don’t understand how terrifying the Ninedust Sect is.” Daolord Thunderheat sighed. “Especially Daolord Ninedust himself. He was close to being on par with even the old Patriarch himself.”

The two disciples ground their teeth, unwilling to accept this. The exalted Eastroad Sect had been dazzling and glorious for so many years. Everyone in the surrounding territories had always feared and respected them, with even the mighty Ninedust Sect going out of its way to avoid causing them trouble. But now, with their great sheltering tree gone, the Eastroad Sect was about to tumble.

“Uncle-Master!” Suddenly, a disciple came running towards them. He came to a halt outside the door, then said with breathless excitement, “Uncle-Master, an unfamiliar Daolord has arrived. He said he came bearing the will of the old Patriarch and wishes to meet with you.”

“What?!” Daolord Thunderheat suddenly rose to his feet while looks of excitement appeared on the faces of his two yellow-robed disciples. “He came bearing the will of the old Patriarch?” Daolord Thunderheat felt excitement as well. The existence of their sect, and in fact their entire clan, had been due to Daolord Eastroad! The reason why Thunderheat and Overgold had been able to become Samsara Daolords was partially because of Daolord Eastroad’s guidance. As a result, Daolord Eastroad’s status in the sect was extremely, extremely high.

The white-haired disciple next to him said with delight, “Master, the old Patriarch must have made arrangements before he died.”

“Don’t be impatient. Let me go out and take a look first.” Daolord Thunderheat felt eager as well. His body flickered as he immediately flew out of the door.

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Outside the main gates of the Eastroad Sect. Daolord Thunderheat immediately saw the white-robed youth bearing that black scabbard on his back who was standing outside the main gates. The white-robed youth’s aura was indeed that of a Daolord’s.

“Eh?” Daolord Thunderheat frowned. The white-robed youth’s aura seemed to be even weaker than Thunderheat’s own aura. He was probably a Daolord of the Second Step.

“Daolord.” Daolord Thunderheat stepped forwards and spoke out to Ning. As for Ning, he saw a figure suddenly appear within the barrier formations surrounding the sect. It was an extremely muscular man.

“Are you Daolord Thunderheat?” Ning asked.

“I am. Dare I ask who you are, fellow Daoist?” Daolord Thunderheat said.

“I am Darknorth.” Ning smiled. “Can we chat inside? Shall you invite me in?”

“Oh, r-right. Please come in.” Daolord Thunderheat’s mind was in a state of chaos right now, which was why he had forgotten even the basic courtesies of welcoming guests. He hurriedly led Ning into the Eastroad Sect.

Within a courtyard inside the Eastroad Sect. A female attendant delivered a flagon of Immortal wine. Daolord Thunderheat sat to one side, with two yellow-robed attendants standing next to him. Ning sat to the other side. Ning was quite relaxed as he drank the wine. He let out a grateful sigh, then said “What a wonderful flavor.”

“Fellow Daoist Darknorth.” Daolord Thunderheat couldn’t help but ask, “Didn’t you say you came bearing our old Patriarch’s will?”

“Yes.” Ning nodded. “With regards to this matter, I have to mention my senior apprentice-brother Daolord Soleman.”

“Daolord Soleman?” Daolord Thunderheat was startled upon hearing this. He had naturally heard the Patriarch speak of Soleman. Soleman and the Patriarch had definitely been good friends, and Soleman had perhaps been only on par with the Patriarch in power, but as a Heartforce Cultivator he had far more bizarre and inscrutable techniques. In the Endless Territories, Soleman definitely had a higher status than Eastroad had.

Ning nodded. “Daolord Eastroad was on an adventure with my senior apprentice-brother Daolord Soleman, as well as Daolord Skyaxe. They ended up in a dire situation. Skyaxe and Soleman managed to survive, but Daolord Eastroad was just a bit unlucky and ended up losing his life.”

