

Desolate 1081

[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.

[The Desolate Era](#)

Book 30: Ancient Cultivator Chapter 26: The Battle in the World's Core

“Prophet.” Daolord Inkmind's true body had been here this entire time, attending to their needs. Upon seeing Ji Ning and the Ninedust Sectlord halt their cultivation, he hurriedly spoke out to them.

“Fellow Daoist Inkmind.” Ning smiled. “The time has now come for me and Ninedust to enter this place and search for worldsplitter stones. Sorry for making you go to the trouble of watching over us.”

“It was no trouble at all. Are the two of you truly unwilling to wait any longer?” Daolord Inkmind couldn't help but try to dissuade them: “If you want a few hundred thousand years, the density of the earth devils might drop by a half, and the danger will drop to roughly 10% of what it is right now...”

The Ninedust Sectlord said calmly, “No need to wait any further. Darknorth, let's go.”

“Let's go.”

The Ninedust Sectlord and Ning simultaneously transformed into streaks of light, flying towards that enormous rainbow-lit region that led deeper underground. There were a number of those humanoid figures flying through that rainbow region. Each of them had tall, muscular bodies, wore black armor, and had faces that were dark yellow in color. They looked like towering mountains, and they emanated

an aura of the world's ponderance. This was a type of strange creature that possessed the power of the vast earth itself.

They were different from the flame demons. The flame demons were more violent and had more powerful attacks, while the earth devils always stayed within their own domain without proactively leaving to launch attacks on the world at large. However, anyone who dared to trespass into their homeland would suffer their merciless reprisals.

"Eh?" As Ning and the Ninedust Sectlord flew into the home of the earth devils, the creatures suddenly turned alert. Moments ago, they had been quite relaxed; now, they all turned to glare towards the two intruders.

"Kill them!"

"Annihilate the intruders!"

Virtually all the earth devils in the area began to move in unison, transforming into streaks of light that shot towards the two of them.

"We can't waste any time.. Let's shake them off as soon as possible," the Ninedust Sectlord suggested.

"Agreed." As soon as the two entered, they had both sensed the dense and heavy earth energy which permeated this entire region and which applied enormous pressure to them. However, both were able to resist the pressure with ease! They also saw that there were many different stone passageways that led from this region to other places. The core of the world seemed almost like a spiderweb lattice of tunnels with countless short passageways that could be taken.

The passageways were so short that there was no way Ning could rely on his black vessel to flee. In this place, it wasn't speed which mattered; it was agility! The countless short tunnels forced them to repeatedly change directions.

Boom! Ning didn't hesitate at all, immediately unleashing his nine novessence arts and letting them crush outwards towards the encroaching earth devils.

"We Ancient cultivators also have certain secret arts of tremendous power, but the more powerful they are the harder it is to cultivate them." The Ninedust Sectlord couldn't help but feel a bit jealous when he saw Ning use the nine novessence arts. Both the Dao Alliance and the Ancient cultivators had many secret arts of incredible power. As for the terrifying secret arts Ning had acquired from the deceased Sword Hegemon, they were far more powerful than these nine novessence arts. However, the more powerful a secret art was, the higher its requirements were!

These secret arts would all require incredibly rare and valuable magic treasures which were almost never sold to outsiders. The bloodfruit which Ning had acquired was a good example; there was no way Skywood City would ever sell sacred bloodfruit. After slaying Daolord Kongsan, Ning had become much wealthier than he had been... but alas, he hadn't been able to use that wealth to purchase any of the rare treasures he needed to train in the Hegemon's secret art.

Just gaining a basic level of skill in the Hegemon's secret art required three exceedingly valuable treasures. To master it, twelve were needed. Thus far, Ning hadn't found even one!

The same was true for the Ninedust Sectlord. Although he had been alive for far longer than Ning had and knew more secret arts, he hadn't been able to master even one secret art of tremendous power.

In truth, Daolord Allgod's nine novessence arts didn't rely that much on rare treasures; Dao lightning and Dao water were fairly weak and cheap. The true ingenuity of the nine arts lay in the way Daolord Allgod had mixed them together in an alchemical fashion, allowing him to perfectly control the [Novessence Thunder] and the [Novessence Water]. This was a type of secret art which possessed tremendous power while having fairly low material requirements... but actually training in it was incredibly difficult. Not only did it require one to be fairly proficient in those nine different types of Dao, it also required you to have reached the grandmaster level in alchemy.

"Break!" Ning manifested three heads and six arms, taking his six Northbow swords into his hands. He seemed to completely transform into a black hole, making it very difficult for the attacking earth devils to do anything to him.

Slash! Sword-light sliced through the chest of one of the earth devils. Moments later, the earth devil's body suddenly exploded with a giant boom. The shattered bits of its body were quickly ground into dust by the power of the nine novessence arts.

"Darknorth, your sword-arts have actually improved." The distant Ninedust Sectlord still had the presence of mind to jest with Ning. This was mainly because they had been through far more dangerous situations when they had been fighting against the countless flame demons in the outlands.

"Just a little bit," Ning said. Ning had used his temporal acceleration treasure for the past twelve thousand years, which he had spent almost exclusively in cultivation. However, aside from the Blood Drop sword-intent which he had broken through in quite some time ago, his other four types of sword-intent hadn't improved in the slightest. As a result, he wasn't much stronger than he had been in the past, even though his Omega Sword Dao – Blood Drop was now twice as powerful as before. If he wanted to improve overall, he would need for all five sword-intents to make breakthroughs, then merge together into his third-stage Omega Sword Dao.

Boom! Boom! Boom! The earth devils utilized heavy weapons like greataxes, warhammers, and heavy poles. They struck out with brutish power, and although Ning held the upper hand he still found each clash quite difficult to endure.

"Let's run."

"Agreed."

After getting a basic understanding of how the earth devils fought, the two felt their hearts grow heavy. They were able to temporarily destroy the earth devils, but just like the flame demons they had invulnerable forms! Fighting them head-on would severely slow down the two cultivators, and these creatures were even more dangerous than the flame demons when massed together. Fortunately, they were comparatively fewer in number.

Whooosh. The two used agility techniques to flee while blocking, and they quickly darted through the countless web-like tunnels. Both of them were faster than the flame demons, and so they were significantly faster than the slower earth devils.

“Kill!” As they continued to flee, more earth devils were attracted by the sounds of combat and came charging straight towards them. Each time, the two cultivators had no choice but to end the battle as soon as possible as they delved deeper and deeper into the earth’s core.

The two were very experienced and very powerful, and they were working in concert. They were able to ‘wander’ through the underground lattice of tunnels for roughly an hour with ease.

“Over there.” Ning and the Ninedust Sectlord immediately saw the slick black stone that was hovering in the air off in the distance. It looked extremely smooth and glossy, and seemed to be filled with endless power, almost as though it held an entire massive world within it. Although this was the first time they had seen this stone, they immediately recognized it as a worldsplitter stone based on the descriptions Daolord Inkmind had given them.

