

Desolate 1041

[The Desolate Era](#)

Book 30: Ancient Cultivator Chapter 16: Everything Has Its Bane

“An ancestral site of the Ancient cultivators?” Ji Ning was slightly startled for a moment, then smiled.

“No wonder you insisted on attacking the Eastroad Sect, and were able to discover the Void Pathway right away.”

“Eh?” The Ninedust Sectlord glanced at Ning with surprise. “You don’t seem to be frightened at all. Since this place was left behind by my ancestors, any treasures or legacies here will probably fall into my hands. As for you? You might even die here.”

“What’s the point of being afraid?” Ning said casually. Since they had already come here and were unable to flee, the only choice they had was to face everything head-on.

“Besides. It’s too early to speculate as to which one of us will be the one to die. You were the one getting your rear kicked by those flaming beasts.” Ning looked quite relaxed.

The Ninedust Sectlord really was rather amazed at Ning’s calm aplomb. He hadn’t revealed the truth previously, but now that both sides had sworn a binding oath to enter into an alliance and to not attack each other or plot against each other, the Ninedust Sectlord was finally willing to divulge the secret of this being an ancestral site for him. As he saw it, towards the end Ning would still find out, so long as he survived.

“Right. Ninedust, did you just say that you Ancient cultivators were the most perfect creatures in the universe? But based on what I’ve heard, the top-tier Aberrant lifeforms like the Brightshore Imperials are on par with you Ancient cultivators,” Ning said.

“Hmph.” The Ninedust Sectlord let out a snort. “Aberrants? They are nothing more than a random, motley collection of freaks which were born out of the primordial chaos. There’s far too many breeds of them, which is why they are just collectively known as the Aberrants. How could that motley collection of freaks be compared to us Ancient cultivators? Just mentioning us in the same breath is an insult to us! As for the Brightshore Imperials, they are a race of Chaos Godbeasts that have been around just as long as we have. I suppose they could just barely be considered our peers... but if we really were to compare our two races, they are still significantly inferior to us.”

“Chaos Godbeasts?” Ning was startled. Although he was a member of the Brightshore Kingdom, he knew very little regarding the Brightshore Imperials.

“It seems that you are unaware of many secrets, most likely because you haven’t been a Daolord for long.” The Ninedust Sectlord chuckled. “The Brightshore Imperials consider this information to be a source of humiliation; there’s naturally no way they would’ve told you about this. I, however, will.”

“Humiliation?” Ning was quite curious.

“Long, long ago, there were no such things as ‘cultivators’, and the various Aberrant lifeforms had yet to learn how to cultivate either! Back then, the endless primordial chaos gave birth to two types of perfect lifeforms. The first type was humanoid in shape and was truly flawless. They were born with transcendent talent and tremendous comprehension abilities... and they became known as the

Ancients. As for the second type, they were shaped like beasts and so became known as Chaos Godbeasts.”

“The Ancients were the first to discover and invent cultivation techniques! As a result, we became incredibly powerful and ended up unifying the endless primordial chaos and becoming its master... and this is why we are known as the Ancient cultivators.” A look of pride was on the Ninedust Sectlord’s face.

Ning was quite startled. So the Ancient cultivators were actually the first ones to create cultivation techniques?

The Ninedust Sectlord said smugly, “As for those Aberrant lifeforms, we held no interest in them whatsoever. The Chaos Godbeasts, however, made for decent servants. We enslaved them and used them as our mounts, ordering them about as we pleased.”

“What?!” Ning could hardly believe it. The Brightshore Imperials used to be the slaves of the Ancient cultivators?

“Back then, we Ancient cultivators roamed the universe without equal.” The Ninedust Sectlord let out a soft sigh. “Every single member of our race is born with incredible intelligence and comprehension abilities, and so we created one new technique after another. Do you know how many Brightshore Imperials have managed to become Eternal Emperors? Just one! The Brightshore Hegemon himself! But many Ancient cultivators have ended up gaining eternity. This is all thanks to our comprehension abilities! Humanoid lifeforms, by nature, are more intelligent than animal lifeforms. If the Chaos Godbeasts hadn’t managed to produce a Hegemon, they would never have reached their current heights.”

“A pity, though. That time ended long ago. Now, it is the era of you normal cultivators.” The Ninedust Sectlord shook his head. “You normal cultivators aren’t nearly as perfect as us, and some of you actually started off as ordinary mortals and slowly crawled up the ranks of power. Unfortunately, there are simply far, far too many of you. Even if you only produce one genius every trillion years, you will eventually accumulate a ridiculous number of powerful experts. Faced with such an overwhelming number of normal cultivators, we had no choice but to retreat.”

The Ninedust Sectlord looked at Ning. “Darknorth, we Ancients do accept ordinary cultivators into our ranks as well. So long as you are just an ordinary member of the Dao Alliance and not a member of the Brightshore Kingdom, the Aeonian Kingdom, or the Dark Kingdom, we’d be willing to recruit you. Join us! If you are as talented as I think you are, you’ll be given the best of resources.”

Ning pursed his lips. They recruited ordinary cultivators? It seemed like everyone was doing this. The Brightshore Kingdom, the Aeonians... they were all recruiting as well, with quite a few ordinary World-level cultivators having been taken on by the Aeonians in particular to serve as their lackeys. The World-level cultivators Ning had encountered in the Allgod Estate were mostly ‘ordinary’ cultivators; most of them didn’t have any Aeonian blood in them at all. Who would’ve imagined that the Ancient cultivators were also recruiting?

But it made sense. The Brightshore Imperials, the Aeonians, and the Ancients all had the same problem – they were too few in number!

“What do you think?” The Ninedust Sectlord looked at Ning eagerly. “Most likely, only the Dao Alliance has as deep a foundation as us Ancients.”

“Forget it. Let me think it over first,” Ning said. He had already joined the Brightshore Kingdom; how could he join their enemies? Still, it was best to keep the fact that he was a member of the Brightshore Kingdom secret, in order to avoid any unnecessary trouble.

“No rush, no rush at all. Here in the ancestral lands, I trust you’ll soon come to realize just how incredible we Ancient cultivators are.” The Ninedust Sectlord smiled. “Later on, I’ll make the introductions for you.” He was a peerless genius who had mastered and perfectly joined together two Supreme Daos; even amongst the Ancient cultivators, he was considered one of the elite chosen of his generation.

Long ago, a major power of the Ancient cultivators had engaged in some divination for him, letting him know where he should go adventuring and where his destiny lay. However... in the end, the future would remain unknown. Numerancy divination could only allow you to see a few scraps and glimpses of the future.

.....

Time flowed on. Having officially joined forces together, Ning and the Ninedust Sectlord continued to carefully travel through this mysterious region, going from one stone passageway to the next. There really seemed to be no end of them.

The two of them spent another three full months trapped in this place. Thankfully, Ning had sold the Ninedust Sectlord a large number of spirit-pills; otherwise, the latter might not have been able to survive.

Swoosh.

On the final day of the third month.

“Kill them!”

“Kill them and eat them!”

A large group of the flaming creatures were in hot pursuit of a flying black vessel which was fleeing from them at incredible speeds while nine awesome secret arts billowed around it, preventing anyone from drawing near.

Whoosh. The black vessel flew into a different stone passageway.

“Eh?” Ning and the Ninedust Sectlord were both startled. Moments later, a look of delight appeared in their eyes. Up ahead was an extremely large and empty area that was at least a hundred billion kilometers in size. At the very center of this region was a planet that glowed with light and emanated an aura of endless might. There were no flames at all in this entire empty region!

It must be remembered that thus far, every single place the two of them had passed through had been filled with those terrifying, omnipresent flames. This region, however, didn’t have a single flame within it!

“Have we reached our destination?” Ning murmured silently.

“This place may well be the place which the ancestors wished us to reach.” The Ninedust Sectlord looked at the planet in front of him rather excitedly.

During the past three months, all they had seen were stone passageways and endless flames! They had never encountered such a vast, empty region. A hundred billion kilometers, and a planet in the center of it! The aura of power emanating off of this planet was so great that Ning and the Ninedust Sectlord both felt rather breathless. This place could very well be the endpoint.

“Kill!” A group of flaming beasts burst out of the stone passageway, seeking to chase down the two of them. However, they suddenly began to slow down as they looked rather hesitantly at the distant planet in the center. The flames covering the bodies of the various creatures all seemed to die down slightly.

“Hurry up and kill them.”

“Don’t let them escape!”

The flaming creatures once more picked up the pace.

Swoosh! The black vessel didn’t hesitate at all as it flew straight towards the planet. The flaming creatures continued their furious chase, but the closer they moved towards the planet the more they seemed to be suppressed. The flames disappeared from their body, revealing the fiery armor, hair, and body which lay underneath! The closer they moved to the star, the more their aura weakened.

“Everything has its bane.” Ning couldn’t help but sigh with amazement when he saw this. “These flaming creatures were completely unkillable, but as soon as they started to move towards this planet they began to weaken dramatically.”

“That planet doesn’t seem to have any effect on us at all.” The Ninedust Sectlord glanced at the planet warily as they moved closer and closer to it. “But its aura of power is tremendous. It might hold certain dangers within it.

Ning looked at him. “What of it? Do you want us to go back into the stone passageways?”

“I’d have to be mad to do that,” the Ninedust Sectlord snorted. Clearly, after spending roughly three months in the stone passageways, he had more than had his fill of them.

“In the end, we definitely have to go take a look at this place. Let’s just be careful,” the Ninedust Sectlord said.

“Alright.” Ning stared at the planet as well.

The black vessel flew closer and closer to it, with the flaming creatures still in hot pursuit but growing weaker by the moment. Finally, they all came to a halt and let out angry, resentful growls. They had no choice but to simply watch as the black vessel flew ever-closer to the planet.

[The Desolate Era](#)

Book 30: Ancient Cultivator Chapter 17: The Prophets Descend

The black vessel finally came to a halt outside the star. Ji Ning and the Ninedust Sectlord stood on the prow of the vessel, able to see the planet clearly.

“What a beautiful star,” Ning praised. The planet was protected by layers of defenses, almost like the yolk of an egg being protected by a shell.

“But also dangerous,” the Ninedust Sectlord warned solemnly.

“Let’s go.” Ning glanced at the Ninedust Sectlord, who did not respond. Whoosh! The black vessel began a slow advance, soon arriving in front of the first barrier protecting the star.

This was a gaseous barrier that was pitch-black in color and extremely solid. When the black vessel sought to advance through it, the two could both sense the first barrier resisting the vessel mightily. The black vessel had to use all of its power in order to just barely advance through the barrier, crackling all the way. After advancing for roughly a hundred thousand kilometers, they left the region of black mist and appeared in front of a region of deep azure mist.

“I imagine that most Daolords of the Fourth Step wouldn’t be able to make it past this,” Ning said softly. “If my judgment is correct, there’s no way this protective membrane could’ve been naturally created. It has to have been man-made.”

“Agreed. Nine out of ten says it was created by a major power that vastly outstrips us in might.” The Ninedust Sectlord nodded.

Swoosh! The vessel continued to advance, passing through one layer of gas after another. There were nine of these gas layers, and they were colored black, deep azure, azure, light azure... the colors continuously lightened until the final layer, which was composed of completely white mist.

By now, the white mist posed almost negligibly low levels of resistance for the black vessel. Starting from the azure layer, a few special lifeforms began to appear. They lived within the gas itself, and were like gaseous entities. They could transform into any shape, with some being strong and others being weak. The most powerful were roughly on par with Daolords of the Fourth Step, while the weakest were on par with ordinary World-level cultivators.

Whoosh. After passing through the ninth layer of mist, Ning and the Ninedust Sectlord saw a brand new open world appear in front of them. This was a vast and beautiful world, filled with cities, villages, and many ordinary mortals as well.