“Ah.” Daolord Thunderheat revealed a look of pain and sorrow, and the two yellow-robed disciples by his side quivered, their hearts filled with pain, sorrow, and regret. Why was it that the other two had survived while their Patriarch had died?

“All three of them knew that it was possible they would perish, and so they all left behind wills for the survivors to carry out,” Ning explained. “Before Daolord Eastroad died, his greatest and only concern was for his homeland. After the other two survived and escaped, they asked me to help deliver some treasures to the Eastroad Sect. Take a look and see if they will be of assistance to you.”

Ning tossed out a storage bracelet, one which Daolord Soleman had used to store various magic treasures. Swoosh. The bracelet flew before Daolord Thunderheat, who accepted it rather excitedly. He quickly bound it, then began to scan the items within as the two yellow-robed disciples behind him waited impatiently.

Just a short while later, Daolord Thunderheat put away the bracelet with a rather mixed expression on his face. This bracelet had also contained a talisman from Daolord Eastroad, one which all three Daolords had left behind with each other.

“And?” Ning asked.

“Seniors Soleman and Skyaxe left behind quite a few treasures.” Daolord Thunderheat sighed. “They even included two Dao-seals of incredible power; both of them created one, and I can tell they poured many resources and energy into each. There are also a number of formations and other things. In a normal situation, they would be enough for us to protect the Eastroad Sect... but our enemy is now the Ninedust Sect.”

“Master, is it still not enough?” The two yellow-robed disciples behind him grew nervous.

“The Ninedust Sectlord is close to Soleman and Skyaxe in power. Even if they came in person, they would at most be able to defeat the sectlord but probably be unable to kill him.” Daolord Thunderheat continued, “Just two Dao-seals... they might be enough to kill ordinary Daolords of the Fourth Step, but they absolutely wouldn’t be of any use against the Ninedust Sectlord.”

Ning nodded. the Ninedust Sectlord was most likely on Kongsan’s level of power. He was slightly weaker than Skyaxe and Soleman, but would be able to stay alive if attacked by them.

“Fellow Daoist Thunderheat, is the Ninedust Sect truly preparing to move against the Eastroad Sect?”

“Yes.” Daolord Thunderheat let out a hate-filled growl. “Brother Overgold was killed by the Ninedust Sect.”

“What?” Ning’s face tightened.

“Brother Overgold’s avatar personally told me this just before he died.” Daolord Thunderheat said with hatred, “Unfortunately, when he was attacked he was very, very far away from the Eastroad Sect. There was no way for us to save him. But of course... I wouldn’t have been able to do so regardless.”

Ning had a solemn look on his face. So it was indeed the Ninedust Sect which had killed Daolord Overgold? Everything was now quite clear.

“My clansmen have been evacuated quite some time ago, to ensure that our line won’t be completely extinguished.” Daolord Thunderheat said softly, “As for us... no matter what, we’ve sworn to defend this place to the death. This is our home, the place where we have lived for countless years. We’ll rely on the formations protecting the formation as well as the treasures the old Patriarch left behind. In the end, we’ll ensure that the Ninedust Sect will lose a few teeth as they devour our clan.”

“We’re going to fight to the death,” the two yellow-robed disciples said furiously.

Cultivators sought their own Daos, their own paths. Once they chose to fight to the death, they would be truly fearless.

“Gentleman.” Ning spoke out. “I’ve already promised senior apprentice-brother Soleman and the others that I will ensure the safety and security of your homeland.”

Daolord Thunderheat and the others stared at Ning, startled.

“Since I’ve promised it, I’ll carry my promise out.” Ning said calmly, “There’s no need for you to worry about the Ninedust Sect. I’ll handle everything!”

“You’ll handle everything?” Daolord Thunderheat and the others stared at this Daolord of the Second Step in astonishment.

Ning waved his hand. Whoosh. Three figures suddenly appeared by his side, each with the aura of a Daolord. They were Pillsaint, Su Youji, and Daolord Naia. Daolord Naia's aura was particularly overwhelming.