“A worldsplitter stone.” The Ninedust Sectlord was closer to it, and so he immediately waved his arm to collect it. He then grinned at Ning. “I’ll hold onto this one for now. Let’s keep exploring until we find a second one.”

“Fine.” Ning didn’t really mind. The two had sworn lifeblood oaths long ago and thus both trusted each other quite a bit by now.

The worldsplitter stones had been birthed from the core of this planet. Although some could be found hovering around in outer regions like this place, most were located far deeper and closer to the heart of the world. Thus, the farther down they went the better their chances would be... but the more dangerous it would be as well, of course. It would also be a longer way back.

More time passed. Ning and the Ninedust Sectlord continued to battle and charge their way closer and closer to the planet’s core.

“That’s...” Ning and the Ninedust Sectlord’s faces both turned pale. Off in the distance, they saw streaks of light flying about happily. There were a total of four streaks, and they each possessed strange vitality and life energy. All four were of different colors, and their auras were completely different as well. However, they flew together in unison and ‘chased’ after each other.

“Four of the five types of Dragonfish Ki?” Ning immediately recognized those four streaks of light. They were incredibly famous treasures that were absolutely priceless, far more valuable than Dao lightning or Dao water. They were incredibly rare and simply couldn’t be bought on any market. Even if a major power was lucky enough to encounter them, he’d generally only trade it for other treasures of similar value rather than sell them. A single stream of Dragonfish Ki would be worth roughly eighty million cubes of chaos nectar; these things were even more valuable than sacred bloodfruit! One could imagine how rare they were.

“Darknorth, I only need one of those four.” The Ninedust Sectlord was so excited his entire body was shaking. If he acquired the Dragonfish Ki, then even if he found nothing else from this ancestral site he would still be completely satisfied. “This thing is extremely important to me. Brother Darknorth, please assist me. I can promise that the other three will be yours.”

The Desolate Era

Book 30: Ancient Cultivator Chapter 27: The Core

“Which one do you want?” Ji Ning asked.

“The water-attribute Dragonfish Ki.” The Ninedust Sectlord looked at Ning. Although the two were working together, they were equal partners; the Ninedust Sectlord didn’t have the right to unilaterally choose which treasures he wanted. If Ning also deeply desired the water-attribute Dragonfish Ki, then it would end up going to whoever moved the fastest. The Ninedust Sectlord truly wasn’t confident in his chances, as the power of Ning’s nine novessence arts was truly great; if Ning was to apply all nine of them in chasing after treasures, his chances would probably be greater.

“To tell you the truth, I truly wish to acquire the water-attribute Dragonfish Ki as well.” Ning grinned when he saw the worried look on the Ninedust Sectlord’s face. “But... even if I did get it, it wouldn’t be of much use to me for now. Fine, fine; the water-attribute one is yours, but the other three are mine. I suppose I technically come out slightly ahead in this.”

“Thank you.” The Ninedust Sectlord let out a sigh of relief. Sometimes, quantity wasn’t the most important thing when it came to procuring treasures, nor was the superficial ‘market price’. When you encountered a precious treasure that you were in desperate need of, you would easily be willing to pay five to ten times the ‘normal’ price! The real question was, how badly did you need it?

“Let’s move.”

“Don’t let the Dragonfish Ki escape.” Ning and the Ninedust Sectlord instantly began to make their moves.

The five types of Dragonfish Ki were aligned to the Five Elements, and four of those five types were before them – metal, wood, water, and fire. Ning’s greatest strength lay in his Sword Dao, with water and thunder in second position. Thus, Ning really did care more about the water-attribute Dragonfish Ki. However, even if he acquired it he would simply store it away for now, because he didn’t really need it for training in any secret arts at present. Perhaps in the future he would obtain a secret art which required such a treasure, but Ning’s focus was on the deceased Sword Hegemon’s secret art. That was a truly powerful secret art! It was quite unlikely that he’d be able to obtain anything more powerful than it.

Soon, the two of them fought through more than ten earth devils and acquired the four types of Dragonfish Ki.

“Hahaha!” The Ninedust Sectlord roared with laughter. “Finally, I’ll be able to make yet another breakthrough in my secret art. The water-attribute Dragonfish Ki... I once offered a bounty of three hundred million cubes of chaos nectar for it, but no one was willing to accept it. Daolord Curveclaw of the Aberrants actually offered it to me for one billion! I was so angry I really wanted to just kill him.”

“Treasures like this can only be hoped for, not counted on.” Ning smiled.

“Thank you, Darknorth. Haha, you know? I’m starting to take a liking to you.” The Ninedust Sectlord laughed merrily. “After we leave this ancestral site, if there’s anything you need me to do I’ll do it, so long as it isn’t anything suicidal.”

Ning immediately felt much more friendly towards the Ninedust Sectlord. Ninedust was the type of person who would do anything to achieve his goals, but he wasn't truly an evil man. The Ninedust Sect's evil reputation was primarily due to the evil deeds of the previous sectlord. The current Ninedust Sectlord was an Ancient cultivator and thus rather arrogant and aloof, and he was willing to do anything for the sake of his cultivation, but he would remember even the slightest of kindnesses or debts that he owed.

"If there's anything you need me to do I'll do it, so long as it isn't suicidal." This was quite a promise. The term 'suicidal' referred to something like Ning asking him to help Ning kill a Hegemon – that would be suicide! But if Ning said to him, "Come, let us venture into the Terror Starsea?" The Ninedust Sectlord would fearlessly accompany Ning into it, despite the many dangers involved.

.....

As a result of this minor affair, both Ning and the Ninedust Sectlord became much more well-disposed towards each other. This often happened when Daolords adventured together. The term 'lifelong friend' often came as a result of friendships being forged through shared adversity in life-and-death situations.

"Why haven't we been able to find a second worldsplitter stone?"

"We've spent another full hour in here." Ning and the Ninedust Sectlord continued to go deeper and deeper into the planet, and the countless passageways continuously twisted downwards.

Although they had taken many twists and turns, both of them knew exactly where they were. They knew that they were moving closer to the core of the planet. Surprisingly enough, they didn't encounter all that many earth devils on the way over; in fact, the closer they were to the core, the fewer in number the devils seemed to become.

"A worldsplitter stone." They saw a levitating worldsplitter stone off in the distance. Ning instantly revealed a look of delight. They were now very deep inside the planet, but there were no earth devils nearby.

Swoosh. Ning immediately flew over and reached out, grabbing the worldsplitter stone with his hands. Moments later, he stared in front of him in surprise. The Ninedust Sectlord was right behind him, and he also stared in disbelief.

Right in front of them was an enormous globe that was pitch-black in color which emanated minute ripples of power. Ning, however, would just barely sense that these ripples were so powerful as to cause their hearts to quaver. Them listening to these ripples was like a pair of ants listening to the heartbeat of an enormous dragon; the terror they felt was innate and heartfelt.

