

## Desolate 1151

### [The Desolate Era](#)

#### **Book 33: Crimsonwave Temple Chapter 4: Nine Sections**

“If it wasn’t for you, there’s no way we would’ve been able to protect the first Voidsea Jadeseal, and big brother Solesky wouldn’t have become an Eternal Emperor,” Ji Ning said. “This next Voidsea Jadeseal will be yours! Haha, but of course if we find a second one it’ll go to me.”

Ninedust frowned. “Darknorth...” There were only three Voidsea Jadeseals left. It was virtually impossible for them to acquire two of them, especially seeing as how Winesage and Dawnstar had already gone into those two tunnels. Later on, even more supreme Daolords would arrive. For them to even acquire a single Voidsea Jadeseal would be a stroke of tremendous fortune. Two? Their chances were very, very low.

“Darknorth, you’ll also need a Voidsea Jadeseal in the future when you attempt the Daomerge in the future,” Ninedust said. “I think it’s better for us to just leave it up to speed and strength. May the best man win?”

“Enough, Ninedust. If you view me as your friend, then stop standing on ceremony with me,” Ning said seriously.

Ninedust looked at Ning. A moment later, he smiled. “Alright!” In this moment, Ninedust felt true gratitude in his heart. The Daomerge was, without question, the greatest tribulation any and every Daolord would ever face! He firmly memorized this moment of grace and buried it deep within his heart.

Ning relaxed as well. Finally, he had convinced the man! Ever since they had entered the Waveshift Realm, Ninedust had been their mainstay in battle. The fight against Fiendqueen Windrain, the escape with the Voidsea Jadeseal in tow... each time, it had been Ninedust who had taken the brunt of the fighting and done the most work. Was Ning supposed to just take the next Voidsea Jadeseal for himself, now that he had broken through in power? Ning simply couldn’t do such a thing! It would violate his Dao-heart!

In addition, of the various supreme Daolords who had gathered here, Ning cared the least about the Voidsea Jadeseals. This was because the Voidsea Jadeseals were not omnipotent. Second-tier Daolords would be able to use a Voidsea Jadeseal to fully simulate a Daomerge, but supreme first-tier Daolords would only be able to do a partial simulation!

As for Ning himself? He was just a Daolord of the Third Step. When he became a Daolord of the Fourth Step, his Omega Sword Dao would become even more overpowered; he would most likely be at the same level of power as the eight lords of the Sacred Cities. If he succeeded in his Daomerge, he would eclipse even Hegemons in power!

If the Voidsea Jadeseals weren’t able to do a full simulation for even the other ‘supreme’ Daolords, it probably wouldn’t even be able to simulate a tenth of his own Daomerge.

However... although he cared the ‘least’ about the Voidsea Jadeseals, that wasn’t saying much; he still cared immensely! Even though a jade seal would only allow him to simulate a very small portion of his

Daomerge, it would still save him a bit of time when he attempted the real Daomerge. That extra window of time and opportunity could well determine whether his Daomerge would succeed or fail!

“Let’s find and seize the Voidsea Jadeseal first. As for the fruits, we’ll worry about them later after we learn more about them,” Ning said.

“Alright.” Ninedust nodded. Right now, even if Ning asked for all the fruits to go to him, Ninedust wouldn’t mind.

Swoosh! Swoosh! They quickly flew deeper into the tunnel of dark blue light they had chosen.

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Rumble... as they flew through the dark blue tunnel, they felt almost as though they were flying through a dimensional doorway. Whoosh! An enormous world appeared in front of them as they flew out of the tunnel.

The enormous world had a dimensional walkway within it, with countless armored soldiers clustered on each of the two sides of the tunnel. At the end of this levitating pathway was an ancient throne, while a golden globe of light hovered above the entire pathway.

“Eh?” Ning and Ninedust traded a glance. A dimensional walkway?” Ning was surprised. When he and Ninedust had been in the Eastroad Territory, they had traversed a dimensional walkway and ended up being teleported into that estate deep within the Terror Starsea. Who would’ve thought they would encounter another one here in Crimsonwave Temple?