“So this place actually holds living creatures.” Ning let out a moved sigh. “The endless primordial chaos truly is filled with endless marvels. Life can survive in even a dangerous place like this.”

“I suspect that the major power who created those nine layers of protective mist did so for the sake of these mortals.” The Ninedust Sectlord carefully sent out his senses, then said in a soft voice, “This region is filled with invisible laws, preventing ordinary cultivators from being able to fly at all. Only Daolords are able to fly here.”

“The skies are sealed?” Ning frowned. “Can it be that this planet holds an Eternal Emperor within it?”

Upon gaining eternity, your very words became edicts of law. You could issue certain edicts that all within a certain region had to follow! However, sufficiently powerful Daolords were capable of

completely ignoring these edicts. It must be understood that certain supremely powerful Daolords were capable of suppressing even the might of the prime essences of the Dao, located at the heart of the universe. In comparison, mere edicts issued by Eternal Emperors were nothing.

“Right. This place might have an ancestor of my Ancient race.” The Ninedust Sectlord swept the area with his gaze. “Darknorth, I’m sure you’ve sensed it as well. This vast world gives me an incredibly strong sense of danger. If we aren’t careful, we could easily die here.”

“Yes, I can sense it.” Ning nodded. As soon as he had seen this planet from afar, he had sensed a terrifying danger emanating from it. Now that they had truly entered it, that sense only grew stronger.

.....

A total of eight strange-looking four-legged beasts were pulling a giant carriage through the grassy plains directly below Ning. Surrounding the carriage there were three hundred valiant knights, all of whom were advancing at high speeds. The carriage was protected by formations which faintly flickered around it, ensuring it didn’t bump or jostle at all.

The carriage itself was thirty meters long and twenty-four meters wide. Within the carriage sat a young man who was casually dressed in sleek silk clothes, as well as two bewitching women who were cuddling against him while feeding him.

The youth casually ran his hands across the two women, toying with them. His eyes, however, had a faraway look in them.

“Your Highness, Dragonwing City is up ahead. Should we pay a visit to the governor?” The voice of a knight rang out from outside the carriage. Although their lord had already informed them as to which experts they would visit on this journey, the young master wasn’t the type to just do as he was told. There were two experts who he had declined to meet with thus far.

“The governor of Dragonwing is one of my seniors and has always treated me very well. We certainly must visit him,” the youth chuckled.

“Acknowledged,” the knight said from outside.

The youth inside the carriage caressed one of the women by his side, a dreamy look in his eyes. He murmured softly, “So this is the path which Father has arranged for me? I can already see what the rest of my life will be like. I really am not happy with it.”

Whoosh. Whoosh. Suddenly, two figures appeared out of nowhere. One was a white-robed youth who bore a black sheath on his back, while the second was an icy-faced man. However, neither the two women in the carriage nor the noble youth noticed them at all. The youth remained lost in his thoughts and pensively pondering his own future.

“This kid is one of the highest status figures without a million kilometers of this place. He actually has three Elder Gods and five Ancestral Immortals guarding him, while he himself is also an Elder God. And, judging from the way they address him, he should be a prince of some sort,” the Ninedust Sectlord said. “He probably knows more about this world than most. Darknorth, shall you do the honors or shall I?”

“I’ll ask,” Ning said with a smile.

No one in the area was able to overhear their conversation. They were simply beings on completely different levels of existence. Although Ning had merely been an Elder God when he left the Three Realms, he could now wipe out untold multitudes of Elder Gods and Ancestral Immortals with but a single breath.

.....

The two of them remained quite cautious. They didn't randomly start sending their godsense out to investigate, as this world was simply too dangerous for them. It must be understood that not even those innumerable flaming creatures dared to approach this region. If they were too rash, they'd probably die here. Thus, caution was the best decision. This was a principle which all Daolords followed when they were out adventuring.

Both Ning and the Ninedust Sectlord stood at the very precipice of power amongst Daolords; they could be considered second-tier Daolords of the Fourth Step by now, comparable to ordinary Eternal Emperors in might. They naturally had to be cautious. The stronger you were, the more careful you had to be.

In a place deep within the underground of this world. This was a place where ancient formations could be seen everywhere.

Roughly 190 million kilometers below the ground, there was a beautiful underground palace. The palace was extremely quiet, and although a few Elder Gods and Ancestral Immortals and even World Gods could be seen walking through it, they were all silent and solemn. None of them dared to speak too loudly, as they felt a natural sense of dread.

Within an ancient, quiet room inside the underground palace. A white-robed old man was seated in the lotus position, his aura comparable to that of a Daolord of the Fourth Step. In front of him was an enormous mirror.

The mirror contained within it images of a black vessel flying through layers of misty barriers before finally descending upon the vast world up above. This scene was playing on a loop over and over within the mirror.

"Elder." Suddenly, a violet-robed man walked over from afar, emanating the aura of a Daolord of the Second Step. He called out respectfully to the old man, but when he accidentally saw the images being played in the mirror his face turned ashen. He stuttered, "A-a-are those Prophets?"

"Yes." The white-robed elder let out a sigh. "Prophets! After a million chaos cycles, yet another group of Prophets have descended upon our world."

"Prophets have descended? Prophets?!" The violet-robed man was shocked and panicked. "B-but... what should we do? Elder, what should we do?"

The white-robed elder waved his hand, causing a black tome to appear before him. The tome opened on its own, and it was filled with the history of this continent.

"Don't panic." The white-robed elder said softly, "In the ancient annals of our continent, it is said that Prophets have descended on three separate occasions! The first Prophet taught us cultivation, allowing us to escape our fetters of ignorance and enter the era of Immortal cultivation. This was the First Era of

our continent. The second Prophet did even more; he established a foundation for us, setting up the nine sky barriers to protect us and thus ensure that those flamefiends wouldn't dare to encroach upon our territory. These days, only the most crazed of flamefiends would dare to attack, and they no longer pose much of a threat. As a result, our homeland was able to grow truly powerful. This was the Second Era."

"But the third Prophet and the Third Era he brought..." The violet-robed man said nervously, "That was the darkest era of our history."

The white-robed elder nodded. The descent of the third Prophet... that Prophet had simply been too greedy, and he had caused a huge war.

"The third time, we were ultimately forced to unleash the power of the Eighteen Heavens and Hells Mutual Apocalypse Formation. We summoned the enormous power inherent within this land and in the end were able to slay that Prophet... but countless living beings in our world were slain as well, with just the few who hid within the sacred lands surviving." The violet-robed man was extremely nervous. That battle had been a dire one. The entire world had been completely devastated! It had taken them a million chaos cycles to recover to their current state.

"Whether this is a blessing or a catastrophe, we still have to face it," the white-robed elder said. "No matter what, the descent of the Prophets means that the Fourth Era has already begun. Inkmind, the task of making initial contact with those two Prophets shall be yours."

[The Desolate Era](#)

Book 30: Ancient Cultivator Chapter 18: Young Master Skywind

Within the carriage. Ji Ning and the Ninedust Sectlord watched as the youth continued to toy with his maids.

Whoosh. Suddenly, both of the maids fainted soundlessly.

"Eh?" The youth's face suddenly paled as he stared sideways. Two figures were standing right next to him, staring back at him. One was a white-robed youth who bore a black sword sheath on his back, while the other was a grim-looking man. The white-robed youth had a peaceful aura, and he most likely wasn't an evil man, but the faint baleful aura surrounding the grim-looking man made the youth feel a bit nervous.

He was very confident in his own abilities, and knew himself to be virtually invincible below the World level. However, these two powerful strangers somehow managed to enter his carriage without him noticing, and his two maids had silently fainted.

"Seniors." The youth hurriedly rose to his feet and bowed.

"I have some questions for you, kid," Ning said.

"Please go ahead, senior," the youth said immediately.

"Introduce yourself first." Ning's voice carried a strange, magical power to it that compelled the youth to speak. "My name is Skywind. I'm the ninth young master of Skyfiend City, and the governor of the city is

my father. I've come on my father's orders to travel to the Eastvoid Sword Pavilion to become apprenticed to Swordmaster Eastvoid."

Skywind was shocked as the words came out of his mouth. Why was it that he couldn't control his own words?

"Is this 'Swordmaster Eastvoid' a World-level expert or a Samsara Daolord?" Ning asked. The nearby Ninedust Sectlord listened attentively as well.

Given that the aura of danger emanating from this planet, they felt it necessary that they be low-key in all their actions, which was why they hadn't acted too brashly. They didn't know what type of temper the most supreme figure on this planet had; if they accidentally offended and made an enemy out of that person, they could well die if their judgment of this planet's danger was correct.

They had already suffered more than enough at the hands of the endless flaming creatures in the endless stone passageways.

"Just a World level cultivator, of course." A look of terror was in young master Skywind's eyes as he heard himself speak uncontrollably. Why was it that he was answering every single question posed? "Samsara Daolords only exist in the legends, and it is incredibly hard to trace or track them down. How could I possibly take one on as my master? Swordmaster Eastvoid is nothing more than an extremely famous expert of the Dao of the Sword. He's virtually invincible against other World-level experts, and even my father is far from being a match for him. My father went to tremendous lengths in order to convince him to accept me as his disciple. However, I have to first reach the Eastvoid Sword Pavilion and personally pass a few tests before being admitted.

Ning and the Ninedust Sectlord exchanged glances. World level? To them, even most Daolords of the Third Step or Fourth Step could be annihilated with a casual wave, much less World-level cultivators. Both were comparable to ordinary Eternal Emperors in power, after all.

"Then do you know where the Samsara Daolords are?" Ning continued to question him. The stronger one was, the more one would know. Most likely, the local Samsara Daolords would know more regarding the secrets of this planet.

"I don't know. How could someone like me possibly be aware of what the Samsara Daolords are doing?" Young master Skywind explained, "Perhaps some of the most elite World-level cultivators would know a few things."

.....

Ning continued to ask questions, while young master Skywind continued to respond automatically. The latter was at the verge of tears; no matter what the former asked, he was somehow forced to automatically answer with the utmost of truth. This feeling instilled terror in him. He was repeatedly reminded as to how powerless he was in the face of this white-robed, sword-carrying youth.

After a long period of time passed.

"What do you think?" Ning glanced at the Ninedust Sectlord.

“This will be a bit troublesome. From the sound of things this planet should indeed have Samsara Daolords, and several of them at that,” the Ninedust Sectlord said. “In the Endless Territories, our Daolords will usually establish their own sects. Here, however, the Daolords all seem to be in hiding.”

“Right. Let’s go find someone higher ranked than this ‘Skywind’ kid,” Ning said.

“That’s our only choice.” The Ninedust Sectlord nodded.

Both of them were quite patient. They would rather spend ten extra days quietly investigating this planet than to blunder rashly into a fight. As the saying went, only when you understood both yourself and your enemies would you be the victor in all your battles. This planet was quite possibly an ancestral site left behind by an ancestor of the Ancient cultivators, after all; they couldn’t be too rash here.

“I have more questions for you.” Ning looked at young master Skywind.

“Please go ahead, senior,” young master Skywind said hurriedly. He had been completely unable to overhear the conversation between Ning and the Ninedust Sectlord. He knew the situation he was in and was behaving quite obediently.

“Who in this general area would possibly have information regarding where the Samsara Daolords are?” Ning asked.

“In this general area, the highest-ranked figure would be the governor of Dragonwing City. He governs this entire region, and all of the countless living beings here prostrate themselves before him. He’s on very good terms with my father, and has been alive for an extremely long period of time. He surely knows a thousand times more than what I know; he might know where the Samsara Daolords hide.” Young master Skywind continued to speak uncontrollably, “I was planning to go pay a visit to him, as he helped out quite a bit and was instrumental in me being able to join the Eastvoid Sword Pavilion.”

Ning chuckled. “Good. Then we’ll accompany you and visit the governor of Dragonwing.”