"This must be the core of the planet," the Ninedust Sectlord said softly. "This is the core of this entire world. It gave birth to all the earth devils, and also to the worldsplitter stones."

"And the Dragonfish Ki." Ning pointed off into the distance. The Ninedust Sectlord followed Ning's gaze, only to see that there were four types of infant Dragonfish Ki being nurtured upon the outermost surface of the world's core.

"Let's go," Ning said softly.

“Agreed. This isn’t a place for us to do as we please.” The Ninedust Sectlord didn’t have the slightest intention of trying to take away the core.

When adventuring, if you wanted to live a long life you had to know your limits. This planet was capable of suppressing the countless flame demons of the outlands, ensuring that they didn’t dare to enter. A ripple from its core alone was enough to inspire fear in their hearts. The power of this planetary core vastly surpassed that of an ordinary Eternal Emperor. Both of them had the feeling that if they so much as touched the core, they would probably be instantly reduced to dust.

Whoosh. Whoosh. They quickly departed. On the way back, they encountered a number of earth devils but were able to quickly shake them off. Although the battles seemed fierce, in truth both were still distracted by thoughts of that enormous, pitch-black world core. What an utterly terrifying core that was! Ning estimated that only someone with the power of a Hegemon would have a chance at possibly procuring it.

“No wonder the living beings born on this planet all have such incredible talent for cultivation and are able to train so easily. This world is even smaller than the Three Realms, but in this era alone it has already given birth to twenty or thirty Daolords and a terrifying number of World-level cultivators. No wonder.” Ning secretly sighed.

.....

The Grand Elder’s avatar led a group of sixteen Daolords as they waited next to the tombstones. They stared afar at the rainbow region off in the distance which led to the world’s core.

“Elder, the two Prophets have been in there for too long. Is it possible that they...” A Daolord spoke out.

“It has been quite long.”

“Our Daolords rarely spent that much time in there.”

Generally speaking, if one wasn’t able to acquire a worldsplitter stone in a fairly short period of time, one would quickly retreat and wait for another opportunity in the future.

“The Prophets won’t die that easily,” the Grand Elder said. “Wait a while longer. They should be returning soon.”

Just a short while later. “There they are,” Daolord Inkmind said hurriedly.

Swoosh! Swosh! Two streaks of light quickly flew towards them from afar, pursued by a large number of earth devils. Ning’s nine novessence arts swirled around him like nine dragons. With the Ninedust Sectlord’s help, they managed to quickly throw off the pursuit of the earth devils. Even the most rare and powerful of earth devils were merely on par with the two of them, and even then they weren’t as fast.

Whoosh. Whoosh. They flew out of the rainbow region, then landed at the entrance of the cave. They watched calmly as the many earth devils within the region issued threatening growls to the two of them. Slowly, the earth devils turned their attention away. So long as one retreated from their home, the creatures would not pursue them.

“Congratulations, Prophets.” The Grand Elder smiled.

"I need to train for a while." The Ninedust Sectlord didn't waste words on ceremony. He waved his hand, causing a wooden house to descend before him. He then entered the wooden house, which was in truth an Eternal-class estate-treasure with incredibly strong defenses that were hard to breach. He sent mentally to Ning, "Darknorth, I need to train in my secret arts for a while. Two hours should be enough."

Ning nodded, then turned to glance at the white-robed Grand Elder. He smiled. "Sorry for having troubled you in recent days. Ninedust and I have both acquired worldsplitter stones; this very day, we shall leave this world."

The Grand Elder and the others all let out secret sighs of relief. It was best if the two left. By now, they were no longer cultivators who need 'Prophets' to transmit techniques to them. They had built up an enormous collection of skills after having embarked on the path of cultivation countless years ago. Although they were a bit weaker than any one of the Twelve Palaces of the Brightshore Kingdom, they weren't that much weaker.

"I'll have to trouble you to watch over my disciple Skywind after our departure," Ning said.

"Don't worry. Skywind is a member of our sacred grounds and a member of our race. We'll spare no offense in helping him grow up and become stronger," the Grand Elder said.

Ning nodded.

.....

Skywind was seated at the desolate mountain in an area with no life at all. The only thing in front of him was endless sand, which contained tribal lifeforms within it. He just watched silently, his gaze travelling countless kilometers as he watched the various individuals celebrate and lament.

"I still can't let it all go." Skywind shook his head.

"Skywind." A surge of godsense swept towards Skywind, ringing out by his ears. "Your master, Prophet Darknorth, will be leaving our world today. He'll be venturing out into the outlands."

"Master is leaving?" Young master Skywind immediately rose to his feet. He knew very well that everything he had today, he had thanks to Ning's guidance. Many of the cultivators of this planet had once trained in the Dao of the Sword, but none of them had ever reached the level his master had reached. The information his master provided went to the core of the Dao of the Sword, and it seemed as though there were no sword-arts which puzzled his master. It was also thanks to his master's guidance that he had been able to improve so quickly.

"Master." Skywind transformed into a sword-shadow. Thanks to the treasures and divine abilities he had acquired in the sacred grounds, he was already comparable to a Daolord of the First Step. And now, he immediately displayed his sword-arts for all to see as he quickly hid back home.

[The Desolate Era](#)

Book 30: Ancient Cultivator Chapter 28: The Shattered World

A vast grassland. The Grand Elder was here, leading a group of Daolords and Skywind in bidding Ji Ning and the Ninedust Sectlord farewell.

“Master.” Skywind looked at Ning, truly unwilling to part with him. Ning had never asked anything of him and had whole-heartedly helped him this entire time. His father had given many costly gifts to convince Swordmaster Eastvoid to teach him, but the Swordmaster was nothing more than a World-level cultivator... and in the end, he hadn’t even accepted Skywind as a disciple. Compared to Ning, Swordmaster Eastvoid was absolutely nothing.

“Haha. Skywind, if destiny wills it, we shall meet again in the future,” Ning smiled.

“Right.” Skywind nodded heavily.

“Let’s go.” Ning glanced at the nearby Ninedust Sectlord, who pursed his lips into a smirk. “I didn’t take on any disciples. I can leave whenever.”

Swoosh! Swoosh! Skywind and the other Daolords watched as they instantly shot into the air, quickly charging into the gaseous barriers in the skies.

Skywind watched as Ning disappeared into the distance, tears appearing in his eyes. Would he ever have the chance to meet his master again?

“Your master Darknorth is very, very powerful.” The Grand Elder gently patted Skywind on the shoulders. “Skywind, you have to grow powerful as well if you want to catch up to him. Otherwise, how will you possibly become strong enough to venture into the outlands and search for him?”

“I understand.” Skywind nodded.

.....

Ning and the Ninedust Sectlord passed through the nine gaseous barriers, finally returning to the empty region surrounding the entire planet.

“What a marvelous place.” The Ninedust Sectlord glanced downwards. “This single, tiny little planet has actually given birth to so many cultivators that each era holds twenty to thirty Daolords. This single planet holds a level of power comparable to quite a few territories combined. It lives up to its reputation as an ancestral site of my Ancient race.”