“There are some differences.” Ninedust stared off into the distance. The dimensional walkway within the Eastroad Sect had been surrounded by empty space, which was why it had been named the Void Pathway! But this vast world before them seemed far more real, and its aura was far more powerful. The area around this dimensional walkway was covered with dark soil and dirt, with many strange trees sprouting from the ground.

The trees were all very short and stooped, and the branches were twisted like the bodies of sea serpents. Only a single tree would grow within a million kilometer region, and every single tree only bore dark blue fruits. The fruits emanated an enticing fragrance that spread out in every direction.

“This enormous world has a total of 108,000 of these trees,” Ninedust said. As he spoke, he reached out with his right hand. Whoooooosh. His right hand expanded to become a million kilometers long as he reached out towards the closest tree, seeking to pluck some of the fruit..

Suddenly, a barrier of light that seemed like the heavenly firmament itself sprang up. When Ninedust’s right hand touched the barrier, he was completely unable to move past it in the slightest.

“Realmsoul Polo already said that harvesting the fruit will be just as hard as acquiring the Voidsea Jadeseals,” the nearby Ning said.

“This barrier is quite strong. I wasn’t able to shake it at all with my attempt just now.” Ninedust shook his head.

Whoosh. Rainbow light gathered next to them, forming into a white-robed man. It was Realmsoul Polo, who smiled. “So the two of you have reached the first world.”

“Realmsoul.” Nine and Ninedust both looked at him.

“Look over here.” Realmsoul Polo pointed towards the left, then waved his hand. Instantly, the mist far off in the distance to the left began to dissipate, revealing yet another dimensional hallway that was also covered with countless warriors. Winesage was standing right there, with a second Realmsoul Polo by his side.

“Winesage?” Ning and Ninedust were both surprised.

“Now look here.” Realmsoul Polo now pointed towards the right, causing the mist off in the distance to once more dissipate and reveal a third dimensional walkway. This one was filled with just as many of those armored warriors, with Dawnstar standing amongst them.

“Palace Lord Dawnstar?” Ning and Ninedust were starting to understand.

“The two of you, along with Winesage and Dawnstar, have separately entered three of the major sections within the first world of the Crimsonwave Realm,” Realmsoul Polo said. “The different regions within the first world are all linked together, and so the two of you should move to acquire the Voidsea Jadeseals as quickly as possible. If you waste too much time, the others might end up winning it.”

“Where is the Voidsea Jadeseal?” Ning asked.

“Look at the throne over there.” The realmsoul pointed towards the black throne at the end of the dimensional walkway. “When you finish breaking through the many waves of warriors barring your path and reach that throne, you’ll be teleported to the second world. The Voidsea Jadeseals are within the second world.”

“Understood.” Ning’s eyes lit up, as did Ninedust’s.

“Then the fruits here...” Ning immediately changed to the next topic of conversation.

“If you wish to harvest the fruit, you must first acquire one of the command seals,” Realmsoul Polo said. “The command seals are in the third world.”

Ning and Ninedust exchanged a glance. The Voidsea Jadeseals were in the second world, while the command seals needed to harvest the fruit were in the third world? That meant that harvesting the fruit would probably be more difficult than acquiring the Voidsea Jadeseals.

“Let’s move.” It didn’t really matter; they had to seize every moment. Winesage was more powerful than both of them, and he would probably advance more quickly. After he won a Voidsea Jadeseal, he’d probably go after one of the others.

Boom! A pillar of golden light descended upon them, illuminating the six armored warriors in the first row before them. The six warriors opened their eyes, now glowing with golden light, then charged towards Ning and Ninedust with weapons at the ready.

Ning transformed into his three-headed, six-armed mode and drew all six of his Northbow swords. As for Ninedust, he brought his longstaff to the ready and immediately charged forwards as well.

Boom! Boom! Boom! As soon as the battle erupted, Ning and Ninedust felt a sense of pressure. “Every single one of these warriors is comparable to a second-tier Daolord.” Ning immediately came to this

conclusion. An attack from six second-tier Daolords was more than enough to cause most supreme Daolords to feel a sense of pressure.