"Master," Daolord Naia, Su Youji, and Pillsaint said respectfully.

Daolord Thunderheat and his two disciples stared at them in astonishment. A Daolord of the Fourth Step was respectfully calling a Daolord of the Second Step 'master'?

Ning glanced at Daolord Thunderheat. "Fellow Daoist Thunderheat, I didn't realize how grim the situation was. However, since I've promised senior apprentice-brother Soleman to handle this, I will! If the Ninedust Sect dares to attack, I'll kill as many as they come!"

### [The Desolate Era](#)

#### **Book 30: Ancient Cultivator Chapter 4: The Void Pathway**

Daolord Thunderheat and his two yellow-robed disciples were all rather stunned. These words were a bit too dominating. Kill as many as they come?

"F-Fellow Daoist Darknorth..." Daolord Thunderheat felt both eagerness and nervousness. "Are you saying that this lady Daolord will be able to resist the Ninedust Sect?" As he spoke, he glanced at Daolord Naia.

"Her name is Naia," Ning said. When Daolord Thunderheat heard her name, he felt a cold feeling crawl past his heart. This was a name he had never heard before! Although he rarely went out adventuring, he knew almost all of the truly famous figures. This meant Daolord Naia wasn't all that famous.

"Greetings, Daolord Naia. May I ask, if you are supported by the formations which protect my Eastroad Sect, will you be able to defeat the Ninedust Sectlord?" Daolord Thunderheat asked.

"Even with the formations helping me, I would probably be defeated and slain by him in a single strike," Daolord Naia said.

"Ah." Daolord Thunderheat was flabbergasted. Daolord Naia was telling the truth; the Ninedust Sectlord was on the same level as Daolord Kongsan. Naia couldn't even withstand a single strike from Ning, who in turn didn't dare to fight Daolord Kongsan in close combat. There was an enormous and obvious difference in power between ordinary Daolords of the Fourth Step and the truly freakishly powerful ones. The Ninedust Sectlord was one of the latter.

"Senior Darknorth, didn't you just say that you would kill as many as come?" The white-haired disciple couldn't help but ask this question.

"I did say just that." Ning nodded. "But I meant, I would kill them personally."

"Uh?"

"Personally?"

Daolord Thunderheat and the others all stared at Ning. "It isn't that I look down upon you, fellow Daoist... but if my judgment is correct, you should be a Daolord of the Second Step," Daolord Thunderheat said.

"Yes. A Daolord of the Second Step." Ning nodded.

"A Daolord of the Second Step, fight against the Ninedust Sectlord?" Daolord Thunderheat couldn't help but shake his head. Daolords trod a line between life and death with each step, and the difference in power between each step was very apparent. Someone at the second step, challenge someone who was at the fourth step? The Ninedust Sectlord himself was a freakishly powerful Daolord, even amongst his peers at the fourth step. Ning, defeat him? The prospects were remote.

But Daolord Naia said coldly, "My master defeated me in a single blow."

Daolord Thunderheat and his two disciples were badly shocked by this.

"In the outside world, I probably wouldn't be a match for the Ninedust Sectlord. But if I was in the Eastroad Sect's base? I trust that Daolord Eastroad personally established the formations protecting this place, and that they possess extraordinary power. With it reinforcing me, I won't fear him at all." Ning chuckled.

"Yes, yes! The old Patriarch personally established all of the formations around the Eastroad Sect, and they truly are incredible." Daolord Thunderheat felt both excited and ashamed. "Please pardon me, fellow Daoist. I previously didn't dare imagine that you would be as powerful as this."

"Generally speaking, even the most freakishly talented of Daolords of the Second Step wouldn't be at this level of power. I only am due to certain special secret arts," Ning said casually.

"Secret arts are part of your power as well." Daolord Thunderheat was extremely excited. Hope! He finally saw hope. He certainly didn't believe that Ning was nothing more than issuing empty boasts. No one who was capable of making a Daolord of the Fourth Step would be so foolish, because the consequences would arrive alongside the Ninedust Sectlord... and the consequences would be fatal. Thus, it seemed likely that this 'Darknorth' fellow really was capable of handling things.