And so, Ning and the Ninedust Sectlord both remained within the carriage. Young master Skywind naturally offered all the fine food and wine he had available. The two maids had awoken by now, and they didn’t dare to say a thing; they naturally understood that they had encountered two important personages.

“Glug. Ah, it’s rare for me to have a chance to relax like this.” The Ninedust Sectlord drank some fine wine, then let out a relaxed sigh. “It feels like it has been ages since I had the chance to rest a bit. I wasn’t able to relax at all back in those stone passageways.”

“Yes, a relaxed life is the best life of all.” Ning had also been driven to the point of near-lunacy by the flaming creatures, but he was now feeling quite relaxed as well. Suddenly, Ning’s gaze turned towards the inner walls of the carriage. The walls had some scars carved into them, and Ning was able to see right away that these were sword-arts scars.

The Ninedust Sectlord noticed Ning glancing at the walls, and he followed Ning’s gaze. When he saw the sword-scars on the walls, he let out a laugh. “How could someone be so shameless as to put such crude sword-arts on display?”

The nearby young master Skywind instantly began to blush with embarrassment.

“Everyone knows how amazing my young master’s sword-arts are. Young master Skywind’s sword-arts are famed throughout the lands. It was these sword-arts that resulted in him being allowed to enter the Eastvoid Sword Pavilion,” one of the maids couldn’t help but argue, her face flushed.

Young master Skywind buried his face in his hands. *Oh my god, you stupid woman... why did you have to say anything.*

“This little girl is pretty devoted to you.” The Ninedust Sectlord chuckled as he looked at the maid. “She’s clearly terrified, but she still wanted to speak up on your behalf. But I must tell you, I was speaking the truth. Your sword-arts truly are crude and ungainly. Hell, forget about your young master’s sword-arts; even that so-called Swordmaster Eastvoid’s sword-arts are unspeakably crude. In terms of sword-arts, the gentleman right in front of you is a true grandmaster of the Dao of the Sword. No, not me! Stop looking at me. I’m talking about this fellow Daoist right here. Can’t you tell he has a sword scabbard on his back? You should be able to tell right away that he’s a swordsman.”

Ning couldn’t help but let out a surprised snort of laughter.

“That ‘Swordmaster Eastvoid’ or whatever he’s called... everything he knows about the Dao of the Sword could probably fit within my friend’s toenails.” The Ninedust Sectlord was clearly in a wonderful mood and so he spoke in a rather casual manner.

Young master Skywind immediately turned his gaze towards Ning, his eyes scorching with eagerness. He was a sword fanatic who was completely devoted to the sword. This was why he had reached such a high level in sword-arts and had become famous in this region. He hadn’t left those sword-scars in the carriage to show off on purpose; rather, even in this carriage he would often ponder on his sword-arts. When he sometimes had an epiphany, he would carve it into the walls.

“Ninedust, you are bragging a bit much,” Ning said.

“I’m doing no such thing. I’m just telling the truth. That East-whatever, he’s a mere World-level cultivator. How could he even know as much as 0.01% of what you know regarding the sword?” The Ninedust Sectlord said hurriedly, “I’ve never met anyone with stronger sword-arts than you at your level.”

As the Ninedust Sectlord saw it, Ning was a Daolord of the Third Step who had truly earth-shaking sword-arts. Once he broke through to become a Daolord of the Fourth Step, he would probably be on par with Palace Lord Dawnstar. In truth, however, Ning’s sword-arts could be fairly described as without peer in all the Endless Territories, because his Dao was that of the Omega Sword Dao!

“Senior...” Young master Skywind looked rather eagerly at Ning.

“You little rascal.” Ning glanced at the carriage walls, then nodded. “I can vaguely see a total of thirty-six sword-stances within those carvings. You are fairly impressive for an Elder God... but there is still area for improvement. You can actually fuse these thirty-six stances into just three stances.”

Ning pointed at the carriage walls in a very serious manner, and three more sword-scars instantly appeared on them. All three pulsed with sword-intent, but very ordinary sword-intent. Ning was just providing guidance, after all; he was teaching the kid the basics of fusing sword-arts together.

“In fact, you can also fuse them into one stance.” Ning pointed again, causing a fourth streak of sword-intent to appear on the walls. This one was extraordinarily powerful, and it was infused with a hint of Ning’s own Omega Sword Dao.

“Right.” The nearby Ninedust Sectlord nodded. “Kid, today is the luckiest day in your life. My friend has just created a brand new sword-art based on your original one. We ate your food and drank your wine, but we don’t want to owe you anything. If you can fully master just one of those first three stances, you’ll be able to reach the World level. As for the final one? If you can master it, you’ll be invincible amongst World-level experts.”

Young master Skywind stared at the walls of the carriage, completely spellbound.

[The Desolate Era](#)

Book 30: Ancient Cultivator Chapter 19: Within the Governor’s Estate

Young master Skywind stared at those four sword-scars, especially the three simpler ones. Countless insights suddenly began to arise in his mind, and he immediately understood that these three sword-stances alone would allow his sword-arts to improve dramatically. In fact, they would even allow him to reach the World level.

He turned his head to look at Ji Ning, then kowtowed without hesitation.

Ning just looked at him calmly. For him to accept a few kowtows after having bestowed the Dao upon this young man wasn’t excessive.

“Your disciple greets you, Master.” Young master Skywind said these words while kowtowing.

“Master?” Ning was startled.

“Ah? Ahahaha!” The nearby Ninedust Sectlord started to roar with laughter after a moment of befuddlement. ‘Darknorth, he’s calling you ‘Master’. Are you planning to accept him as your disciple?’

Ning shook his head. “I just gave him a few casual tips. It can’t be considered as me having taken him on as my disciple.”

“Senior, this grand Dao you have taught me will ensure that I should be able to break through to reach the World level within a year. How can such a grand Dao be transmitted without purpose?” Young master Skywind said hurriedly, “I can understand if you look down on me, senior. You’ve taught me sword-arts. I might not be a true personal disciple, but I can be considered an honorary disciple, right?”

“You are quite crafty, junior.” Ning shook his head.

“Senior, do you agree?” Young master Skywind asked.

“Don’t mention it again.” Ning shook his head again. Skywind was quite talented in the Dao of the Sword, but Ning was currently trapped in an ancestral site of the Ancients. He had no desire to take on and teach a disciple at all. Even if he did, he would have to carefully consider the person’s character first.

“Understood.” Skywind nodded obediently. However, he became even more industrious and humble for the rest of the journey. He knew that a truly great blessing had befallen him!

Good heavens. This person was able to casually condense his thirty-six sword-stances into three stances, then fuse the three into a single stance. Supposedly, if he mastered that final stance he would be invincible even amongst World-level cultivators. What unfathomable level had that senior reached in sword-arts? A level beyond Skywind’s imagination, no doubt. He naturally wished to take on such a powerful figure as his master; even being a mere honorary disciple would be enough.

Alas, these two seniors were not so easily moved.

.....

A few hours later, young master Skywind’s process reached Dragonwing City.

Dragonwing City was quite a large city, and it had hundreds of millions of citizens dwelling within it. This was the headquarters of a World-level expert, and its streets were three thousand meters wide and filled with many beauty carriages. However, processions like Skywind’s which had more than three hundred knights were considered quite impressive in size.

“Youji, it’ll be up to you in a bit,” Ning said.

“Don’t worry, Master.” Su Youji was quite excited.

Ning, Su Youji, and the Ninedust Sectlord accompanied young master Skywind as he entered the governor’s estate. They went into a guest hall, and none of the guards or servants in the estate were able to notice the three Daolords in the slightest.

The Dragonwing Governor was a World-level cultivator who had been living for an extremely long period of time, and Ning really didn’t have much talent in control. He was able to deal with Elder God Skywind simply because the disparity in power was absolutely overwhelming. Taking control over a World-level cultivator, however, would be a bit tougher. He might succeed, but if the cultivator had a very tough mind he could very well fail.

The Ninedust Sectlord had no talent in this regard either, and so in the end Ning chose to have Su Youji handle things! Su Youji was skilled in the Dao of control and charm, and for her to deal with a World-level cultivator was simplicity itself.

“Haha. Skywind, you came!” Loud laughter rang out from behind the door. Moments later, a yellow-robed elder walked in, emanating the mighty aura of a Chaos Immortal. He did not, however, seem to be a World God as well.

“The Dragonwing Governor?” Suddenly, three figures appeared within the guest hall. One of the three, a woman dressed in fiery red robes, spoke out to him.

“Who are...” The Dragonwing Governor looked at Su Youji. He went stiff, then his eyes slowly glazed over.

“Do you know where the Samsara Daolords are?” Su Youji asked.

“The Samsara Daolords move about unpredictably. Although I’ve met one, I don’t know where he lives,” the Dragonwing Governor said.

Young master Skywind watched with amazement. Good heavens. The woman next to these two seniors was actually able to control the Dragonwing Governor like a golem? What level of people were these people on?!

“Then do you have a way to find a Samsara Daolord?” Su Youji asked.

“There’s a Chaos Immortal known as Immortal Slowseal. His master is a Samsara Daolord,” the Dragonwing Governor said. “It won’t be that hard to locate him. Once you find him, it’ll be easy to find his master.”

Ning and the Ninedust Sectlord revealed looks of delight. Still, this planet truly was strange. The Samsara Daolords were all in hiding! This was completely different from the Endless Territories. They all felt that there had to be some secrets hidden in this place. Only by finding the Samsara Daolords would they be able to discern the secrets of this world.

“Oh?” Su Youji revealed a look of delight. She then used a secret art and sent out a streak of light from her forehead, sending it into the Dragonwing Governor’s forehead. Divine runes glowed within the governor’s eyes. A short while later, he regained consciousness, but a look of dread and fervor was now in his eyes as he looked towards Su Youji.

“Greetings, Mistress,” the Dragonwing Governor said respectfully.

Ning immediately understood that Su Youji must have taken full control over the Dragonwing Governor. In the past, Feixian the Exalted was extremely talented in this regard, and she was able to allow even Daolords to obey her command.

“How long will it take for us to find Immortal Slowseal?” Su Youji asked.

“Anywhere from a week to a month,” the Dragonwing Governor said.

Su Youji glanced at Ning and the Ninedust Sectlord. Ning said, “Governor, you should immediately begin to search for Immortal Slowseal. Once you find him, lead us to him immediately.”

“Hear that?” Su Youji looked at the governor, who frantically nodded.

“Understood,” the governor said. “I’ll go handle this right now.” He then immediately unleashed his Immortal energy, sending mental orders to his subordinates to locate Immortal Slowseal. He had been here for countless years and had many friends. It wouldn’t be too hard to locate the man.

The governor looked at Skywind, then revealed a smile. “Skywind, my dear nephew, I have to thank you. It was all thanks to you that I now have a chance to serve my new master.”

“Once this matter ends, I’ll dispel my secret art,” Su Youji said to Skywind.

“Please don’t, Mistress. I wish to serve you unto death,” the Dragonwing Governor said with agitation.

Skywind was stupefied. The governor’s memories and intelligence hadn’t been affected in the slightest, but he now was filled with the utmost of loyalty and dedication towards Su Youji.

.....

Ning and the others took up residence in Dragonwing City for now. They were all quite patient, and it was only through patience that they would ensure they would be able to survive this dangerous place. If they were impatient, they would die quick deaths.

On the fifth day of them being in the governor's estate.

Whoosh. A giant azure bird that was three thousand meters long was flying through the skies of Dragonwing City. A pavilion was located on top of the bird's back, and a simian-looking alien man was seated casually within the pavilion. He was surrounded by a large group of female servants, and one of them with the aura of an Ancestral Immortal was in his arms.

"We've arrived at Dragonwing City, my pretty. The kid named Skywind is in that city right now," the alien man said with a chuckle.