“This planet might not necessarily be connected to your ancestors.” Ning turned to glance towards the outside. “Pick a direction.”

The area around them was vast and empty. Beyond this empty region were countless stone passageways that led off in many different directions. These stone passageways brimmed with flames; one could only imagine how many of those flame demons were present.

“Every direction seems to be the same. We came from this direction over there, so let’s take the opposite route.” The Ninedust Sectlord pointed to the other side of the planet.

“You read my mind.” Ning grinned, then waved his hand and produced a black flying vessel. The two immediately boarded the vessel. Swoosh! It instantly accelerated to move at a hundred times the speed of light, departing the planet. This entire ancestral site, including the planet they had been in, was dimensionally locked, preventing any form of teleportation or blinking.

“Here we go.” Ning and the Ninedust Sectlord both stared towards the stone passageway as they moved closer and closer to it. Swish! The black vessel dove into one of the stone tunnels and into its roaring flames. When they saw a distant flame demon, both Ning and the Ninedust Sectlord instantly used their worldsplitter stones.

Swish! Swish! Their armor and their weaponry all glowed with black light, covered by the effects of the worldsplitter stone.

“Kill!” The distant flame demon bellowed as it charged at them while also sending out an invisible vibration. Soon, many more flame demons appeared in the distance and began to furiously charge towards the two.

“Darknorth, take a look at this secret art of mine,” the Ninedust Sectlord chuckled. His body instantly began to glow with a curtain of watery light that looked almost solid, as though waves had appeared in the area around him. The deep blue waves wildly smashed as the ripples spread beyond him, crashing into the attacking flame demons. The flame demons were all sent stumbling backwards as their speed dropped drastically.

The watery curtain of light surrounded Ning as well. Ning reached into the curtain to touch it with his hand, and as he did he could sense a surge of overwhelming power.

“What do you think?” the Ninedust Sectlord asked smugly.

“It is just as powerful as my secret art,” Ning said with a praising nod.

“Haha. This Ripplewater secret art of mine was created by an Eternal Emperor of my race. I am skilled in the Dao of Water, and so I started training in this secret long ago. Only today have I finally mastered it.” The Ninedust Sectlord was in quite a good mood. “I’m currently a Daolord of the Third Step. Once I become a Daolord of the Fourth Step and reach an even higher level of understanding, my Ripplewater art will strengthen even further. Haha, when I fight against my peers, I’ll start off with this secret art to slow them down. Heh, heh, heh...”

“It seems you really took to heart the way I used my secret arts to suppress you,” Ning teased.

“Your secrets arts pissed me the hell off.” The Ninedust Sectlord had to chuckle as well. “Are you feeling jealous about my new breakthrough? Haha, even if I have to go back to the Endless Territories right now I would feel no regrets.”

As they chatted, more and more of the slowed-down flame demons began to gather around them and attack them. In the past, they would never have dared to let the flame demons congregate in such large matters. Now that they had worldsplitter stones, they wanted to test the stones out for themselves and so they didn’t mind.

Even if they faced more than a hundred flame demons, they wouldn’t find it too hard to escape even if they didn’t have a worldsplitter stone.

“Die.” Ning transformed into his three-headed, six-armed form. Six Northbow swords were in his hands, and each one was covered with a layer of the worldsplitter stone’s power.

Swish! Sword-light howled through the air and chopped straight through the flame demons, cutting giant wounds into their bodies and stabbing gouging holes into them.

“Ahhh!” All of the flame demons who were stabbed through their armor let out miserable, powerless cries. Their eyes quickly turned dull and blank as their auras rapidly vanished. They were like snow melting in the heat of the summer sun. Some of the flame demons had clearly suffered just tiny wounds, but they vanished and their bodies were dispersed into flames, never to be reborn again.

“They die whenever they are so much as touched by the energy of the worldsplitter stones?” Ning and the Ninedust Sectlord were shocked by how powerful the stones were. It seemed as though this was a natural counter for the flame demons; so long as you were able to breach their armor and wound them, they would invariably perish.

“That’ll make things easier.”

“This’ll be a hundred times simpler than I thought.”

Ning and the Ninedust Sectlord were both delight, and they quickly began to advance at high speeds.

.....

Time passed on, day by day, as the two of them traversed one flaming stone tunnel after another. After finding nothing, they finally opted to enter one of the enormous stone corridors that were a million kilometers wide. In the past, these places were mortally dangerous to them. Now that they had worldsplitter stones, they could give them a try. These corridors had absolutely terrifying numbers of flame demons, with each group clustering in the thousands and some in the tens of thousands.

Even supported by both their secret arts and the worldsplitter stones, they found it incredibly hard to advance.

“These million kilometer tunnels are the main passageways.” Although they were surrounded by danger and often had to fight for their lives, they soon realized the good part of being in these massive tunnels. The smaller tunnels turned and twisted like spiderwebs, making it difficult to progress in any one direction. These main passageways, however, were all linked together in straight fashion, making it so that they didn’t have to twist and turn when trying to advance in a certain direction.

“Careful!”

BOOM. Ning helped the Ninedust Sectlord block a chop but was sent flying as a result. As for the Ninedust Sectlord, he took out a Dao-seal. BANG! A wild wind suddenly erupted, blowing back countless flame demons who found that they were completely unable to control their bodies.

“Let’s move!” Ning and the Ninedust Sectlord hurriedly fled aboard their black vessel in a rather bedraggled fashion. Although the worldsplitter stones were banes to the flame demons, they had been surrounded and attacked by over a hundred thousand of the creatures, forcing both of them to go all-out and use some of their special treasures.

Bang! The flying vessel shot out of the enormous stone passageway.

“An empty region! Another empty region!” Both Ning and the Ninedust Sectlord were overjoyed. Although they had merely spent twelve hours in the super-wide passageways, they had nearly died on

three occasions. Each time, they had only survived thanks to their Dao-seals. Ning had used one of the Dao-seals left behind by Daolord Kongsan, while Ninedust had used up two seals of similar power. This was primarily because Ninedust's protective abilities weren't as formidable as Ning's suit of Hegemon armor.

"We've finally reached an empty region again." The two stood on the prow of the black vessel and stared off into the distance as the charging flame demons behind them began to slow down, almost as though they were afraid of something up ahead.

Up ahead was a stream of rainbow light that snaked through an empty region that was over a hundred billion kilometers in size. At the very center of this region was the silhouette of a planet.

"Same as before?" Ning and the Ninedust Sectlord exchanged a glance. When they had been in Skywind's homeland, they had seen something quite similar, a planet hidden within a massive, empty voice.

Swoosh. They sent the vessel flying closer. The stream of light filled much of the void and thus covered the planet, making it hard for them to get a close look at it. By the time they were just a few hundred million kilometers away, they were able to see everything clearly. Within the rainbow light, they saw an utterly devastated planet that was covered with countless 'wounds'. Next to it levitated two enormous fragments of another shattered planet.