“Heartworld projection, descend! Novessence arts, manifest!” Ning didn’t hesitate or hold back in the slightest. His mighty heartworld projection came crashing down, suppressing his foes. As for his nine novessence arts, they followed the principles of his Omega Sword Dao – Yin-Yang as they furiously wrapped around the warriors, rendering them almost immobile. However, right at this moment even more of the golden light rained down from the skies. This time, it covered virtually the entire dimensional walkway... and as it did, it seemed to completely block off the power of Ning’s nine novessence arts and his heartworld projection, rendering them useless.

“What the hell? It actually blocked off my heartworld projection and the nine novessence arts?” Ning raised his head to stare at the golden globe of light above them.

“Kill!”

“Kill!”

The six armored warriors let out furious, murderous shouts as they began to launch attacks at Ning and Ninedust without any hesitation at all.

Ning and Ninedust exchanged a glance. The warriors they had fought in the Void Pathway within the Eastroad Sect had been much weaker. Even the warriors they had encountered at the very end were merely equivalent to the lowest-ranked second-tier Daolords in power, and they weren’t able to ignore the nine novessence arts like this.

“Even the first warriors here are already comparable to second-tier Daolords,” Ning sent mentally. “And they are clearly far more numerous as well. All of them are fighting like madmen, seemingly intent on our deaths. Even my heartworld projection and nine novessence arts have been nullified. No wonder Realmsoul Polo said that only supreme Daolords even stand a chance at surviving this place! It won’t be easy at all for us to survive this first world.”

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#### **Book 33: Crimsonwave Temple Chapter 5: The Grovekeepers**

Ji Ning and Ninedust clearly surpass the six warriors in power, but the six warriors had bodies comparable to top-tier Eternal treasures. Each time they were knocked backwards, they would quickly regroup and charge towards the two once again.

“Why the hell are they continuing to attack?” Ninedust sent mentally.

“We’re clearly overpowering them, but they continue to press the assault.” Ning frowned as well. “Let’s just keep advancing. Forget about them.”

“Alright.” Ning and Ninedust clearly held the upper hand, and so they smashed their way through and continued the advance. As they did, however, six more rays of light shone down from that golden globe above them. Instantly, six more warriors opened their golden eyes and began to charge towards them. The six original warriors didn’t let up the pursuit either, continuing to press the assault. Now, there were a total of twelve warriors assaulting them.

“That’s not good.” Ning and Ninedust both turned pale. “We’re clearly stronger than them, but they aren’t even alive. Their bodies can’t be damaged in the slightest. If they continue to harass us like this, if we advance we’ll have to face eighteen of them, then twenty four of them. More and more of them will come to life and start attacking us.” Ninedust began to grow anxious. “Even if we work together, we won’t be able to last for very long if a hundred of these things attack us.”

“Agreed.” Ning was worried about the same thing.

Boom! Ning attacked in a ghostly manner, his six arms striking out with six Northbow swords and striking one of the warriors. That warrior was knocked flying backwards until it flew outside the dimensional walkway. Its golden eyes instantly dimmed. Moments later, some sort of invisible string seemed to jerk it back into the dimensional walkway where it rejoined the other warriors. This time, however, it no longer attacked.

“Aha!” Ning’s eyes lit up. “Knock them off the walkway. That’s all we need to do!”

“Oh, is that it?” Ninedust was delighted as well.

Boom! Boom! Boom! The two of them were clearly much stronger. Now that they knew what to do, they began to focus on knocking the armored warriors out of the dimensional walkway. In each case, the eyes of the warriors would go dim before they were pulled back into the ranks of the other warriors, now completely immobile.

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Ning and the others continued to press the advance. Each time, they faced a total of six warriors! Some specialized in sword-arts, some specialized in whip-arts, some specialized in staff-arts, some specialized in axe-arts, some specialized in long-distance attacks... Ning and Ninedust were faced with all sorts of varied attacks.