"I can't wait to see that look of rage and grief on his face," the woman said coquettishly.

In this planet, it was almost impossible to fly via magic treasures as the skies were sealed as though by edict. Most likely, only Samsara Daolords would be able to resist that disruptive power and use their Immortal energy and artifacts to fly. However, there were some natural creatures such as birds which were not bound, and so some cultivators would capture giant birds to serve as mounts.

"Skywind!" The alien man glanced downwards, then spoke out in a booming voice that was backed by his Immortal energy and which shook the governor's estate.

Soon, both the Dragonwing Governor and young master Skywind appeared in front of the courtyard. As for the giant bird, it slowly began to descend.

"Brother Mountainplume?" The Dragonwing Governor said hurriedly, "Have you come to bring Skywind to the Eastvoid Sword Pavilion? But the appointed date is more than half a year away. There was no need for you to come so soon."

Skywind glanced at the sharp-lipped, ape-faced man within the pavilion atop the giant bird, and also at the violet-robed woman in his arms. When he saw the violet-robed woman, his face turned pale and a look of grief appeared on his face.

"Skywind this is Immortal Mountainplume. He's the eldest disciple of Swordlord Eastvoid and has entered the World level already. In the future, he'll be your senior apprentice-brother," the Dragonwing Governor said.

"You..." Skywind's gaze was focused on the violet-robed woman, who merely smiled coldly in response.

"She's my woman. How dare you stare at her like that?" The ape-faced man said coldly.

"Skywind!" The Dragonwing Governor barked softly.

Young master Skywind shook his head. "It's nothing."

“I’ve come on Master’s orders,” the ape-faced man said. “This kid, Skywind, has an impure Dao-heart and is not worthy of joining the Eastvoid Sword Pavilion. Kid, there’s no need for you to waste your time going to the pavilion.”

“What?” The Dragonwing Governor’s face turned pale. He said hurriedly, “We already came to an agreement, and the Windfiend Governor has already sent quite a few gifts...”

“We only said we’d give him a chance. He’d only be formally accepted once he passed our tests. Clearly, the kid failed.” The ape-faced man said coldly, “As for the Windfiend Governor, who gives a damn about him? Would he dare go against my master’s orders?”

The Dragonwing Governor had an ugly look on his face. As for young master Skywind, he ground his teeth, furious at the insult to his father and heartbroken by that woman. This was the only woman he had ever loved... but it had all been nothing more than a sinister ploy. To this very day, she was still causing trouble for him.

“Skywind, compared to Immortal Mountainplume you are absolutely nothing.” The violet-robed woman leaned against the ape-faced man, then let out a cold smile. “You want to become Swordmaster Eastvoid’s disciple? Stop dreaming. Go home and hide in your father’s protective embrace.”

“Become my master’s disciple? Even if you knelt in front of me and begged to be my disciple, I wouldn’t accept you,” the ape-faced man said mockingly.

Skywind’s face grew even uglier to behold.

“Endure it for now. Neither your father nor I can afford to make enemies out of the Eastvoid Sword Pavilion,” the Dragonwing Governor sent mentally.

.....

On the other side of the governor’s estate were Ning and the Ninedust Sectlord, who were sipping some wine alongside Su Youji. Their gazes were able to traverse the void and see everything which was happening in front of the estate.

[The Desolate Era](#)

Book 30: Ancient Cultivator Chapter 20: Learning From Heaven and Earth

“Master, I really don’t like the look of that ‘Immortal Mountainplume’ fellow.” Su Youji looked at Ji Ning.

Ning shook his head. “No rush.” He turned his gaze to the distant young master Skywind, then began to scry the young man’s destiny. It was quite difficult to scry the man’s future, as he was an Elder God who would soon reach the World level; to scry his future was extremely difficult. To scry his past, however, was fairly easy.

The future had yet to happen; all things were possible. The past, however, had already ended.

The Windfiend Governor was a World-level cultivator who had been alive for an extremely long period of time. He was a very tyrannical figure who had countless beautiful concubines. Although it was very difficult for World-level cultivators to have children, over the course of many years he sired a total of nine sons and daughters, with Skywind being the youngest of the nine. Skywind’s mother died when he

was young, and so he was a very solitary person as a child. After he grew up, he eventually encountered a dazzling beauty known as Fairy Violetlotus.

Fairy Violetlotus was warm and gentle towards him, causing him to feel that the world was truly a beautiful place. He immediately felt certain that she would be his Dao-companion, his eternal Dao-companion.

Who would've thought that this most blissful period of his life would transform into a nightmare? The woman suddenly displayed an overwhelming level of power, crippling his cultivation base. She tortured him, sending his body into a hell of pain... but to him, the spiritual pain he suffered was far more nightmarish. His one and only love had transformed into nothing more than a cruel plotter. The only reason she had befriended him was to torment him to get back at the Windfiend Governor.

Later on, the Windfiend Governor found his son, saved him, restored and repaired his body, then helped his son return to the path of cultivation.

But from this day forth, young master Skywind's heart was forever filled with hidden pain. In fact, he decided that he would never feel love towards another woman again. And so, he began to roam the world, adventuring through its mountains and rivers.

The Windfiend Governor no longer held many hopes for his youngest son; he had always been a solitary figure, and he was very slow in cultivation. As a result, he chose to just let his son do as he pleased. Who would've thought that Skywind would suddenly take a liking to sword-arts while out touring the world? He became completely infatuated with sword-arts, taking on the natural world of Heaven and Earth as his master. He developed increasingly powerful sword-arts based on the natural world and soared into the skies. In just a hundred thousand years, he reached the Elder God stage and was virtually invincible within it.

"What?!" Ning revealed a stunned look.

"What's wrong?" Su Youji and the Ninedust Sectlord both looked towards Ning, puzzled.

"Nothing." But Ning was still unable to disguise his shock. This 'young master Skywind' had never trained under any master at all? He had learned from the workings of Heaven and Earth, yet had managed to reach his current level of cultivation?

Previously, when the Ninedust Sectlord had mocked his sword-arts as unspeakably crude, that was in comparison to Ji Ning. In truth, Skywind had reached an incredible level for an Elder God!

"He's actually this talented in sword-arts?" Ning glanced at the distant Skywind, then nodded slightly.

"And he's not a bad person." Ning cared more about character when considering whether or not to take on a disciple; talent was of secondary concern.

.....

"Let's leave." Immortal Mountainplume and Fairy Violetlotus retired into their pavilion atop the giant bird. While leaving, Fairy Violetlotus glanced sideways at young master Skywind, then smirked. "You'll never recover from this."

Young master Skywind just looked at her silently. Although he felt pain in his heart, he bore no hatred for her. Even the most detestable of people had their own pitiable attributes. The reason why Fairy Violetlotus had treated him like that was principally due to the great grudge she bore for the Windfiend Governor.

Whoosh. The flying beast spread its wings, then departed.

The Dragonwing Governor shook his head and sighed upon seeing this. "Skywind, Immortal Mountainplume must've caused trouble in secret. He's Swordmaster Eastvoid's favored disciple; if he's insistent on causing trouble, it'll be impossible for you to be able to enter the Swordmaster's tutelage."

"It's fine," young master Skywind said. "But Father will be very disappointed once he learns this."

"Skywind." A voice suddenly rang out by Skywind's ears. Skywind was stunned to hear this voice. It was Ji Ning's. "Come to me, immediately."

Young master Skywind didn't dare to tarry; he hurried ran towards Ning's residence.

.....

Ning, Su Youji, and the Ninedust Sectlord all sat down to eat and drink. Right at this moment, young master Skywind came. He immediately bowed respectfully. "Greetings, seniors."

"Skywind." Ning looked at him.

"Senior." Skywind looked back at Ning.

Ning smiled at him. "You've been wanting to become my disciple, yes?"

Skywind was stunned for a moment, then was overjoyed and fell to his knees and kowtowed. "Your disciple greets you, Master."

"Darknorth, you...?" The Ninedust Sectlord was amazed, as was Su Youji. They knew what level of power Ning had reached. If he publicly announced in the Endless Territories that he was about to accept a disciple, countless World-level geniuses would fight over the chance. In fact, there were even some Samsara Daolords who would come apprentice themselves to him.

Ning glanced at the Ninedust Sectlord and Su Youji, then chuckled. "I wanted to take him on, so I did."

Ning acted in accordance with his heart when he chose disciples. When he had been in the alternate universe, he had taken a liking to 'Green Bamboo' Yang Quding and so had taken him on as his second disciple.

When he saw the past of his third disciple, Skywind, Ning felt a hint of empathy for him. Skywind had been hurt by love, while Ning felt remorse and regret towards his own wife Yu Wei. Skywind was incredibly talented in the Dao of the Sword, and so focused all of his efforts on it. Ning suddenly decided to give the kid a chance.

"From this day forth, you shall be my third disciple," Ning said. "Now that you are under my tutelage, you must obey my commands."

"Understood," Skywind immediately said gratefully.

“Mm.” Ning nodded, then stretched out a finger and waved it lightly. The tip of the finger tapped Skywind on his forehead. Instantly, a large amount of information poured into his mind.

There were cultivation techniques! The Dao of the Sword! Everything was transmitted to him!

The Sword Daos which Ning transmitted to him were, respectively, the [Blood Drop] sword-art, the [Shadowless] sword-art, the [Soleheart] sword-art, the [Yin-Yang] sword-art, and the [Heavenbreaker] sword-art. Any of the five would allow him to become a Daolord. Ning also left behind two powerful types of sword-intent; the first was of his first-stage Omega Sword Dao, the second was of his second-stage Sword Dao.

“These five sword-arts can be merged together. Only then shall you see my true Sword Dao. You should constantly meditate on these two types of sword-intent. The amount you can comprehend, however, will be determined by your talent,” Ning said.

All cultivators had to walk their own paths if they wished to become a Daolord. Just teaching a few sword-stances wouldn't be of much help, and so Ning went ahead and gave him two memories of Ning's own sword-intent. Skywind was to meditate on them. Perhaps he would one day develop his own Dao of the Sword.

“When you are in danger, you can even summon these two streams of sword-intent forth from your mind. The first stream of sword-intent is capable of slaying most Daolords of the Third Step, while the second stream is capable of slaying of ordinary Daolords of the Fourth Step.

“The sword-intent is primarily meant to help you train in the Dao. Unless absolutely necessary, do not unleash them.

“Remember... all divine abilities and secret arts are outside sources of power. You can learn them, but you cannot abandon your own Sword Dao for them. The Dao is the foundation of everything,” Ning sent mentally.

He didn't transmit any divine abilities or secret arts. This planet was quite an extraordinary one; if his disciple wished to learn them, he could go adventure for them himself. And, to tell the truth, Ning really didn't have any good divine abilities or secret arts to pass on. The good ones he did have, such as the ones the deceased Sword Hegemon gave him, were not permitted to be taught to others!

Ning was also correct in stating that the 'Dao' was the foundation of all things. The more powerful your Dao is, the less meaningful those divine abilities, secret arts, and what-not were.

For example, when the Ninedust Sectlord used his divine ability, his divine power would instantly become a thousand times more powerful than before. However, his actual combat strength would only increase fractionally! This was because the power of his 'Dao' made up for most of his power in combat. If Ning became a Daolord of the Fourth Step, a single glance from him could cause ruinous damage. Thus far, he had merely reached the second-stage Omega Sword Dao, but the power of his sword-intent was more greater than his novessence water and could easily annihilate Daolords of the Fourth Step.

.....

Skywind swore a lifeblood oath not to disobey Ning's commands. After completely receiving Ning's transmitted memories, a new, vast Dao was visible before him. The two sword-intents of an Omega Sword Dao... they would be lamps that guided him on his path of cultivation.