"It's been broken apart?" The two stared in disbelief at the devastated planet.

[The Desolate Era](#)

Book 30: Ancient Cultivator Chapter 29: Golden Sand

The shattered planet still emanated an aura of exalted might, but it would never be able to pose a threat to anyone ever again.

"How could it have been shattered?" The Ninedust Sectlord was in disbelief. "Not even an Eternal Emperor could've destroyed something like that. Only a Hegemon would've been able to do it. Could a Hegemon have come here and destroyed this planet?"

"Let's land on the surface and take a look," Ji Ning said.

"Alright. Maybe there are some leftover treasures," the Ninedust Sectlord agreed. Both of them were very curious; what type of power could've shattered such a planet? It must be understood that first planet had a similar aura of power and had twenty to third Daolords at any given point in time, as well as a terrifying number of earth devils. There was no way such a powerful planet could be destroyed on a whim.

Swoosh. Swoosh. The two quickly flew closer to the planet.

"Careful."

"Let's halt here." The two of them simultaneously noticed the danger up ahead and issued warnings to each other as they halted.

“The rainbow light...” Ning and the Ninedust Sectlord both stared at the rainbow light before them. The rainbow light spanned an area of a hundred billion kilometers, including the planet. “It... it actually is the remaining presence and aura of someone else.”

“How terrifying.” Ning felt stunned. They hadn’t noticed anything from far away, but upon moving closer they were able to sense and be shocked by the highly withdrawn and reserved aura of the rainbow light.

“That’s not light at all. Those are waves of energy.” After taking a careful look, Ning realized that this was a stream of diffused energy waves that would never, ever dissipate.

“Some inconceivably powerful figure must’ve struck through space and smashed the planet apart, causing it to shatter and crumble. The remnants of the power left behind by that strike have taken the form of this rainbow light and been here ever since.” The Ninedust Sectlord took a careful look, then pointed towards a certain part of the rainbow light. “The rainbow light is denser over there. Most likely, that major power must’ve launched his attack from that direction.”

Ning nodded in agreement. This was indeed a killing blow from a major power, and it had the scent of eternity about it.

“The major power in question was very possibly a Hegemon, or close to it,” the Ninedust Sectlord said. “However... given how much time has passed, there shouldn’t be much power left in the remnants of his strike. Let me try it out first.” As he spoke, he stretched out his right arm, which extended more than a thousand kilometers and passed through the rainbow light.

Crackle, crackle, crackle. The remnant energy within the rainbow light instantly began to crush down towards the Ninedust Sectlord’s arm! This caused his face to tighten slightly.

“How’d it go?” Ning asked.

“Not too bad. It’s just a bit of leftover power, after all; I feel like it is merely on par with our secret arts,” the Ninedust Sectlord said. “The two of us can take it.”

Ning let out a sigh of relief, then said with amazement, “The remnant power of a single strike that was launched countless aeons ago is still on par with our secret arts... what power is this?!”

“Let’s go take a look at the planet. Although it’s been shattered, we might still find something nice here,” the Ninedust Sectlord said with a smile.

“Let’s go.” Both Ning and the Ninedust Sectlord flew carefully into the rainbow light. The energy within the rainbow light was folded in layers and contained hidden undercurrents to it. Ning activated his nine novessence arts and used them to form the Yin-Yang Sword Domain to protect them, while the Ninedust Sectlord used his own Ripplewater secret art. Together, the two managed to just barely resist the suppressive might of the rainbow light.

“These two shattered halves are both enormous,” the Ninedust Sectlord said with a sigh. One of the two halves was eight hundred million kilometers long, while the second half was over five hundred million kilometers long.

Ning and the Ninedust Sectlord landed upon the tattered planet. It was in absolutely dire shape, with no living creatures on it at all, nor did it have any flame demons or earth devils or other strange creatures.

“How desolate. Let’s go underground and take a look at the core.” The planet where Skywind lived had a core that could give birth to worldsplitter stones, Dragonfish Ki, and other similar items. The two were naturally quite interested in the core of this planet as well.

Swoosh! Swoosh!

Given that the entire planet had actually had essentially been smashed into two giant pieces, one could imagine what bad shape it was in. As a result, the two were able to fly directly into the core of the planet.

“The planet’s core is shattered as well. There’s nothing here capable of giving birth to new treasures,” Ning said. He swept the area with his gaze, unable to discover any treasures akin to worldsplitter stones or Dragonfish Ki.

“Darknorth, this time you are wrong. The planetary core itself is a treasure. Look!” The Ninedust Sectlord pointed towards a distant rift in the core. “That rift there is leaking a large amount of golden ‘sand’. There’s no way anything leaking from the core of this planet could possibly be anything but extraordinary.”

Ning chuckled, then nodded. The main issue was that there was simply far too much of the golden sand. The entire core was cracked, resulting in much of that golden sand having spilled outside of it. The region of spilled quicksand filled an area of over a hundred million kilometers.

“I still can’t tell what this golden quicksand is.” The Ninedust Sectlord made a grabbing motion towards a handful of quicksand on the ground. Moments later, his face turned pale. He tugged viciously, causing all of the golden sand within the hundred million kilometer region to tremble slightly... but alas he wasn’t able to pull it to him.

“Ninedust, you can’t even pick up a handful of this sand?” Ning was startled by what he saw. He then chuckled teasingly, as he himself was beginning to realize how special and unusual the golden sand was.

“Why don’t you test it out yourself.” The Ninedust Sectlord gave Ning a hard look.

Ning reached out as well. It was quite easy for him to insert his fingers into the sand, but when he tried to pull out a handful of it he felt as though the sand was part of a complete whole.

BOOM! Although Ning used all the power he had, he was only able to cause the sand in the area to slightly tremble. He wasn’t able to pull any out at all.

“Can’t do it either, right?” The Ninedust Sectlord smirked.

“It reminds me of the stone passageways,” Ning said. “When we tried to hack the stones apart, we felt a counter-force emanate from the entire passageway.”

“Right.” The Ninedust Sectlord nodded. “When we try to grab a handful of the sand, all of the sand in this entire area is fighting back against us.”

The Ninedust Sectlord suddenly reached out once more. “Let me try a single grain of sand.” These grains of sand were roughly the size of a fingernail, much larger than ordinary ‘sand’. The Ninedust Sectlord let out a grunt as he pulled with all his strength. Boom! He managed to pull a single grain of sand into his hands.

“Now, let me try two.”

.....

Both the Ninedust Sectlord and Ning were analyzing the sand of the planet’s core with interest. Since this sand had filled the entire core, it had to be the core’s primary element. When undamaged, the planet’s core should’ve possessed enough power to wipe out the two of them with just the slightest of shockwaves. It was almost unbelievable that they managed to find a core of such power that was completely defenseless; there was no way the two would just pass such an opportunity up.

After a period of time, they verified that the more sand they tried to pull out at once, the stronger the resisting power from the rest of the sand would be. The difficulty level would quickly skyrocket.