Ning and Ninedust continued to press the assault for more than three days. Finally... from this day forth, they had to fight seven warriors each time!

Seven warriors... eight warriors... the number slowly began to rise. Each warrior continued to merely have the power of a second-tier Daolord, but the way they worked together became increasingly intricate and marvelous! Knocking them off the dimensional walkway became harder and harder, especially given how incredibly large the walkway was. The width alone was roughly a million kilometers! Each time, Ning and Ninedust had to fight with their full power.

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Nine months later.

Twenty-six of the armored warriors were surrounding and assaulting the two of them in perfect concert. Their bodies were completely invulnerable, allowing them to focus on attacks without needing to defend at all. Ning and Ninedust worked together as well, slowly driving one warrior after another to the ends of the dimensional walkway. They fought for more than two hours before finally sending the last one flying.

“I’m so done right now. I’m exhausted.” Ninedust slumped to the ground. “I need a break. I can’t take any more, I really can’t.”

Ning sat down as well, staring at what lay ahead of them. They had only traversed roughly half of the dimensional walkway, and the further they advanced the more difficult it would be.

“This is torture.” Ninedust shook his head. “We’ve been fighting nonstop for nine full months, and I’ve been using chaos jewels to replenish my energy. Sure, I have plenty of them, but fighting at full power for this long is mentally exhausting. I’m more tired right now than I ever have been in my entire life. How about you, Darknorth?”

“I’m kind of tired as well,” Ning said. In truth, he wasn’t nearly as bad off. He was a Heartforce Cultivator, after all, and his close combat skills were exquisite. This was why he wasn’t as exhausted as Ninedust was. Still, Ning elected to rest alongside Ninedust for a time, as the two were able to advance faster when fighting together. If he tried to fight by himself, he’d move much more slowly.

“Hahaha...” Suddenly, a deep, rumbling laugh rang out from the distant black soil. Ning and Ninedust sat up straight in surprise as they turned to stare at the black soil off in the distance.

Suddenly, the black, earthy ground began to slowly bulge upwards, forming into a humanoid figure of dark soil. The black earth golem was the size of a mountain, and he cracked his mouth into a grin.

“Haha! Tired already, kids? Honestly, the two of you really don’t know your limits. Why have you come to attempt this pathway by yourselves? You should work in groups of four or five. Wouldn’t that be much faster?”

“Who are you, senior?” Ninedust called out.

“Me? I was manufactured by the Sithe. I’ve been here my entire life, taking care of these trees. The Sithe called me the ‘Grovekeeper’.” The black earth golem boomed with laughter. “But the Sithe were wiped out long ago, and my current master is Emperor Waveshift. Of course, my mission remains the same – to take care of these trees. The nine regions within Crimsonwave Temple have a total of nine Grovekeepers, and I’m one of them.”

Ning and Ninedust both nodded slightly.

“Senior,” Ning called out, “Who were the Sithe, exactly? They seem to have been quite powerful.”

“Powerful? Hah! Of course they were powerful! Their war encompassed countless realms. I don’t even know how many of you cultivators died as a result of it.” The black earth golem continued, “But of course, the Sithe were still defeated in the end. They were wiped out! The Crimsonwave Temple experienced quite a few things before ending up in Emperor Waveshift’s hands.”

Ning and Ninedust were intrigued. So the great battle in the Terror Starsea known as the ‘Dawn War’ had been fought against the Sithe race?

“The Sithe paid an unbelievable price to create Crimsonwave Temple,” the black earth golem said.

“Crimsonwave Temple holds more marvels than you can imagine, and it was used to plant all of these divine trees around us! The nine regions here represent nine different types of divine trees, and each type is incredibly useful. The Sithe were completely wiped out, with their most powerful experts being

completely slaughtered and their treasures taken away. That was also what happened to Crimsonwave Temple.”

“Their most powerful experts were all wiped out?” Ning and Ninedust couldn’t help but sigh. The Sithe had been incredibly powerful, so powerful that they were able to create Hegemon-level guardians and locations like Crimsonwave Temple! And yet, all of their supreme experts had been wiped out, essentially driving their race to extinction. In the end, for any race, what truly mattered was the presence and existence of their supreme experts.