"Thank you, Master," young master Skywind said excitedly. These two streams of sword-intent were too unfathomably profound, but the five sword-arts formed a perfect circle that would guide him from all the way from being an Elder God to becoming a Daolord. Every single stance was described in great detail, and it also explained the process by which Ning gained insight into these Daos. They were of tremendous use to him.

"I won't get involved into your personal issues. You'll have to handle everything," Ning said.

"Understood," Skywind said. He did indeed have some things he wished to do, but in the past he was too weak. Now...

"Also, you need to stay by my side for a period of time," Ning said. "If you have any questions, I can answer them for you."

Sooner or later, he would leave this place. He certainly couldn't take this new disciple with him when he did, as each had their own paths to walk. This was how Ning treated his disciples. Take his second disciple for example; after transmitting the Dao to him, Ning immediately disappeared. That second disciple lived in a fairly ordinary mortal world, after all; this third disciple lived in a somewhat more powerful planet, and so Ning had left those two streams of sword-intent to ensure that he would be protected while he was weak.

As for afterwards? Whether he lived or died would be up to him.

[The Desolate Era](#)

Book 30: Ancient Cultivator Chapter 21: Immortal Slowseal

Nine more days went past before the Dragonwing Governor finally found traces of Immortal Slowseal.

"Master." The Dragonwing Governor hurriedly came running to report to Su Youji, Ji Ning, and the Ninedust Sectlord. "Immortal Slowseal is currently a guest at the Hiddensea Palace, roughly a hundred million kilometers from this place. He's quite some distance away. It'll probably take us some time to get there, and so I've made the arrangements for transport birds and mounts to be prepared for us. We can head out whenever."

"We'll head out right now." Ji Ning rose to his feet, then waved his hand and caused a black flying vessel to appear next to him.

"We'll fly over?" Skywind and the Dragonwing Governor were rather speechless when they saw the vessel. It must be understood that this planet was bound by the edicts of an Eternal Emperor, and the invisible laws made it so that only Samsara Daolords were just barely able to fly. Samsara Daolords, however, were incredibly rare. Neither of the two had ever truly flown in the air before using magic treasures before; at most, they had flown on the backs of giant birds.

"Move it!" Ning, Su Youji, and the Ninedust Sectlord were already aboard the vessel, and they barked impatiently to the others.

“Y-y-yes.” The Dragonwing Governor excitedly followed after them, and Skywind was similarly unable to disguise his excitement.

Swoosh. The black vessel burst into the skies, then immediately disappeared without a trace.

.....

Ning and the others had long ago acquired a local map of this planet from the Dragonwing Governor. They knew where the Hiddensea Palace was located, and the planet itself wasn't that large; at most, it was a bit over one billion kilometers in diameter. The ordinary mortals on this planet were fewer in number than even in the Three Realms, but on average they were more impressive as the rate at which they gave birth to Immortals and Fiendgods was far higher.

Swish! Just a few heartbeats later, the black vessel had already left the Dragonwing Governor's estate and arrived directly above the top of a cloud-piercing snowy mountain.

“Here we are,” Ning said. “Hiddensea Palace is right below us.”

“What? We arrived?” The Dragonwing Governor and Skywind stood at the prow of the ship, staring in astonishment at the scene below them. The mountain peak below them was covered with snow, with an ordinary-looking palace buried below it. This was Hiddensea Palace.

“We made it there in one breath.” The Dragonwing Governor and Skywind exchanged glances. Both of them felt stunned. That had been simply too fast! To them, Hiddensea Palace was an extremely distant location that would only be reached through riding birds or mounts. The path was a dangerous, twisty one that needed careful navigation, and it would take them at least half a month to reach it.

The nearby Ninedust Sectlord chuckled. “This ship can move at a hundred times the limits of the Heavenly Daos. A hundred million kilometers is nothing to it. You! Whats-your-face, Dragonwing Governor, right? Hurry on down and lead us to Immortal Slowseal.”

“Understood. Skywind, follow me and stay behind me. As for the three of you?” The Dragonwing Governor hesitated.

“We'll go with you,” the Ninedust Sectlord said calmly. “No one in this puny little palace can possibly see through our illusions.”

“Understood.” The Dragonwing Governor acknowledged the order.

.....

The Dragonwing Governor led the party while the other four temporarily followed behind him as he entered Hiddensea Palace. The former was a World-level cultivator, after all. He was on the same level as the Palace Lady and so was received with great courtesy.

“Dragonwing.” The Palace Lady was a black-robed woman who looked quite ordinary but who had an extraordinary demeanor.

“Hiddensea.” The Dragonwing Governor hurriedly rose to his feet.

“What suddenly brings you to my place? Dragonwing City is quite distant from my palace. To think that you made the long, hard trek here in person... might I ask, what is the reason behind this?” The Palace Lady smiled. Her gaze just briefly lingered on Ning and the rest of the four behind the Dragonwing Governor. She noticed nothing remarkable about them at all; the difference in power between them was simply too great.

The ‘long, hard trek’? The Dragonwing Governor couldn’t help but sigh to himself. It had all been done in the twinkling of an eye. However, he didn’t expose this. “Hiddensea, I’ve come to meet with fellow Daoist Slowseal.”

“Meet Slowseal?” The Palace Mistress frowned. “Immortal Slowseal is a rather bad-tempered person. If I didn’t have something important I needed him for, I would never have invited him over. Why are you causing problems for yourself?”

“I have something important to discuss as well,” the Dragonwing Governor said.

The Palace Mistress gave him a hard look, then nodded. “Fine. I’ll help you send word, but you know what Slowseal is like.”

“I do.” The Dragonwing Governor nodded.

A few moments passed as she conversed with Immortal Slowseal. “Let’s go. I just checked and Slowseal agreed to meet with you. I’ll take you to him.” She led the Dragonwing Governor deeper into the palace.

A short while later, they arrived within the most beautiful courtyard within the Hiddensea Palace. A horned, black-haired elder was seated within it, drinking some wine. When the Dragonwing Governor brought Ning and the others in, the black-haired elder’s eyes twitched. He glanced sideways at the four, then frowned and barked at the Palace Mistress, “Hiddensea, bringing in Dragonwing is one thing, but why have you brought in a group of juniors?”

“I’m to blame for that.” The Dragonwing Governor hurriedly smiled. “It has nothing to do with Palace Mistress Hiddensea.”

The Palace Mistress just stood there silently. She knew quite well that Immortal Slowseal was doing this to knock the Dragonwing Governor down a few pegs.

“Hmph.” The black-haired elder let out a snort. “Throw these juniors out.”

“But...” The Dragonwing Governor was stunned. As for Ning, Su Youji, and the Ninedust Sectlord, they revealed looks of resignation.

“Ugh.” The Ninedust Sectlord let out a sigh, and as he did an invisible aura of power blasted out from around him, causing Skywind, the Dragonwind Governor, the Hiddensea Palace Mistress, and Immortal Slowseal to all feel their hearts quiver. The entire world seemed to have turned silent. Heaven and Earth had both vanished, leaving nothing else save his voice.

“I wanted to resolve this peacefully and have a nice chat with Immortal Slowseal’s master.” The Ninedust Sectlord shook his head. “I didn’t imagine him to be such a fool. It seems we’ll have to do things the hard way.”

Ning and the others had indeed been planning on doing things peacefully. This planet was mysterious and inscrutable; they didn't want to accidentally kick over a hornet's nest. Unfortunately, this Immortal Slowseal was a bit too arrogant.

"What's going on? Why is this happening? W-who are they?!" Immortal Slowseal was panicking, and the Hiddensea Palace Mistress was amazed as well.

"Slowseal actually has a Daolord as his master. It's fine for him to be proud, but his pride goes too far." Ning shook his head slightly as well. People truly did act differently once they had a powerful backer. In the Badlands Territory, if you encountered a disciple of the Badlands Court you generally wouldn't dare to attack even if you were much stronger! As for the likes of the Skykwood Sect of Skywood City, one of the eight Sacred Cities? Whenever the weakest members of Skywood Sect so much as mentioned their sect, World-level cultivators and weaker Daolords would be utterly terrified.

This was the good part of having a strong backer. This was why so many World-level cultivators wanted to join major schools, but the Badlands Court and Vastheaven Palace had very high standards. As for the Skywood Sect and other sects on its level, their standards were even more excessive. Thus, the World-level cultivators who weren't able to join the major sects were forced to hide in one place. When trouble came knocking, they had no choice but to fight head-on... and if they failed, they would die.

If you had a powerful background, even if you couldn't win the fight you could report your name and thus stay alive in that way.

It was much like what the Paragon of Pills had told Ning: "If you ever find yourself in a life-threatening situation, you can use my name!" Her being his backer would overawe many attackers.

"W-who are you?" Immortal Slowseal was rather panicked. "My Master is Daolord Feng Xian."

"Kid..." The Ninedust Sectlord's face was dark, and his voice was cold and grim. Waves suddenly arose in the area around him, swirling around him with torrential voice and filling Immortal Slowseal's entire field of vision, making him feel as though they were about to drown him. The power held within the waves caused Immortal Slowseal to feel a sense of endless terror. Horrified, Slowseal immediately produced a jade talisman, then crushed it with a cracking sound.

"My master is going to arrive soon! Don't do anything crazy!" Immortal Slowseal said, terrified.

"Hahaha..." The Ninedust Sectlord started to laugh.

"Haha..." Ning started to laugh as well. "Ninedust, I thought we'd have to threaten him a bit before his master would arrive. I never would've thought he'd panic so badly that he'd immediately crush a Dao-seal to summon his master."

"I was planning to torment him a bit. Now, it seems, he's quite a clever boy." The Ninedust Sectlord let out a chuckle as the waves around him all vanished.

Everyone else, including Immortal Slowseal and Palace Mistress Hiddensea, felt their hearts quiver as their legs turned to jelly. Prior to this, Ning's group had shown them no enmity and had completely masked their auras, making it so that Immortal Slowseal could sense no power at all. Now that they fully released their auras, they felt an instinctive, bone-deep terror in their hearts!

“W-where did all these terrifying figures come from?” Immortal Slowseal felt misery in his heart.

The Desolate Era

Book 30: Ancient Cultivator Chapter 22: Outlander Demons

At the very peak of a desolate mountain. A gray-robed man was seated here in the lotus position. He had been seated here for more than a hundred thousand years, ignoring the howling of the wind and the beating of the rain.

“In the end, this world is simply too small.” The gray-robed man raised his head to stare into the skies. “I need to do the same thing the other major powers did; leave this world, fight my way through the endless demons of the outlands, and then enter the wider world beyond. According to what the legendary Prophets said, the world beyond ours is vast and filled with countless cultivators. It is a world trillions of times greater than ours.”

“That place is the place I should be in!” A look of desire was in the gray-robed man’s eyes. Leaving this world and entering the outlands carried a high risk of death, but generations of Daolords continued to do just that. In the end, this world was simply too small, even smaller than the Three Realms. For figures as powerful as Daolords, spending a few dozen chaos cycles in such a small place left them with little to no interest in it at all. They wanted to explore the wider, more exciting world outside, especially after they had learned from the Prophets who had descended as to just how amazing that world was.

“But I’m not quite there yet. I should first become a Daolord of the Fourth Step. Then, I might perhaps be able to leave.” The gray-robed man nodded slowly.

Suddenly...

Bang! The gray-robed man suddenly turned his head to stare in a certain direction. He frowned. “Why is my disciple suddenly asking for rescue via his message-talisman?”

He truly was puzzled. This world was fairly small, and all the Daolords within it knew each other. As a result, even if they chose to punish his disciple for some reason they would first give him, Daolord Feng Xian, a heads up. This particular disciple, Slowseal, was very attentive and obedient. As a result, Daolord Feng Xian liked him very much. In addition, Slowseal had no chance of becoming a Samsara Daolord, nor did he ever go out adventuring. That was why this didn’t make sense.