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A short while later, Daolord Thunderheat prepared a sumptuous banquet for Ning and the others. After the banquet concluded, Daolord Thunderheat personally escorted Ning away.

"Fellow Daoist," Daolord Thunderheat said softly, "If you were to break through to the third step, would your chances of defeating the Ninedust Sectlord improve?"

"A Daolord of the Third Step?" Ning chuckled as he glanced at Daolord Thunderheat. "If I can reach the third step, my chances will greatly improve. In that situation, even without the assistance of the Eastroad Sect's formations I still wouldn't need to fear him. In fact, I might even be able to kill him."

Ning wasn't just bragging. If he truly did break through from the first step and become a Daolord of the Second Step... given the power of his Omega Sword Dao, he really would become on par with the likes of Daolord Kongsan and the Ninedust Sectlord. In addition, his Omega Sword Dao was flawlessly perfect in every aspect, making it absolutely perfect for actual combat. So long as the opponent did not flee and

chose to continue the fight, the end result would definitely be the opponent getting the worst of it! But of course, no one would be so foolish as to stand there and get beaten down like that. Clever Daolords like Kongsan would retreat as soon as the situation turned south for them.

The reason why he hadn't been able to flee was because the Hegemon's Dao-seal was simply too powerful, causing even spacetime to be bound and suppressed. Daolord Kongsan had used two life-saving treasures in a row without being able to escape. It wasn't that his fleeing abilities were weak, it was simply that the Dao-seal was far too powerful. It would have been easy for him to flee from most Daolords he battled.

"Then how long would it take you to break through to become a Daolord of the Third Step, fellow Daoist?" Thunderheat asked.

"I'm not too far off," Ning said. To go from the first step to the second step was quite quick, and to go from the second step to the third step didn't take that long either. Reaching the fourth step, however, was a very long process. As for succeeding in the Daomerge and gaining Eternity? Chances were slim, no matter how much time you took.

"Alright." Daolord Thunderheat clenched his teeth. "Fellow Daoist Darknorth, the Eastroad Sect has a sect-guarding treasure which the old Patriarch brought back from the Terror Starsea."

Ning's eyes lit up. Something from the Terror Starsea?

"Technically speaking, I shouldn't divulge its existence to outsiders. However, I am now the sole master of the Eastroad Sect, which is now facing an existential crisis. I'm going to ignore those rules." Daolord Thunderheat looked at Ning. "This supreme treasure is known as the Void Pathway, and it is extremely beneficial to cultivators. Perhaps, fellow Daoist, you will be able to seize this opportunity to break through to become a Daolord of the Third Step."

Daolord Thunderheat was simply too worried. He hoped that Darknorth would be able to grow even more powerful, as this matter would have an impact on the life and death of the Eastroad Sect.

"Void Pathway?" Ning couldn't help but begin to feel curious.

"Follow me," Daolord Thunderheat said solemnly.

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Daolord Thunderheat led the way, while Ning followed from behind. Thunderheat dispelled one formation after another as he guided Ning to a seemingly ordinary courtyard.

"Do you see that?" Daolord Thunderheat pointed at a decorative sculpture of a mountain located in the corner of the courtyard. The 'mountain' even had some vines and 'trees' growing from it.

"What about it?" Ning was puzzled. There was nothing unusual about that artificial mountain. In fact, he couldn't sense any formations from it at all. Daolord Thunderheat stepped forward, then waved his hand. The vines instantly were reduced to dust, revealing what was hidden beneath them. This 'mountain' actually had a sculpted stone 'door' on it!

"Is that a doorway?" Ning was puzzled.



“Yes. A door. A door that you can open,” Daolord Thunderheat said. “Daolord Darknorth, please follow me.”