“Did Emperor Waveshift set down the dimensional walkway, or did the Sithe?” Ning asked.

“The Sithe, of course.” The black earth golem explained, “Emperor Waveshift certainly doesn’t have the ability to do so! The Sithe used these dimensional walkways to train and temper their Daolords. All of these varied golems here provide an excellent source of combat experience, after all.”

Ning and Ninedust were startled. Right. It made sense. This place was indeed a superb place to train. Ning had only recently become a Daolord of the Third Step, but he was lacking in actual combat experience. As he fought against all of these warriors, Ning had accumulated more and more actual battle experience and as a result was able to discover some of the weaknesses still inherent to his sword-arts. Upon discovering those weaknesses, he was able to find a way to improve his sword-arts and thus more quickly move towards becoming a Daolord of the Fourth Step.

As for Ninedust, he would be able to come up with even more powerful techniques. Daolord Shaka, the Radiant King... these ‘supreme Daolords’ all had reached the same level of enlightenment into the Dao, so why was it that they varied so much in power? It was because they all had developed different attacks!

Ning’s Dao was that of the Omega, and thus it represented the true apex of what was possible. This was why, whenever he wanted to truly upgrade his technique, he would have to first reach a higher level of enlightenment. This wasn’t true for the others.

“I believe the Sithe had many similar locations which they used to train Daolords,” the black earth golem said. “Their Daolords were all extremely powerful, with many reaching the ‘supreme’ level of power. Unfortunately, their ambitions were too vast. They sought to enslave all cultivators and take control over the destinies of all living things.”

“And so, in the end they had to be wiped out.” The black earth golem shook his head. “Let me give you another word of advice. It’ll be virtually impossible for the two of you to fight through to the third world by yourselves. I urge you to work together with a few more supreme Daolords.”

“Alright. Thank you.” Both Ning and Ninedust nodded. At present, what they really cared about was the Voidsea Jadeseal in the second world. The command seals in the third world were of secondary concern.

“The various fruit trees within the nine major regions all ripen at different intervals, going from every 30,000 chaos cycles to every 100,000 chaos cycles,” the black earth golem said. “This is why Crimsonwave Temple will only be opened up once every 30,000 chaos cycles at most! However, this is the first time Crimsonwave Temple has been opened up in a very long time, and so all of the fruits in all nine regions are ripe for the harvesting. Seize the opportunity! If you miss it, you’ll have to wait another 30,000 chaos cycles... and by then, you’ll only have access to the fruits in two of the regions.”

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### **Book 33: Crimsonwave Temple Chapter 6: Command Seals**

Anywhere from 30,000 chaos cycles to 100,000 chaos cycles? Ji Ning and Ninedust exchanged a glance, the same thought running through both their minds: when the competition over the Voidsea Jadeseals concluded, the two of them would definitely have to do their best to acquire some of the fruit.

Ji Ning felt particularly eager. Although the Voidsea Jadeseal was perhaps more valuable, Ning also knew that it would be of limited use to him. The Daomerge for his Omega Sword Dao was simply going to be so incredibly difficult that he felt zero confidence in his abilities to succeed in it. As a result, he viewed the fruits with great importance as well.

Given how badly the various Hegemons and the Dao Alliance wanted the fruits, they might be of use to him in reviving his wife. As for the Daomerge? If he failed, he'd die. By now, Ning had seen past both life and death. If he could revive his wife and then happily live together alongside her and their daughter Brightmoon for over 100,000 chaos cycles, he really wouldn't mind failing his Daomerge. His greatest wish was to bring his wife back. Ordinary mortals were only able to live for a hundred years; to be able to spend over 100,000 chaos cycles alongside his loved ones was a true blessing. What did he have to complain about?

"Dare I ask, senior," Ning said, "How many of those fruit-picking command seals are there?"

"A total of nine in total, and they are each attuned to one of the nine regions," the black earth golem said. "Each of the nine regions holds a different types of tree within them. Once you earn a command seal, you'll be able to see all of the divine trees and fruits located within a certain region."