“If we slowly pick this stuff up one grain at a time, it’ll take us forever. Let me see if I can perhaps hack it apart with my sword.” Ning pulled out a Northbow sword.

“Yes, if you can hack it apart into smaller pieces it’ll be much easier.” The Ninedust Sectlord stood back to watch.

“Chop!” Ning manifested [Three Heads, Six Arms] and gripped a single Northbow sword with all six arms, then unleashed his most powerful attack: Omega Sword Dao – Heavenbreaker. BOOM! The sword slammed into the defenseless sand, but when it moved deeper and sought to sever a piece of it, an invisible source of power suddenly arose to stop it. The power of Ning’s sword seemed to have sunk into a quagmire, having been completely absorbed by the endless sand and causing just a few vibrations.

“Won’t work.” Ning shook his head. “I can’t cut it apart. I’m not even close to being strong enough.”

“Master!”

“Master!”

“Hey, Master!”

One clear, child-like voice rang out after another as six adorable children appeared. All of them stared wide-eyed at Ning.

“Why have the six of you come out?” Ning chuckled. These six were the sword-spirits of the six Northbow swords. They were Lifeblood weapons, and so they were connected to Ning’s spirit and essence. Ning almost viewed himself as their father.

“Master, the golden sand...” The first Northbow sword, ‘Boss Northbow’, hurriedly pointed to the flows of golden sand. “That golden sand is very important to us. We can sense it! Can you give it to us?”

“Very important to you?” Ning immediately understood. Lifeblood weapons needed to grow, but ordinary materials would be of no use to them. Clearly, the golden sand had attracted their interest.

“Yes.” The six children nodded simultaneously.

The nearby Ninedust Sectlord watched with amusement. “You actually have SIX of those Lifeblood swords? Not bad, Darknorth.”

Ning couldn't be bothered to banter with him for now. He said to the six children, "But there's no way for me to harvest or mine the golden sand."

"No need. Master, just insert us into it."

"Yes, insert us into it. Let us absorb it into us." All six of the children continued to stare at Ning.

The Desolate Era

Book 30: Ancient Cultivator Chapter 30: The Growing Northbow Swords

Ji Ning was delighted when he heard this. He waved his hand, causing all six black swords to fly out from the sheath on his back and into the sea of flowing sand.

Swish! Swish! Swish! Swish! Swish! Swish! They all plunged deep into the sand.

"Haha!"

"Here we go!"

"Oh, this is lovely."

"Mm..."

The six children let out excited cries as they flew back into their respective swords. The six Northbow swords began to glow with a layer of golden light as the sand around them began to lose its luster, quickly changing to become a grayish-white color before then completely disappearing without a trace.

"In the future, if you encounter anything you like you can just let me know," Ning sent mentally to his six sword-spirits.

"We don't know what we like either. We can only sense something we want from a close distance."

"Right! Master, if you find anything powerful in the future, give it a few whacks with us first and we'll get a good sense of it," the six sword-spirits replied in chorus.

Ning laughed, a smile on his face as he watched the six Northbow swords furiously devour the essence of the golden sands around them. A large amount of golden sand was being rapidly converted into white dust and then vanish. In the twinkling of an eye, more than half the golden sand in a thirty meter area had completely vanished.

The nearby Ninedust Sectlord was rather jealous when he saw this. He hurriedly lifted up his longstaff, then plunged it into the golden sand.

"Ugh." The Ninedust Sectlord shook his head, putting away his longstaff. He glanced at Ning.

"Congratulations, Darknorth. It seems your Lifeblood weapons are able to absorb the golden sand quite rapidly. Why is it that my own Lifeblood weapon can make no use of it?"

"I guess they aren't a good fit for each other," Ning laughed.

The Endless Territories were filled with countless marvelous curios, but only a few of them would be suitable for each person. Ning's six Northbow swords had been personally forged to perfection by

Emperor Gonflame, as perfection was needed in order to match Ning's own Dao. They were already nigh-flawless and thus very picky; thus far, they had shown no interest in anything Ning had encountered.

Whoooooosh. Entire swathes of golden dust turned white and then vanished.

"This golden sand can be considered a type of treasure. Actually harvesting it, however, is a pain." The Ninedust Sectlord laboriously gathered the golden sand to himself, two grains at a time. After more than two hours, he had only managed to gather roughly a washing basin's worth of sand. By the time he turned to look at Ning, he realized that virtually all of the golden sand around them had been sucked away. He could do nothing but shake his head and sigh. "Compared to how fast your Lifeblood weapons are harvesting these things, I'm moving at a snail's pace. Mm. Well, I'll keep harvesting. In the future I'll ask and find out what type of treasure this is."

Ning smiled as he watched, his mood excellent. He could sense that his six Northbow swords were slowly growing in power as they themselves began to transform and evolve. They had originally been black in color but now they were starting to be tinged with gold, almost as though their abyssal darkness was now brimming with faint golden light. They were beginning to look like dark gold.

Four hours. Twelve hours. One day. Two days. One month. Two months...

The six Northbow swords remained plunged into the golden sands that had leaked out of the shattered planet, furiously sucking away at the sand's essence. Not only were they changing in color, they were even changing in shape. They were now even slimmer than before, but their tips and edges were much sharper. Just looking at them, one could sense a terrifying aura of power from them.

Ning and the Ninedust Sectlord had been fairly relaxed at first, but as time passed both of them grew increasingly astonished. As the Northbow swords had continuously drawn in more of the golden sands and evolved, the rate at which they drew in the sand began to dramatically increase as well.

Rumble...

The entire sea of golden sand was rumbling and rolling about, because the golden sands at its deepest depths were being continuously wiped out. As a result, 'waves' were sweeping through the sea unceasingly and flowing towards the six Northbow swords that had been inserted into the heart of the shattered planet's core.

"Your Lifeblood weapons aren't going to suck up all of the golden sand of this planet's core, are they? When in perfect condition, the planet's core possessed such power that neither of us would even dare to approach it. If your weapons somehow managed to absorb all of that power... how strong would they become?" The Ninedust Sectlord stared in slack-jawed amazement. It must be understood that the outer layer of the hundred-million-kilometer sea of golden sand had already completely vanished. The swords were now primarily drawing from the sands deep within the sea.

"The more powerful, the better." Ning smiled. "This is an ancestral site of you Ancient cultivators; I imagine there won't be any legacies for me here. I need to get what I can out of this place."

The Northbow swords had completely transformed by now. They were now extremely thin, completely golden in color, and glowed with a layer of light. If other cultivators saw these new Northbow swords,

they never would've believed that they were the same swords as Ning had been wielding just a short while ago.

Ning continued to watch eagerly. The planet's core was truly an incalculably valuable treasure; most likely, its value was comparable to that mountain of darkspace flamestone in the alternate universe. His swords had already absorbed so much of that precious golden sand that they had undergone a fundamental transformation.