Daolord Thunderheat walked towards one of the sculpted stone doors, then pressed his hand upon it. Instantly, the doorway split open with a rumbling sound, revealing a deep, dark tunnel beneath it. The entrance to this tunnel ebbed and flowed with spatial ripples.

Ning was surprised. Prior to the stone door opening, this had seemed like nothing more than a very ordinary sculpture of a mountain. He hadn't sensed anything special or magical about it at all... but it now had a dimensional hallway within it.

“Come in.” Daolord Thunderheat turned to look at Ning, then stepped inside. Ning followed him without hesitation.

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Whoosh. Space twisted and flowed around Ning as a dazzling, glowing golden region appeared before him.

“What's this?” Ning and Daolord Thunderheat were standing within a long walkway. The floor was black, and the walkway itself was hanging in empty space, with nothing but the void on each side of the walkway.

“This is the Void Pathway. Everything around this golden region is just empty space; the only thing here is this Void Pathway hanging in space.” Daolord Thunderheat pointed towards the front. This walkway was an extremely long one, stretching off at least ten million kilometers. In front of the walkway stood a number of armored soldiers and guards. Ning's visual prowess allowed him to clearly see to the very end of the walkway, where there was a royal golden throne.

“There are a total of thirty thousand soldiers here,” Daolord Thunderheat said. “Once you begin advancing through the Void Pathway, you will be impeded by these soldiers. The deeper you go, the more terrifyingly powerful the soldiers will be.”

“Oh?” Ning revealed a smile. This seemed quite similar to the Brightshore Kingdom's 'Daolord Cloudworld'.

“These soldiers have very unique combat Daos. Very, very unique.” Daolord Thunderheat looked at Ning. “You'll see for yourself when you fight them. The weakest of them are comparable to Daolords of the Second Step, which is why only the Daolords of the Eastroad Sect are permitted to enter it.”

“Did Daolord Eastroad manage to reach the throne?” Ning asked.

“The old Patriarch tried twice. He failed the first time. He later gained certain insights, then went all out in a second attempt and managed to succeed. The two final soldiers are all comparable to him in power,” Daolord Thunderheat said.

Ning was stunned. This was much more impressive than the Daolord Cloudworld. Anyone who had reached the threshold of power for a Daolord of the Fourth Step would be able to battle their way to the very end of the Daolord Cloudworld, but it seemed as though this place required the trial taker to be

comparable to Daolord Eastroad in power. Daolord Eastroad was already comparable to the weaker Eternal Emperors. How was it that these guards were as powerful as this?!

“Unfortunately, there’s no way to bring out even one of these thirty thousand soldiers. In fact, there’s no way to control them at all.” Daolord Thunderheat sighed. “If there was, why would we worry about the Ninedust Sect?”

Ning nodded, his gaze focused on the golden throne at the end of the walkway. “What happens once you reach the throne? Anything good?”

“A legacy,” Daolord Thunderheat said. “The old Patriarch didn’t tell me in detail, and so I imagine that the so-called legacy wouldn’t be all that interesting to freakishly strong Daolords like yourself.”

“However, when those thirty thousand soldiers fight against you, you’ll benefit from the insights into the Dao you will gain.” Daolord Thunderheat sighed. “Even the old Patriarch benefited from his first attempt, resulting in him becoming much more powerful.”

### [The Desolate Era](#)

#### **Book 30: Ancient Cultivator Chapter 5: Ten Thousand Years of Cultivation**

Ji Ning nodded, then suddenly asked, “Fellow Daoist Thunderheat, might I ask if my retainers can enter as well?”

Daolord Thunderheat let out a pained laugh. “Fellow Daoist Darknorth, the Void Pathway is the most important treasure of the entire Eastroad Sect. You have vowed to save our entire sect, and the debt we owe you is endless! Your retainers and your closest friends can all make the attempt as well, but I ask that you not divulge anything about it at all.”