He wasn’t out adventuring and Daolords wouldn’t attack him. Why then was he begging for aid?

Swoosh! Although quite puzzled, Daolord Feng Xian immediately flew into the skies towards the direction the plea had come from.

.....

A courtyard within the Hiddensea Palace.

Ji Ning, Su Youji, and the Ninedust Sectlord were seated here casually, chatting and drinking wine. Skywind and the Dragonwing Governor stood next to them, while Palace Mistress Hiddensea hurriedly attended to their every need, pouring wine and delivering platters of fruit. As for Immortal Slowseal, he watched from a distance, his heart filled with terror and unease.

A short while later...

Whoosh. A figure suddenly descended from the skies.

“Master.” Immortal Slowseal raised his head, a look of delight on his face.

“There he is.” Ning, the Ninedust Sectlord, and Su Youji all turned their heads to stare at the gray-robed man descending from the skies. The man’s gaze instantly fell upon Ning and the Ninedust Sectlord.

“Eh?” The gray-robed man’s face changed. He was a Daolord of the Third Step; there was no way those three Daolords could mask their auras in front of him.

“Who are you?” the gray-robed man roared. He didn’t care about Su Youji, but Ning’s aura was that of a Daolord of the Third Step. As for the Ninedust Sectlord, his aura was even more powerful and terrifying than that of a Daolord of the Fourth Step!

“I’ve never met you three before. You shouldn’t be from our world.” The gray-robed man had an ugly look on his face as he roared angrily, “Are you outlander demons?!”

“Outlander demons?” The Dragonwing Governor and Skywind all stared at Ning’s group, stunned.

Outlander demons... here in this world, those things were creatures of nightmares! Once outlander demons appeared, everyone would pay any price necessary to wipe them out – this was a shared acknowledgement amongst all cultivators in this world! Skywind and the Dragonwing Governor had heard stories of outlander demons since they were young; they knew that every appearance of an outlander demon represented a calamity descending upon their world.

“Impossible. There’s no way my master could be an outlander demon.” Skywind couldn’t, wouldn’t, believe it.

“Outlander demons?” Ning’s group of three exchanged glances. This world was indeed filled with many flaming creatures who were known as outlander demons. They were incredibly powerful creatures, and some of them dared to enter this world. Although they would be suppressed by the might of this planet, ensuring that their power dropped dramatically, the ones who did dare to enter here were always amongst the most supreme of the flaming creatures and were at least at Ji Ning’s level. Some were even stronger!

But of course, upon entering this planet and being weakened by it they would become far weaker than Ning or the Ninedust Sectlord.

The gray-robed man immediately sent a message back to the sacred grounds. “Three strange figures have appeared, and their auras are at the Daolord level. One has an aura even stronger than that of a Daolord of the Fourth Step. I suspect he is a transformed demon from the outlands.”

.....

A beautiful underground palace located roughly 190 million kilometers beneath the ground. One of Daolord Feng Xian’s avatars was located here, and it immediately sent out the word.

“Three Daolords? One has an aura even greater than that of a Daolord of the Fourth Step?”

Within an ancient, still room. A white-robed elder was seated in the lotus position here, and by his side was a violet-robed man who was also seated in the lotus position. The walls around them were filled with countless ancient runes.

“They should be the two Prophets and their servant,” the white-robed elder said. “Inkmind, go and pay a visit to those two Prophets.”

“Acknowledged,” the violet-robed Daolord Inkmind said respectfully

Ning’s group was behaving with caution, but the ‘sacred grounds’ which had unified this planet were similarly cautious. The wealth which had been built up in the sacred grounds over the course of countless years was more than enough to stir Prophets with greed! That was exactly what had happened last time, and a disaster had befallen the world as a result. As a result, the sacred grounds behaved very cautiously. At first, they had been able to track Ning’s descent through the nine barriers around their world, but they were unable to track them afterwards.

They could’ve forcibly swept the world through their godsense, but they wanted to avoid unnecessary trouble. They chose to wait and see what the two Prophets would do first, leaving the initiative to them. Given how powerful the Prophets were, it was impossible for them to remain completely hidden within this world.

“You should know exactly how you should deal with the Prophets,” the white-robed elder said. “We naturally wish to act in a friendly manner, but if they leave us no choice then we can choose to battle them and wipe them out.”

“Understood,” Daolord Inkmind said respectfully. Last time, they were only forced to use a world-destroying measure to kill the Prophet because they had been caught off-guard. As a result, virtually all living creatures on the surface of the world had been wiped out as well. Fortunately, the ‘sacred grounds’ still held living beings within it, and over the course of countless years they slowly propagated to the point of allowing the world to flourish once more. This time, if they felt that the Prophets were likely to cause trouble they would choose to immediately kill them!

Whoosh. Daolord Inkmind departed.

“We’ve never experienced two Prophets descending together. I hope things can be resolved peacefully,” the white-robed elder murmured softly in his room.

.....

The atmosphere in the courtyard was very tense and heavy. Daolord Feng Xian stared unblinkingly at Ning’s group, certain that they were outlander demons. The only people who came from the outlands were either demons or Prophets. Prophets? From the day this entire planet was created til now, there had only been three times that Prophets had descended. The chances of this happening were incredibly low. Although outlander demons were also fairly rare, they were far more common by comparison.

“There’s no way Master and the others are outlander demons.” The nearby Skywind continued to refuse to believe it.

Swoosh! Just two seconds after the two sides first began to face off, a golden vessel suddenly appeared in the skies.

“They came.” Daolord Feng Xian revealed a look of delight when he saw that flying vessel. The sacred grounds had sent him reinforcements. He truly hadn’t been certain of victory if he had to face this alone.

“They are incredibly fast. That ship moved at roughly a hundred times the speed of light.” Ning and the others raised their heads, watching the flying vessel approach them.

A violet-robed man walked out of the flying vessel, a smile on his face as he descended towards the courtyard.

“Brother Inkmind?” Daolord Feng Xian revealed a puzzled look. Daolord Inkmind had a fairly special position in the sacred grounds, because he was the retainer of their most important leader, the ‘Grand Elder’. However, Inkmind himself was merely a Daolord of the Second Step; he was even weaker than Feng Xian. If even Feng Xian didn’t feel confident in being able to deal with these outlander demons, what good would Inkmind be?

After Daolord Inkmind descended, he turned his gaze towards Ning’s group of three. He had already seen the images of them piercing through the nine barriers and descend to their planet, and so he was able to recognize them at a glance.

“I am Inkmind. Greetings, Prophets.” Daolord Inkmind bowed. “When the two of you passed through the nine celestial barriers, those of us in the sacred grounds immediately realized that you had arrived.”

“Prophets?” Ning and the Ninedust Sectlord traded glances. So they had already been discovered when piercing through those nine barriers of mist? But they hadn’t noticed anything at all! Still, it made sense; those nine barriers did indeed seem to have been artificially created by a major power.

“They are Prophets?” Daolord Feng Xian revealed a stunned look.

“Yes. To be precise, these two are Prophets.” Daolord Inkmind nodded as he pointed towards Ning and the Ninedust Sectlord. “I’ve come on the orders of the Grand Elder. There’s no mistaking it; these two are Prophets. Prophets, would you be willing to share my ship and journey to the sacred grounds? I trust many of your questions will be resolved once you do.”

[The Desolate Era](#)

Book 30: Ancient Cultivator Chapter 23: Sacred Grounds

“Prophets?” The Dragonwing Governor, Palace Mistress Hiddensea, and Immortal Slowseal were all puzzled.

“Prophets?” Skywind looked at his master, Ji Ning, in confusion as well.

None of them had ever heard of the term ‘Prophet’ before.

“Gentlemen?” Daolord Inkmind looked towards Ning and the Ninedust Sectlord.

The two exchanged a glance, then chuckled. The Ninedust Sectlord said, “Let’s go take a look. I want to see what the so-called ‘sacred grounds’ of this planet look like.”

“Youji, you can dispel your secret art now,” Ning instructed.

“Understood.” Su Youji nodded obediently, then released a strange rainbow light from her eyes as she glanced at the Dragonwing Governor. The latter felt dizzy for a moment, but when he regained his clarity of mind he quickly realized that he had spent the past period of time under the dazzlingly beautiful red-robed woman’s spell. Although she had already dispelled it, he still couldn’t help but feel a deep sense of veneration and desire towards her. He wanted to swear to forever serve her, but his rational mind told him to stay calm.

“Skywind, follow me.” Ning and the Ninedust Sectlord both walked towards the golden flying vessel.

“Yes, Master.” Skywind and Su Youji both followed the two ‘Prophets’ as they entered the flying vessel.

Whoosh. Daolord Inkmind took control of the vessel, and the group of five quickly disappeared into the distant horizons.

Daolord Feng Xian watched as they left, a frown on his face. “Two Prophets have descended. If they truly are Prophets... I wonder if this will be a blessing or a disaster.”

As for the Dragonwing Governor, he raised his head to stare into the skies. No matter how he tried, he couldn’t wipe out Su Youji’s image from his heart.

.....

Daolord Inkmind led them to a wooden house guarded over by a Daolord. A miniature teleportation array was set up within the wooden house, and it sent them directly into the depths of the earth.

190 million kilometers underground. Whoosh. Ning’s group of five suddenly appeared out of nowhere within an enormous plaza that was studded with black gemstones.

“This is a palace of utterly enormous size, especially given that its underground. Judging from the power of the formations protecting it... someone truly impressive must have set this place up.” Ning let out an amazed sigh. He saw endless ripples of terrifying power radiate out from the vast palace, with countless ancient seals and barriers active.

“This is our sacred underground palace which was created by the most powerful of the Prophets, our ‘sacred ancestor’.” Daolord Inkmind’s eyes flashed with pride. “When the Sacred Ancestor descended upon our world, he guided us, taught us, and eventually completed his Daomerge here in our world, gaining eternity for himself. It was all thanks to him that we have had the chance to flourish.”

“An Eternal Emperor?” Both Ning and the Ninedust Sectlord were surprised. Even young master Skywind, who was following after them obediently, was secretly surprised. He had learned Ning’s legacy and so he knew what the various levels of cultivation were. He knew that after the World level the next level was that of the Samsara Daolords, where each step represented walking a fine line between life and death. Above them was the level of Daomerged Eternal Emperors! According to what Ning’s legacy had taught him, less than one in a hundred thousand ordinary Daolords would gain eternity and become Eternal Emperors. Their ‘Sacred Ancestor’ was actually one of them?

“Fellow Daoist Inkmind, tell me more. What are Prophets and who was this Sacred Ancestor?” Ning asked.

“Very well.” Daolord Inkmind nodded. “Long, long ago, living beings arose on our planet but knew nothing of cultivation. As a result, they lived brutish, barbaric lives. Every so often, outlander demons would descend upon the world, bringing death and despair to countless living beings. Everyone lived short, dangerous lives, with many being forced to hide deep underground in order to stay alive. But one day, the first Prophet descended from the outlands into our planet. His heart was filled with pity towards all living beings, and so he taught us cultivation techniques, allowing us to embark upon the path of cultivation. Only then did an era of cultivation arise within our planet, allowing our people to finally have the power to fight back against the outlander demons.

Ning and the Ninedust Sectlord immediately understood. This person who had descended upon this world from the ‘outlands’ was most likely a cultivator of the Endless Territories who had come here, just as they had.

“After a very long period of time passed, the second Prophet descended upon our world. He was the one we call our ‘Sacred Ancestor’! He created the nine celestial barriers, making it difficult for outlander demons to descend upon our world. Eventually, he succeeded in his Daomerge and then established this underground palace, giving us a place for us to pass legacies down from generation to generation and ensuring that we would be able to grow and thrive even more.”