Boom. Boom. Boom. A series of booms rang out, followed by the six Northbow swords flying into the skies and towards Ning.

"Master, I'm full."

"I can't eat another bite."

"I feel wonderfully stuffed."

The six children appeared once more on the blades of the Northbow swords, incredibly excited. With but a thought, Ning sent all six swords flying into the sheath on his back.

"Look! Look over there!" The Ninedust Sectlord pointed at the planet's core. Your six swords must've drained roughly twenty to thirty percent of the golden sand. I daresay that in material quality, they have a shot of becoming Universe treasures."

Ning waved his hand, pulling out one of the Northbow swords. "Let me test one out first." Ning felt extremely comfortable when holding that Northbow sword, and its entire body glowed with that golden light.

Swish. Swish. Ning began to display his sword-arts. He first started with his defensive sword-arts, because judging from how thin, slender, and sharp the sword was he felt certain that its offensive properties would have been strengthened. He wanted to savor this and save the best for last, and so he decided to test out his defensive sword-arts first. Upon doing so, Ning discovered to his joy that his sword-arts came out even faster and more fluid than ever before. They were also significantly more powerful as well; most likely, his defensive prowess had increased by fifty to sixty percent.

"Omega Sword Dao – Heavenbreaker!" Ning unleashed a furious chop. BOOM! A stream of sword-light visible to the naked eye flew out from the tip of the sword, slamming down through the rainbow light for several kilometers before finally dissipating.

"It's merely twice as strong as before." Ning shook his head slightly; this would be of limited use to him.

"Omega Sword Dao – Shadowless!" Next, Ning chose to test out the Shadowless stance. This instantly caused a look of joy to appear on Ning's face, as the new Northbow sword was perfect for the Shadowless stance; it was now faster, sharper, more ethereal, and more unpredictable.

"This one is four times stronger than before," Ning estimated.

"Omega Sword Dao – Blood Drop!" Ning struck out with a seemingly casual stab, but in the final instant of the strike the sword-light twisted slightly. It destroyed the local power of the Dao-aura unleashed by the prime essences of the universe, forming a true void.

“What?!” The nearby Ninedust Sectlord cried out in shock, “Y-you... your sword has actually transcended space itself?”

“It’s actually transcended space.” Ning revealed a delight look as well.

The technique which Emperor Mirrorsnow had mastered and used to gain eternity for himself was a sword-art that transcended both space and time, allowing him to pierce through his enemies even from countless kilometers away. Neither space nor time could constrain his sword-arts, and his enemies would be dead before they even had a chance to react. The power of this attack was simply incredible.

To surpass the limits of time was to be inconceivably fast. As soon as Emperor Mirrorsnow struck, his sword would slay his foe; there would be no ‘attack time’ at all, as the attack would be instantaneous. This was what made transcending time so terrifying.

As for transcending space, it meant that distance was no longer an obstacle. Emperor Mirrorsnow was capable of using his sword to slay an enemy who wasn’t even in the same territory as him!

Transcending space was comparatively easier. Transcending time was extremely difficult! Ning had originally thought that when he became a Daolord of the Third Step, his sword-arts would be able to transcend space. Who would’ve thought that he’d accomplish it at the second step! But still, when he thought about it in detail, it made sense to him. The essence the Northbow swords had absorbed had caused them to be extremely ‘skewed’ in one area, whereas they had previously been balanced. They were now much sharper and thus better-suited to the Blood Drop stance! The Shadowless stance wasn’t improved as much, while the berserk Heavenbreaker stance was barely improved. As for his defensive sword-arts, they were improved the least of all.

In addition to his swords now being more suited to the Blood Drop stance, Ning had improved the most in the Blood Drop sword-intent to begin with. The Blood Drop sword-intent was highly destructive and thus suited for tearing through the bonds of space and time; it naturally became the first technique he could use to succeed in transcending space.

“Now that you’ve transcended space, ordinary dimensional bindings will no longer have an effect on you. Even if an Eternal Emperor wished to kill you, you would be able to easily pierce through the dimensions and then flee through a dimensional tunnel. Only an Eternal Emperor who is incredibly skilled in the Dao of Space would have a chance of tying you down, with the vast majority of them being helpless against you.” The Ninedust Sectlord looked at Ning, then let out a sigh. “Darknorth, from this day forth, you now have a true life-saving measure that you can use when you please. Very, very few people are now capable of slaying you. You’ve transcended the bounds of space... I have to admit, I truly envy you now.”

[The Desolate Era](#)

Book 30: Ancient Cultivator Chapter 31: The Ancient Ancestor

Ji Ning laughed. When he had been at Skywood City and encountered Daolord Kongsan, the latter had dimensionally locked the area with a formation, making it impossible Ning to escape; his only option would’ve been to use his vessel to slowly fly around inside! But now? His sword-arts surpassed the limits of space and were able to forcibly rip out dimensional passageways, allowing him to easily escape. Only

someone who had reached an extremely high level in the Dao of Space would be able to restrict Ning's movements.

The vast majority of Eternal Emperors would not be able to bar Ning's path. This was a true life-preserving method he now had!

Kongsan was able to transform into darkness incarnate, a virtually invulnerable form. This was his own life-preserving method which ensured that even the likes of Palace Lord Dawnstar would be unable to do anything to him.

Ji Ning would be able to use his swords to transcend space, making it so that dimensional shackling would be unable to bind him. He would also be able to tear through space and flee at a moment's notice. This was a life-preserving method that was every bit a match for Kongsan's.

There were very few figures even amongst exceptionally powerful second-tier Daolords like Ning and Kongsan who had such incredible life-preserving methods. The Ninedust Sectlord, for example, didn't have any such technique.

However, the most supreme of Daolords such as Dawnstar or Skyaxe, the ones who stood at the very precipice of power, all had Daos of such incredible power that they had life-preserving abilities similar to that of spatial transcendence.

This was why they were all generally extremely difficult to kill. However, a Hegemon would probably be able to wipe them out with the wave of a hand. Perhaps some of the freakishly powerful ancient figures such as the lords of the eight Sacred Cities, second only to the Hegemons in power and who Hegemons wouldn't necessarily be able to kill, might be able to slay the supreme Daolords. These figures were far more powerful than even Emperor Mirrorsnow.

However, Hegemons and near-Hegemons were incredibly rare and exalted figures. The three Hegemons belonged to the Brightshore Kingdom, the Aberrant special lifeforms, and the Ancient cultivators. These three were the rulers and sovereigns their entire race. As for the near-Hegemons, they were amongst the most powerful figures each race or organization had. For now, Ning wasn't at a level where he could get embroiled into fights with them.

"Don't feel jealous of me. Once you become a Daolord of the Fourth Step, I'm sure you'll have access to a formidable protective ability of your own," Ning said. The Ninedust Sectlord had merged two Supreme Daos together, which meant that when he became a Daolord of the Fourth Step he would instantly become one of the most powerful Daolords around. None of those Daolords would be easy to deal with.