"How much fruit is within each region?" Ning and Ninedust were surprised.

"Well... let's use this current region, the third region, as an example. If you can acquired the third command seal, then I'll harvest all 108,000 fruits on your behalf and give them to you," the black earth golem said.

Ning immediately decided that he had to do his absolute utmost to acquire the command seals! Every single command seal represented an enormous number of fruits.

"Senior," Ninedust immediately asked, "What good are these fruits? What can they be used for?"

"Pill-making!" The black earth golem explained, "They can be used to forge certain legendary pills that will drive any Eternal Emperors mad with desire."

Ning asked, "Senior, which of the fruits in the nine regions are the most valuable?" Since there were nine command seals in total, he'd definitely have to try and find the most valuable one.

"Hey, this kid's pretty smart." The black earth golem chortled. "Then I'll go ahead and tell you – the ninth command seal is the most valuable one. The fruits in the ninth region ripen once every 100,000 chaos cycles! The sixth, seventh, and eighth command seals are equivalent in value; those fruits ripen once every 90,000 chaos cycles! The third, fourth, and fifth command seals correspond to fruits that



ripen once every 60,000 chaos cycles, while the fruits for the first and second command seals are the least valuable, ripening once every 30,000 chaos cycles.”

Ning’s eyes lit up as he memorized this. “Thank you, senior.”

“Darknorth, if we join forces we should be able to seize at least a few of those command seals,” Ninedust said.

“Haha... quite a few supreme Daolords will be taking part in this. Count your blessings if you can even seize one of them,” the black earth golem laughed merrily. He then quickly dissipated, his body reverting to chunks of dirt that fell down to the ground.

“That little chat with the Grovekeeper really brought my spirits up,” Ninedust chortled. “Let’s keep charging.”

“Right.” Ning was filled with eagerness as well. “Attack!” The two charged forwards, side-by-side.

After chatting with the Grovekeeper, Ning now understood more about this place. This was a place which the Sithe had used to train their Daolords and give them more combat experience, helping them discover flaws in their techniques. Naturally, there was no way they would allow heartworld projections or secret arts to be used, as that would defeat the entire purpose.

From this alone, it seemed clear that the many varied techniques these warriors used would indeed give Ning many new insights into his Omega Sword Dao.

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At the entrance to the Crimsonwave Temple.

Swoosh! Swoosh! Swoosh! One figure after another charged through the entrance, not even wanting to waste time admiring the characters ‘Crimson’ ‘Wave’ ‘Temple’ above them.

“Eh?” There were seven figures in total, and they all stared in shock at the two hideous, towering, black-skinned, green-furred, golden-eyed figures in front of them. The aura in particular caused all seven of these supreme Daolords to shudder.

“Hegemons?” All seven of them were stunned.

Streams of rainbow light manifested next to them, resolving into a white-robed man who smiled at them. “Do not be alarmed. These two are not Hegemons, but they did have power comparable to a Hegemon’s. They are the most powerful guardians which were produced by the Sithe race, who created them at enormous expense to watch over Crimsonwave Temple. However, the two of them were killed and Crimsonwave Temple ended up in my master’s hands.”

The seven supreme Daolords were just as stunned as Ning had been when he had heard this information. Realmsoul Polo couldn’t help but feel smug; he was extremely proud of his master.

“Where are Winesage and Darknorth?” A silver-robed figure amongst the seven spoke out. This was Palace Lord Cloudwalker.

“They’ve gone inside to seek out the Voidsea Jadeseals. These three corridors head to three different places, and there is a Voidsea Jadeseal at the end of each.” Realmsoul Polo pointed towards three deep blue hallways that appeared at the other side of the temple. The seven supreme Daolords instantly turned anxious upon hearing this. The realmsoul continued, “But don’t be impatient; the Voidsea Jadeseals are not so easily won. Although you’ve arrived nearly a year later than them, you still stand a very good chance at earning the seals. But of course, that’s only if you work together.”