“The third Prophet to descend brought a great disaster upon us. He forced us to fight him, and although we were able to kill him, we suffered horrendous casualties.”

“Prophets.” Daolord Inkmind looked at Ning and the Ninedust Sectlord. “I’m telling you nothing but the truth. We are filled with gratitude towards the Prophets of the outlands. Without you Prophets having descended upon our world, we would still be living brutish and miserable lives.”

Ning and the Ninedust Sectlord exchanged a glance. Both could tell that part of the reason this person had so ‘honestly’ told them the true history of their world was to display friendship, but the other part was to give them a veiled warning: We don’t want to fight you, but if you force us to then we’ll be able to wipe you out.

“I imagine the first three Prophets had their own reasons for descending upon this planet,” the Ninedust Sectlord said in a low voice. Although both him and Ning were quite cautious, neither of them were afraid. Both had valuable treasures they could use, and it wouldn’t be easy for the locals of this planet to deal with them.

“Perhaps the ancestral lands?” Daolord Inkmind suddenly said. The faces of both Ning and the Ninedust Sectlord changed.

“So you really are here to visit the ancestral lands.” Daolord Inkmind waved his hand, causing a layer of blurry light to surround Skywind and Su Youji, blocking them off.

“There are some secrets which I cannot let them know,” Daolord Inkmind said. “Please do not be offended.”

“Mm.” Ning glanced at Skywind and Su Youji, then nodded. The barrier of Immortal energy was preventing the two from seeing what was happening on the other side, but they just waited there obediently instead of disrupting the power around them.

“The various generations of Prophets all came for the sake of the ancestral lands.” Daolord Inkmind waved his hand, producing a snow-white scroll. “Before the Sacred Ancestor departed, he left this with us. He instructed us to hand it over to any future Prophets and to let them read what he wrote within it, and that it would explain everything.”

Ning and the Ninedust Sectlord immediately turned to stare at the white scroll. The scroll emanated an aura which was very weak but which had the essence of eternity within it. Time no longer held any sway over this scroll at all; without any question, this came from an Eternal Emperor.

“Please take a look for yourselves.” Daolord Inkmind waved his hand, sending the white scroll before the two of them. It automatically unfurled on its own. The scroll was filled with many words, and both Ning and the Ninedust Sectlord stared intently at them.

The Sacred Ancestor was an Ancient cultivator known as Emperor Vulturax. He had also been teleported into the endless stone passageways by that spacetime array. Pursued by countless flaming creatures, he had fled until he finally reached this planet. This planet, however, was not the actual site of the ancestral lands! It did, however, contain a treasure that negated the powers of those flaming creatures, a treasure known as the ‘worldsplitter’ stone. The worldsplitter stone could be carried or affixed to the surface of a magic treasure, and it could be used to permanently kill those flaming creatures!

The reason why this planet was resistant to the flaming beasts was the worldsplitter stone, making it the most important treasure the planet had to offer.

“So it was Patriarch Vulturax!” The Ninedust Sectlord revealed an excited look.

“Emperor Vulturax?” Ning’s face changed as well.

In the Endless Territories, the three figures who stood at the very apex of power were without a doubt the three Hegemons! Below them, however, was a host of incredibly powerful Eternal Emperors. They might not be a match for the Hegemons in power, but some were strong enough that not even the Hegemons could slay them! Everyone had their own ‘Dao’, after all. By relying on the area they were strong in, they were able to escape even from Hegemons. But of course, if they were somehow restrained there would be nothing they could do. They were some of the most truly dominating figures of the Endless Territories, and they included the lords of the eight Sacred Cities of the Dao Alliance! The Aeonians, the Aberrants, the Ancient cultivators... they all held similarly powerful figures within their ranks, and there were some who had gone into seclusion who were even more powerful.

Emperor Vulturax was on the same level as the lords of the eight Sacred Cities. Amongst the Ancient cultivators, he was a person who was viewed as being second only to the Hegemons in power! According to the stories, he was a merciful and kind man. A person could pretend to be kind and virtuous for a period of time, but Emperor Vulturax had been alive for as long as the Brightshore Kingdom had been in existence. There was no way someone could feign virtue for that long. As a result, Emperor Vulturax had an extremely good reputation and was idolized by countless cultivators.

“I never would’ve imagined that even in a strange place like this, he would do so many things for the local cultivators.” Ning couldn’t help but sigh in praise.

“I never would’ve thought that Patriarch Vulturax would’ve come to this place, and that he actually achieved his Dao here. How ancient is this ancestral site? Can it be the legendary...” When the

Ninedust Sectlord thought of one of the Ancient legends, his eyes instantly lit up. He immediately asked, "So you are saying that by retrieving a worldsplitter stone, we'll be able to leave this world, right? Quick, tell me where they are!"

[The Desolate Era](#)

Book 30: Ancient Cultivator Chapter 24: Underground Tombstones

"Worldsplitter stones are born from the very heart of this planet. They naturally are even deeper underground than we currently are." Daolord Inkmind looked towards Ji Ning and the Ninedust Sectlord. "Do the two of you wish to go now? Would you like to take a stroll around our underground palace and rest a bit first?"

"No need." The Ninedust Sectlord rejected the offer.

This was the place where Patriarch Vulturas completed his Daomerge. However, the Ninedust Sectlord was an Ancient cultivator and thus knew very well that Patriarch Vulturas had seventy-two Ancient cultivator disciples. Although he was a very kind and beneficent man, he never casually transmitted the most powerful techniques he had developed to outsiders. At most, he'd transmit some of the second-class techniques he possessed... but the Ninedust Sectlord truly had no interest in those.

Just judging from the fact that Patriarch Vulturas completed his Daomerge here but was merely the second Prophet was proof that this 'ancestral site' was undoubtedly a terrifyingly ancient place. Most likely, it had something to do with some of the oldest legends of the Ancient cultivators. He could hardly wait to find out.

"Let's just go down and take a look," Ning said. He could tell that this so-called 'sacred ground' was still rather wary of them. Given the situation, it was best to keep a bit of distance between them.

"If that is your decision, then I'll lead the two of you down." Daolord Inkmind waved his hand, dispelling his Immortal energy and allowing Su Youji and Skywind to see and hear what was going on once more.

"Skywind." Daolord Inkmind's gaze turned towards young master Skywind. "Since you are the Prophet's disciple, you are naturally permitted to go deeper underground as well. However, you had best not divulge anything you see or hear."

"Understood," young master Skywind said hurriedly. His heart was blazing with eagerness when he thought of how he was about to learn some of the deepest secrets of his homeland.

"Let's go!" Daolord Inkmind led the way, with Ning and the others following from behind.

Whoosh. They moved through the twists and turns of an ordinary-looking corridor within the palace, quickly arriving at an unfathomably deep downwards tunnel.

They immediately flew down towards the tunnel, with Ning bringing Skywind with him. Skywind certainly didn't have the ability necessary to oppose the Emperor's edict! They flew deeper and deeper into the abyss, flying more than three hundred million kilometers before finally landing.

"So beautiful."

“Simply marvelous.” Ning and the others all stared at what appeared before them. This enormous cavern was filled with all types of colors and sights. The stone walls gleamed like gemstones, with some being fiery red and others being jade green or deep blue. They all emanated faint ripples of power, and as the different types of ripples coursed through them they all felt their souls at peace.

“We’ll be there in a short while.” Daolord Inkmind guided the way deftly up ahead, moving tens of thousands of kilometers with each step.

A short while later...

“What’s this?” Ning, the Ninedust Sectlord, Su Youji, and Skywind all stared at what was before them in astonishment. This enormous cavern was filled with tombstones! There had to be more than ten thousand of the things, and they stretched off into the distance.

Daolord Inkmind pointed up ahead towards the end of the cave, an area which was filled with blurry streaks of rainbow light. Vague humanoid silhouettes could be seen there. “There are flame demons outside. Countless earth devils live at the core of our planet as well, and they are just as powerful as the flame demons. However, because their natural habitat is the center of our planet, they aren’t weakened by our formations in the slightest. If you want worldsplitter stones, you’ll have to find them yourselves. You’ll have to slaughter a path through the earth devils, find the worldsplitter stones, then escape safely. If you aren’t able to escape, then we’ll erect a tomb for you here.”

Daolord Inkmind pointed towards the many tombstones, then said in a soft voice, “These belong to many of our ancestors and built up over the course of countless years. Many came here seeking worldsplitter stones but ended up perishing. We weren’t even able to recover their bodies, so we left behind tombstones for them here.”

“You spoke of earth devils?” Ning and the Ninedust Sectlord both frowned.

“How tough are they?” Ning asked.

“Tougher and stronger than the flame demons from the outlands,” Daolord Inkmind said. “Based on the experience we accumulated... although they are less nimble and agile than the flame demons, they are even tougher to deal with. Amongst my people, only Daolods of the Fourth Step are permitted to enter the depths of this abyss in search of worldsplitter stones.”

“You saw it yourselves.” Daolord Inkmind gestured at the tombstones. “All these tombs? They each represent the death of a Daolord of the Fourth Step.”

“All of them were Daolords of the Fourth Step?” Skywind, at the very back of the procession, couldn’t help but feel shocked. Daolords of the Fourth Step were incredibly rare; how was it that his homeland had produced over ten thousand of them?

“How many Daolords has this world given birth to?” Ning was astonished. “How could so many of them have died here?”

It must be remembered that the Twelve Palaces of the Brightshore Kingdom had produced less than a hundred thousand Daolords in total despite the passage of so many years.

The nearby Ninedust Sectlord said calmly, "Darknorth, no need to be so surprised. Didn't you hear what he said? Patriarch Vulturax himself completed his Daomerge here, but he was merely the second Prophet to descend! Patriarch Vulturax completed his Daomerge countless ages ago, which meant that this planet has existed for far longer than the Aeonian race or even the Brightshore Kingdom."

"Honestly, we don't have that many Daolords. In each era, we only see twenty or thirty of them," Daolord Inkmind said. "The total number is high only because of how long we've been around for."

Ning was secretly amazed. The Ancient cultivators truly were the most ancient civilization of them all. The history of this ancestral site ran farther back than the history of the entire Brightshore Kingdom.

"In the end, this planet of ours is too small. The various generations of Daolords all dream of visiting the outside world, and so they've all delved into the underground to seek the worldsplitter stones. When each finds one, that person is able to leave this world and visit the vaster world outside." Daolord Inkmind said softly, "Even though the underground is dangerous and many have perished, successive generations of Daolords have continued on their quest."

Ning and the Ninedust Sectlord both nodded slightly. All Daolords had incredibly determined Dao-hearts. This was true even for vile and demonic figures. If they wished to leave this place, no level of danger could stop them.

It must be understood that in the Endless Territories, the Verge-level Daolords would often venture into the Terror Starsea. Daolord Solesky had entered the incredibly dangerous Waveshift World, which had been left behind by Eternal Emperor Waveshift, the number one expert of the Dao of Numerancy. You could imagine how deadly it was!

"Given how much time has passed... although it might be difficult for this world of yours to give birth to an Eternal Emperor, I imagine it must've given birth to many Daolords of incredible power. I imagine some of them must have been able to acquire worldsplitter stones. Why didn't they take out more? That way, there would be no need for the others to die."

"Yes, we have indeed given birth to a number of incredible Daolords." Daolord Inkmind said coldly, "However... the outlands are filled with endless flame demons and many other unknown creatures. If you don't have the courage to venture underground to find worldsplitter stones for yourself, what right do you have to go to the outlands?"

"This is a tradition of my homeland. If you wish to leave, you must find a worldsplitter stone for yourself first. Only then can you leave." Daolord Inkmind said calmly, "Over the course of so many years, more than ten thousand Daolords have successfully acquired worldsplitter stones and left for the outlands."

The Ninedust Sectlord suddenly said, "Have any of the Daolords who left ever been able to return?"