Ning was briefly startled, then nodded. “I swear on my very life itself that aside from my retainers, I will not speak of the Void Pathway to anyone else.” His voice echoed within the void and within his very own soul. This was a lifeblood oath.

“That wasn’t necessary. The Eastroad Sect trusts you fully, fellow Daoist Darknorth,” Daolord Thunderheat said hurriedly. In reality, however, he couldn’t help but let out a sigh of relief. He did want Ning to swear a lifeblood oath, but he was also begging Ning to prevent his entire sect from being wiped out, which was why he had never proactively mentioned any oaths.

“It was only proper,” Ning said casually. He could tell what the man was thinking. Still, he really wasn’t all that concerned about this opportunity. The cultivators of the Three Realms had their own opportunities to exploit.

“Those three retainers of mine will never spread this information either. I’ll have them swear oaths as well,” Ning said.

“Um...” Daolord Thunderheat chuckled. “Then I won’t bother you any further. Whenever you wish to leave, fellow Daoist, you only need to turn back and you’ll be able to depart.”

“Understood.” Ning nodded, and Daolord Thunderheat departed. Ning chuckled and shook his head. The fewer treasures one had, the more one would value them! Ning had acquired all of Daolord Kongsan’s treasures, and had the Sword Hegemon’s Dao-seal. Although this Void Pathway was a unique treasure, it

wasn't enough to make Ning feel the slightest bit greedy. Ning also knew that the more powerful he became, the more treasures he would have in the future. In the future, this Void Pathway would be even less meaningful than it was right now.

"But let me take a look and see what's so special about this thing." Ning stepped forwards, moving tens of thousands of kilometers in an instant.

Rumble...

An enormous globe of golden light suddenly appeared high in the void above the golden region. The globe of light unleashed two streaks of golden light which shot into the bodies of the two armored warriors directly in front of Ning. Golden light immediately began to shine out of the armored soldiers eyes.

Boom! Boom! The two armored soldiers hoisted their weapons as they transformed into streaks of light, charging towards Ning. "Die!" One of them stabbed out with a long spear, sending it piercing through the skies.

"Kill!" The other armored soldier lashed out with a long whip which moved like a long, agile serpent. These two armored soldiers worked in concert, one charging forward valiantly while the other moved with crafty agility. They moved in perfect harmony, as though they were part of a greater whole.

Ning revealed a smile. "Interesting. No wonder Thunderheat said that these soldiers fight in a very unique manner; they actually have employ a battle-formation Dao, and are able to work together wonderfully..."

Boom! With but a thought, Ning caused his sword-intent to manifest. His sword-intent swept out in an overwhelming wave, smashing against the two soldiers and sweeping them off their feet, then sending them flying.

The difference in power was simply far too greater. These two soldiers were just barely comparable to ordinary Daolords of the Second Step.

Boom! Boom! Boom! Boom! Ning blew through the soldiers like rotting wood, continuing to advance through the pathway. Only after defeating 18,000 soldiers did he finally begin to slow down.

"What a strange feeling." Ning was surrounded and being attacked by eight soldiers. These eight soldiers used different weapons and different attack styles. Hard, soft, insidious, straightforward... every single soldier was extremely dedicated to one type of combat style. And yet, they were able to work together through their battle-formation. Ning felt as though he was fighting a major power who was a mastery of many different types of weapons. This was quite a taxing fight.

"The Dao of Wind? The Dao of Lightning? The Dao of Water?" Ning was growing increasingly excited by this battle. As for the globe of light, it continued to hang there in the void. Each time Ning defeated a soldier, it would shoot out even more golden light and activate even more powerful soldiers.

"That light globe should serve as the core of the entire Void Pathway." Ning lifted his head up to glance at the light globe. All of the soldiers were unliving and inanimate things, but once the light shone down upon them they were given incredible amounts of power.

“The items that can be found in the Terror Starsea truly are marvelous.” Ning was feeling increasingly curious about the Terror Starsea, but it was simply too dangerous a place; not even the three mighty Hegemons dared to go too deep into that place. It was so terrifying that even they stood a chance of dying if they went too far in.