"True." The Ninedust Sectlord nodded. "I'm not too far away from breaking through to the fourth step anyhow. With just a few more insights, I'll be able to break through my bottleneck and reach the final step. By then, my mastery over water will easily allow me to gain an 'undying waterform body'.

Ning chuckled and nodded.

An 'undying waterform body' was a fairly common technique amongst those who had reached an extremely high level in the Dao of Water. This was a technique that was much stronger than Kongsan's ability to dissolve into darkness incarnate. Kongsan had only comprehended a single Supreme Dao, after all; his 'darkness incarnate' form was simply not flawless enough.

“By then, I can just stand there and let you hit me without fighting back, but you still won’t be able to injure me,” the Ninedust Sectlord boasted smugly.

“Oh.” Ning mumbled mentally to himself, you know, I’m actually just a Daolord of the Second Step...

.....

The Ninedust Sectlord had mastered his Ripplewater secret art, while Ning had now evolved his lifeblood weapons. Both had benefited significantly from this adventure.

“Let’s go.” Ning stood atop the surface of the shattered planet. “The only thing of value here was the core, but harvesting it is too difficult.”

“It really is, but you made a killing off of it...” The Ninedust Sectlord chuckled as he scanned his surroundings, then pointed to the source of the rainbow light. “Let’s move over there. The rainbow light is denser over there; that should be the direction from which the ancient power launched the strike.”

“Yes, let’s go take a look.”

The two immediately flew off the planet and towards the rainbow light. They flew several hundred kilometers alongside the light stream, moving towards the source. Both of them were quite curious; this was an ancestral site of the Ancient cultivators. Who could’ve been able to destroy a planet such as this? Most likely, only a Hegemon-level figure or someone close to that level of power.

Swish! They traversed through space and reached the end of the rainbow light.

“What’s that?” Ning and the Ninedust Sectlord stared in amazement at the cluster of stone passageways ahead of them. The stone passageways were brimming with flame demons, but the streak of rainbow light flew straight through the stone passageways... and the place it flew through was an absolutely enormous straight passageway that was at least two billion kilometers wide! Based on the other nearby tunnels, it could be ascertained that the ‘rainbow passageway’ was actually once filled with countless stone passageways that had been completely destroyed.

“How terrifying,” the Ninedust Sectlord murmured. “A single strike blasted through countless stone passageways, forming a single enormous one in their stead... and then, after being weakened due to having gone through so many passageways, continued through to blast apart that planet! It had to have been a Hegemon.”

“I agree that only a Hegemon could’ve done such a thing,” Ning concurred.

This level of power was incredible. Both of them had learned for themselves how tough the stone passageways were, but someone had been able to blast through two billion kilometers worth of stone then shatter that planet with a single strike. This level of power was beyond their imagination. As they saw it, only the nigh-omnipotent Hegemons could’ve done such a thing.

“This place must really be that legendary place...” Waves of shock and awe began to fill the Ninedust Sectlord’s heart as he grew certain of his guess.

“Come, Ninedust. Let’s go through and see what lies on the other end of the rainbow passageway,” Ning said.

“Agreed.” The Ninedust Sectlord nodded. The two then flew into the rainbow passageway.

The rainbow passageway was brimming with remnant power. There was simply no way to avoid it, and so both used their secret arts to resist as best possible. After being ablated by their secret arts, the remnant power no longer posed a threat to them at all when it washed over their divine bodies.

.....

The rainbow passageway was two billion kilometers wide and so long that they couldn't see to the end of it. The two followed the rainbow light, forging a pathway forwards. The closer they moved to the source, the stronger the layers of power became. However, they were both able to hold; for now, they had yet to reach their limits.

The Ninedust Sectlord sent mentally, “If we were pulled into a fight, I'd only be able to unleash around 20% of my full power right now. This is absolutely terrifying. The remnant power from a single strike that was unleashed countless aeons ago is still able to suppress me to such an extent!”

“I've been whittled down to a fraction of my full power as well,” Ning said. He had the Hegemon's armor, allowing him to endure the damage, but the fact that the remnant energy was so omnipresent meant that he would at most be able to pull out 30%-40% of his true power when using sword-arts.

They continued to fly forwards.

“Is that an entrance up ahead?” Ning was rather puzzled. The rainbow light lowered visibility, but he could vaguely see that the end was up ahead.

“It does look like that.” The Ninedust Sectlord gripped his longstaff and sent mentally, “Be careful, Darknorth. Let's not lose our lives at the very end of this journey.”

“Agreed.” Ning manifested three heads and six arms and wielded his six Northbow swords with great caution.

Swoosh! Swoosh! There really was an exit at the end of the rainbow tunnel. When they simultaneously flew through the tunnel, they suddenly felt their bodies expanding dramatically in size. Ten thousand times, a million times, a billion times...

“What's going on?!” Both of them felt perplexed and they simultaneously turned to look backwards. They saw a hole directly behind them; this was the hole they had just flown out of. As they had rapidly increased in size, the hole had shrunk in comparison.

“T-t-that's...” Both of them were stupefied. Behind them they saw a towering, pitch-black humanoid figure lying on the ground. The figure was 540,000 meters tall, and a hole that was just a few meters wide could be seen over his chest. Clearly, the hole had punctured straight through his chest and into his body.

As for Ning and the Ninedust Sectlord, they had just flown out of this humanoid creature's chest wound.

The two landed on the ground. They stared at the fallen, towering giant figure with astonished gazes.

“W-w-we were actually inside its body this entire time?” Ning could hardly believe it.

“Those countless stone passageways we went through were just part of its body? Those flame demons and earth devils, and that powerful planet? They were all just part of its body as well?” The Ninedust Sectlord couldn’t believe it either.

A grain of sand, an entire world.

This humanoid creature looked like it was ‘merely’ 540,000 meters tall, but within its body was an endlessly vast space that gave birth to flame demons, earth devils, and even mortal lifeforms! This was truly unbelievable.

“I don’t think it was an actual living being. Actual living beings should have divine power and Immortal energy within their bodies, but it only had those endless stone passageways,” the Ninedust Sectlord said.

“It doesn’t seem to be a cultivator.” Ning nodded in agreement.

They then began to carefully inspect their surroundings. This was an enormous cave they were in, and they were in just one corner of it. The two began to walk through the cave and inspect it.

“Look over there.” Ning pointed off into the distance, a stunned look on his face. Far away there were two figures who could be seen. One was a white-robed figure who lay on the ground, completely unmoving. The other was seated in the lotus position, a peaceful look on his face. Both of these enormous figures emanated auras of incredible might, the might of a Hegemon. Ning had seen three Hegemon corpses in the Genesis Lands of the alternate universe, and now he had found two more here in this cave.

“Is that...” The Ninedust Sectlord stared at the two figures, his gaze quickly focusing on the man seated peacefully in the lotus position. The Ninedust Sectlord’s body trembled slightly as he murmured, “An ancestor. That’s one of the ancestors...”