“Which tunnels did they choose?” Daolord Dreamlord, bloodblade in his arms, spoke out in a cold voice.

“They separated and chose to go through all three tunnels,” Realmsoul Polo said. “The rest is up to you and luck.” After finishing his words, he dissipated.

The seven supreme Daolords in the temple exchanged a glance. “Damn the two of them. Winesage and Darknorth repeatedly used their heartworld projections to slow us down, forcing us to gather together to resist them in unison. Otherwise, we would’ve reached Crimsonwave Temple long ago.”

“Let’s cut the crap. What should we do next?”

“Have you decided where we should go?”

“We arrived later than them to begin with. If we work by ourselves, we won’t have any chance at all.”

The seven supreme Daolords weren’t fools. They quickly decided to separate up into two squads. The first squad consisted of Ninestone, Palace Lord Cloudwalker, Shaka, and Snowjoy.

The second squad consisted of Dreamlord, Tigrone, and Skyshatter.

“Which one should we choose? They’ve already gone up ahead of us. I wonder which path Winesage choose?” Both squads worried the most about running into Winesage. Even someone as incredibly powerful as Ning, who was able to suppress the ‘old’ Winesage in might, had been completely crushed by Winesage when the latter had used his Universe treasure. Ning’s only choice had to be to rely on the speed and concealing properties of his Shadowless evasion art in order to escape.

“If we run into Winesage, we’ll be in serious trouble.” This is what both squads were worried about.

“Based on my understanding of Winesage...” Daolord Skyshatter had an ugly scar on his face, and his voice was very cold. “Although he looks calm and collected, he’s an extremely arrogant and domineering person who views himself as without peer amongst Daolords! Now that he has a Universe treasure, he’s only going to feel even more arrogant than he did in the past. He would naturally choose the central hallway.”

“Mm. Then let’s avoid that one.” There really was no other options; the Waveshift Realm placed tight restrictions on spacetime techniques, and the situation inside Crimsonwave Temple was even worse. It was completely impossible for them to use temporal inversion to see what happened here.

“Then we’ll take the left,” Palace Lord Cloudwalker said.

“We’ll take the right,” Daolord Dreamlore said.

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The dimensional walkway of the first world inside the Crimsonwave Temple. Ning and Ninedust had already battled their way past countless warriors, but more waves of those warriors continued to assail them. Right now, there was a total of twenty-nine warriors surrounding and assaulting them.

Whoosh. The Ninedust Sectlord transformed into an enormous wave of water, his invulnerable aquaform having transformed into a vast sea. If he so chose, he would be able to easily transform into a sea that covered hundreds of millions of kilometers, if not more. The vast sea swept through all of the warriors, slowing them down and making it difficult for them to effectively work together.

In terms of impeding these armored warriors, the Ninedust Sectlord's 'invulnerable aquaform' was far superior than the techniques Ning had available to him. No matter how strong Ning was, he was only able to block a few of the warriors at once, whereas Ninedust's invulnerable aquaform was able to have an impact on all of them.

"Kill!"

"Kill!" This was a site which the Sithe had used to train their Daolords; a mere 'invulnerable aquaform' wouldn't be able to defeat it that easily. The warriors moved closer to each other and the golden light in their eyes shone even more brightly, causing golden light to spring up amongst them and cause them to join together into a whole. This caused the impact of the vast waves to be greatly lessened.

As for Ning, he remained the mainstay in this fight. He furiously and laboriously seeking out opportunities to smash one warrior after another off of the dimensional walkway, despite the formation the warriors were using.

"Eh?" After knocking yet another warrior off, both Ning and Ninedust noticed something behind them. Three more figures had suddenly appeared at the other end of the dimensional walkway.

The first figure was a red-robed youth who was carrying a bloodblade in his arms, surrounded by a towering, baleful aura. This was Daolord Dreamlore, a man who had been very low-key up until he had defeated the Radiant King in his first major battle.

The second man was a muscular man dressed in extremely thick gray armor whose eyes glowed with green light. This was the most powerful Daolord the Aberrants had, Daolord Tigrone. His divine body was so tough that not even King Gorsch had been able to injure him in the slightest. Daolord Tigrone had been the main reason why King Gorsch had died.