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Time flew on. Ten thousand years went past in the blink of an eye. To cultivators, ten thousand years was actually a very short period of time. The entire Eastroad Sect remained in a state of disarray and fear of the Ninedust Sect’s arrival.

The main hall of the Eastroad Sect.

“What will be, will be.” Daolord Thunderheat’s face turned solemn after he heard his disciple’s reports. A group of disciples had already been gathered here within the hall.

“The Ninedust Sect has finally arrived.” The disciples all felt nervousness in their hearts.

“Lead him in,” Daolord Thunderheat instructed.

“Yes.” The disciple who was responsible for bringing word from outside immediately departed. As he did, Daolord Thunderheat’s avatar appeared in front of the sculpture of a mountain, pushed the ‘door’ open, and entered the Void Pathway.

There was a battle going on in the empty void of space directly above the actually pathway. It was Daolord Naia and Flamefairy Su Youji battling each other! There was a thatched cottage at one end of the area, and Ning was seated in the lotus position within it as he meditated silently. Ning had spent almost the entirety of the past ten thousand years within the Void Pathway. He would often go out to engage in battle, then use his spacetime cottage to train and reflect on his insights.

“Fellow Daoist Darknorth.” Daolord Thunderheat’s avatar walked over, then called out to Ning. Within the cottage, Ning opened his eyes and smiled. “What is it, Daolord Thunderheat?”

“An envoy from the Ninedust Sect has arrived,” Daolord Thunderheat said.

“The Ninedust Sect? They’ve finally come.” A cold glint flashed through Ning’s eyes. He rose to his feet, walked out of the cottage, then waved his hand and put it away.

“The two of you can keep training here. I’ll go take a look,” Ning said loudly.

“Yes, Master.” Su Youji and Daolord Naia both called back loudly.

“Let’s go.” Ning immediately accompanied Daolord Thunderheat in leaving.

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One of the side halls of the Eastroad Sect had been set up to welcome the Ninedust Sect’s envoy. A large number of Eastroad Sect disciples had already gathered here. As for Ning, he was brought in through a side door. He quietly sat down in the back row and watched silently.

“Envoy of the Ninedust Sect, why have you come to the Eastroad Sect?” Daolord Thunderheat spoke out from his position atop the high seat.

“Simple.” The fiery-armored figure standing before him said coldly, “We’re here giving you a chance to stay alive. If you immediately evacuate the Eastroad Territory, all of you will be able to stay alive! But if you fight back, you will be wiped out.”

“Damn him.”

“He dares...”

Instantly, the disciples within the hall all began to roar and shout with fury. They hadn’t imagined that the Ninedust Sect would act in such a brash manner.

“It was the Sectlord who personally told me to convey this message. Either you get the hell out of the Eastroad Sect or you die.” The fiery-armored man said coldly, “I’ve delivered my message. It is up to you what choice you will make. Ten years from now, if the Eastroad Sect is still present in this region, then you can simply wait for death.” Message delivered, he turned and left.

“He wants to leave, just like that?”

“Stop right th-...” An enraged disciple of the Eastroad Sect moved to block his path.

“Let him leave,” Daolord Thunderheat said coldly. The Eastroad disciples had no choice but to swallow their rage.

“Hmph. I train in a cloning technique. Even if you killed me, it would be meaningless.” The fiery-armored man let out a cold laugh, then left with a swagger.

Daolord Thunderheat just watched him leave silently. He wasn’t going to get angry with a World-level cultivator; it was the Ninedust Sectlord he was angry with!

“Fellow Daoist Darknorth.” Daolord Thunderheat looked at the seated Ning.

“I saw everything.” Ning nodded and smiled. “Let them come. I’ve been waiting over ten thousand years here for the Ninedust Sect to come.”

Daolord Thunderheat relaxed slightly. “Your words put me at ease, fellow Daoist.”