Daolord Inkmind shook his head. "None!"

Ning and the Ninedust Sectlord felt stunned. Not a single one out of all those Daolords returned?

"Perhaps they were unable to find a way to contact us after they reached the vaster world outside," Daolord Inkmind said. Ning and the others nodded. This was indeed quite possible.

They might've died, but they also might've survived but left this spacetime continuum. For example, in this region Ning and the others were unable to maintain contact with the outside world. Those who successfully left this region and entered the Endless territories. would probably also be unable to maintain contact with the 'sacred grounds' here.

"Even though the outlands might hold great danger, our Daolords have always wanted to give it a try. All of us are filled with curiosity towards the outlands," Daolord Inkmind said. "Even if they aren't able to come back, it doesn't really matter."

"Mm." The Ninedust Sectlord pointed towards the rainbow-lit region at the end of the cavern. "So if we want worldsplitter stones, we should just charge straight inside?"

"No." Daolord Inkmind shook his head as he stared at the rainbow region and the humanoid silhouettes within it. "I imagine you can see those earth devils yourself. Even from here, I can see more than three thousand of them! Based on the accumulated experiences of our Daolords, the earth devils like to drift about. Sometimes, the number of earth devils in a region will be lower than usual. If you can see less than five hundred from this position, that means they are now fairly dispersed. But of course, even then you'll definitely encounter more than five hundred when you venture forth, as I'm merely talking about the ones visible from here."

"If you can see less than a hundred, things will be even safer," Daolord Inkmind said.

"A hundred? And usually how long does that take?" The Ninedust Sectlord was rather impatient.

"Generally speaking, this will happen once per chaos cycle," Daolord Inkmind said.

"That's far too long." The Ninedust Sectlord shook his head. "Lower than five hundred?"

"Roughly once every million years," Daolord Inkmind said.

"Still too long." The Ninedust Sectlord truly wanted to charge in right away.

"If you only want to wait for lower than a thousand, ten thousand years should be enough," Daolord Inkmind said. "But a thousand... that'll be extremely dangerous. Only the most powerful of Daolords would have a chance of success."

The Ninedust Sectlord turned to look at Ning. "Ten thousand years. That's doable. What do you think, Darknorth?"

Ning nodded. "I don't want to wait too long either. When we can see less than a thousand earth devils, we'll enter." Ning had only been training for a short period of time, while the Ninedust Sectlord was filled with eagerness towards the legacy of the Ancient cultivators. As a result, neither wished to tarry here too long. They had spent months surviving in the 'outlands'; they were quite confident in their abilities to acquire the worldsplitter stones.

[The Desolate Era](#)

Book 30: Ancient Cultivator Chapter 25: Skywind's Life

"The sacred grounds will send people to keep an eye on this place," Daolord Inkmind said with a smile. "You can come with me to visit the underground palace, or you can wander around our planet and explore it a bit."

“No need.” The Ninedust Sectlord said calmly, “I’ll wait right here.”

“Yes, there’s no need to trouble anyone. The two of us can simply wait here,” Ji Ning agreed. He then looked at the nearby Skywind. “Skywind, you can go out and engage in some exploration and adventuring. If you have any questions regarding the Dao of the Sword, you may come speak to me about them. After I acquire the worldsplitter stone, I’ll leave this planet. By then, you’ll have to rely on yourself.”

Skywind said respectfully, “Yes, Master. In truth, in the last few days since you transmitted the Dao of the Sword to me, I’ve gained many insights and am prepared to enter the World level already.”

“Skywind.” The nearby Daolord Inkmind smiled. “The sacred grounds have quite a few World-level cultivators. They are the disciples and servants of the various Daolords here. After you make your breakthrough, you can spar with them. You can also go and study from the various Sword Daos which the successive generations of our Daolords have left behind.”

“Understood.” Skywind revealed an excited look.

The nearby Ning nodded in approval. “Disciple, this is a wonderful opportunity for you. Don’t let it slip past you.”

.....

Ning and the Ninedust Sectlord spent the rest of their time quietly meditating underground, waiting for the right moment. The Ninedust Sectlord simply sat on the ground, while Ning used his temporal acceleration cottage. The sectlord was at a bottleneck and needed an epiphany to break through. Ning, in contrast, had just recently become a Daolord of the Second Step. He needed to seize every moment.

That very year, Skywind broke through to become a World-level cultivator. In the past, he had never had a good teacher; he had relied completely on his own natural talents to cultivate himself. Things were different, now that he had Ning’s guidance. Ning was a perfect teacher for him, with the five sword-arts Ning having transmitted being perfect guides as to five different directions the Dao of the Sword could be developed towards.

Every ten years or so, he would come and ask Ning a question. He would also often leave the underground region to go to the sacred grounds and spar against the other World-level cultivators there.

“He’s improving at a terrifying rate.”

“Who the hell is this kid? I’ve never seen him here before.”

“His name is Skywind. I hear that he’s the disciple of one of the Prophets.”

“A Prophet? No wonder he’s this impressive. I heard that all Prophets are incredibly strong.”

“His Sword Dao is simply incredible. I’ve never seen any World-level cultivator improve this quickly.”

Thanks to Ning’s temporal acceleration treasure, Skywind truly did improve remarkably fast. Three thousand years later, he had become a master-class World God... but of course, he had actually spent nearly three hundred thousand accelerated years within the spacetime treasure.

“No wonder the Prophet took a liking to him.” The Grand Elder’s avatar stared at Skywind from afar as the latter sparred with another opponent. The avatar nodded. “His talent for sword-arts truly is impressive. Inkmind, on my orders all of the Sword Dao legacies within the sacred grounds are to be made available to him.”

“Ah?! B-but Grand Elder...” Daolord Inkmind was rather startled.

“Skywind is a member of our race,” the Grand Elder said with a smile. And so, Skywind began to gain access to some peerless sword-arts legacies.

.....

“Master, your disciple has some questions to ask.” Every ten years, Skywind would come and ask Ning some questions. Each time, Ning would guide him through his queries and even personally spar with him to help him out.

Strictly speaking, Ning had spent far more time with Skywind than his other two disciples, Bluecliff Xiaoyu and Green Bamboo. Although Ning’s Primaltwin and Xiaoyu often met in the Three Realms, Xiaoyu was different from Ning; she wasn’t the type of person who was completely enthralled by cultivation. In contrast, Green Bamboo and Skywind were true cultivators.

“Master, your disciple has studied many of the sword-arts of the sacred grounds. Each time, you were able to easily point out the various flaws within them.” Skywind was puzzled. “Should I stop learning these sword-arts?”

“The five sword-arts I taught you represent five different avenues for developing the Dao of the Sword. All the sword-arts in the universe are unable to escape the reach of these five avenues.” Ning chuckled. “The more you study, the more it will benefit your mastery over my five sword-arts.”

“Ah.” Skywind was enlightened. In truth, the more sword-arts he studied, the more amazed he was by his master. Over the course of countless chaos cycles, the sacred grounds had produced quite a few Daolords of the Dao of the Sword. However, whenever he compared their sword-arts to his master’s sword-arts, especially his master’s Omega Sword Dao sword-intent, he always felt that they were much inferior.

Skywind was beginning to understand just how terrifyingly powerful his master truly was! The sacred grounds had built up an enormous collection of sword-arts, yet not a single one of them appeared to be a match for his master’s.

“You have spent five thousand years under my tutelage, and your sword-arts are comparable to that of supreme World Gods. Further instruction will be of limited use to you. What you should do is go meditate and find a Dao which suits you the most, a Dao which you shall use to become a Samsara Daolord,” Ning said. “You can leave now. Go. Explore. Adventure. Here in the sacred grounds, you’ll never have a chance to truly temper yourself.”

“Understood,” Skywind said respectfully.

.....

He left the underground world, returning to the beautiful world outside. He resolved the enmities and feuds he had, then went out to adventure through the world!

Skywind slowly began to grow and mature. After two thousand years of adventuring, he possessed the power of a transcendent World God even though he didn't have any particularly powerful treasures! By now, he was ready to break through to become a Samsara Daolord whenever he wished. However, he did not break through because he kept on having the feeling that the Daos he had developed were not what he was truly searching for.

His master's five sword-arts all surpassed everything he was able to come up with. As for the Omega Sword Dao's sword-intent, it was unimaginably superior. And so Skywind continued to search... search for a Dao he would be satisfied with.

The sacred grounds kept a quiet watch on him as well. When they realized he already had the power to become a Samsara Daolord whenever he wished, they showed themselves and began to help him when necessary. Skywind's status in the sacred grounds quickly skyrocketed, and he was viewed as Samsara Daolords were!

"That's Skywind."

"That's World God Skywind. He's already come back."

When Skywind returned to the sacred grounds, he attracted the attention of many of the Elder Gods, Ancestral Immortals, and World-level cultivators here. The news that he was capable of becoming a Samsara Daolord whenever he wished had long ago been leaked to everyone; this was to ensure that no one would grumble or complain about the special status he had within the sacred grounds. In this planet, the sacred grounds held an overwhelming level of power over the rest of the world. There was no fear that anyone might attempt to harm him out of jealousy.

"Master, World God Skywind is nothing more than a World God. Why is everyone so excited?" A violet-robed woman quietly asked her master.

This woman was Violetlotus. Fairy Violetlotus was an extremely capable woman, and she was capable of doing anything to achieve her goals. After she learned of the existence of the 'sacred grounds', she came up with a way to become a member of a Samsara Daolord's school! Later on, she managed to acquire one of just ten slots for cultivators to be sent into the sacred grounds and become one of them. She had never expected that Skywind had already become a World God.

"Ah, disciple... you don't know this yet, but Skywind is no ordinary World God. The sacred grounds have many World Gods, but Skywind is the disciple of a Prophet. He is also incredibly powerful, and he has reached such heights in the Dao of the Sword that he can become a Samsara Daolord whenever he chooses." Her master's eyes glowed with excitement. "Do you know? The speed at which he became a World God and reached such heights of power is only equaled by some of the most legendary Daolords in the history of the sacred grounds. Given his current level of insight and the fact that he still refuses to make a breakthrough, he clearly wishes to develop an even more powerful Dao for himself and become an absolutely dominating Daolord. I'd be more than willing to become the retainer to a figure like him."

Fairy Violetlotus was speechless. A complex look appeared on her face as she stared at the distant Skywind.

In truth, Skywind had seen her as well, but he had only given her a glance and then departed.

“Skywind...” Fairy Violetlotus watched silently as he left. Although she had repeatedly caused trouble for him and had actually tortured him, she also felt certain strange, mixed emotions towards him. If it wasn't for that, she would've killed him long ago when he was very weak. The reason why she had tortured him but not killed him was due to the contradictory feelings she had in her heart.

“He just glanced at me, then ignored me? I wouldn't have cared if he came over to take revenge on me and kill me, but he didn't even glance a second time at me.” Fairy Violetlotus continued to stare silently, her fingernails digging deep into her palms.

.....

Ning was very pleased that his disciple Skywind was searching for a suitable Dao for himself. However, he wasn't really able to help out; it would all be up to Skywind himself.

He himself had only been able to join together his five Supreme Daos when he was within the Genesis Lands of the alternate universe. Finally, after reviving his parents in the Three Realms, his heart became peaceful and he was able to break through to master his Omega Sword Dao.

This disciple of his would have his own path to tread. Even if his disciple also embarked on the path of the Omega Sword Dao, every single cultivator's Dao would be different and unique in certain ways. There was no way any Samsara Daolord could completely imitate or train in the Dao of another; only the Dao they themselves created would be ideal for them.

“Darknorth, our chance has come,” the Ninedust Sectlord said.

“Yes.” Ning rose to his feet and walked out of his temporal acceleration cottage. They had waited here for twelve thousand years; it was now finally time for them to go retrieve the worldsplitter stones.