The last one was an insidious, scar-faced man who looked extremely mysterious. All Ning knew was that he was a Daolord of the Dark Kingdom known as Daolord Skyshatter. His real level of power was a mystery.

"Darknorth!"

The gazes of Daolord Dreamlord, Daolord Tigrone, and Daolord Skyshatter all fell upon Ning.

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#### **Book 33: Crimsonwave Temple Chapter 7: Heartsword Art**

"It's them." Ji Ning's face tightened slightly.

“Darknorth, this will be troublesome. Daolord Dreamlore’s power is unfathomable, while Daolord Tigrone’s defenses are superior to any I’ve ever seen. As for Daolord Skyshatter, he’s a Daolord of the Dark Kingdom but was accepted by Daolord Dreamlore and Daolord Tigrone as a partner. He must be incredibly strong as well.” The Ninedust Sectlord frowned.

“Don’t worry about them. They were a full year behind us. It won’t be that easy for them to catch up to us,” Ning said. “Seize every moment and do your best to push as many of the warriors out of the dimensional walkway.”

“Alright.” Ninedust nodded.

The two paid no more heed to the three Daolords behind them and began to focus on attacking the warriors up ahead.

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“The Voidsea Jadeseals are in the second world, while the command seals needed to harvest the fruit are in the third world.” Realmsoul Polo once more gave detailed instructions to the new arrivals. These supreme Daolords were amongst the most incredibly talented figures alive in the endless Territories; it was important for him to give them good guidance. His master, Emperor Waveshift, was doing this for the sake of tempering these supreme Daolords and make them even better. The realmsoul naturally had to keep them fully informed.

“Got it.”

“Let’s move.”

Daolord Tigrone, Daolord Dreamlore, and Daolord Skyshatter began to advance as well, and they immediately began to suffer the attacks of the armored warriors in front of them.

“Hmph. Darknorth and Ninedust are fools. Why aren’t they using their secret arts or a heartworld projection? Are they trying to use this as a training exercise?” Daolord Skyshatter frowned. Instantly, he sent a tri-colored surge of energy sweeping out to surround the area, wrapping itself around the warriors around him. However, the golden light covering the entire dimensional walkway immediately swirled forwards to cover it.

In raw power alone, Daolord Skyshatter’s secret arts were actually slightly stronger than even Ning’s nine novessence arts!

“What? My secret arts were nullified?” Daolord Skyshatter was shocked.

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Ning and Ninedust ignored the three behind them. They were very experienced in fighting against these warriors, and were able to work together perfectly. Ninedust was responsible for tying down and slowing the warriors, while Ning was responsible for delivering the final blow that knocked them off the walkway.

Time continued to flow on. Another year passed in the blink of an eye, with Ning’s team slowly advancing. The further they advanced, the more warriors assaulted them. Knocking the warriors off the dimensional walkway became increasingly powerful, as there was now a total of thirty-two warriors

assaulting Ning's team. This represented a force of thirty-two second-tier Daolords who were able to work together perfectly and who were invulnerable to all harm!

Just beating them wasn't enough. You had to knock them off the dimensional walkway. It was simply too difficult! By now, Ning's team needed to spend five or six days in battle before defeating a 'wave'..

Whoosh! Ninedust transformed into a massive wave, but the upper half of his body was still visible. He continued to wield his longstaff, sending it smashing through the waves and knocking one enemy aside after another, doing his best to give Ning enough space to work in. As for Ning, he was even fiercer than he had been in the past, with each of his six Northbow swords containing astonishing amounts of power.

"Haha, Darknorth, these warriors are becoming increasingly difficult to defeat, but this process has been quite beneficial to my staff-arts. I've come up with a supreme technique of my own!" The Ninedust Sectlord let out a loud laugh as he swept out his longstaff. Whoosh! The water around him instantly formed into a whirlpool that was centered around his longstaff, causing layers of spatial illusions to appear around it.

Crimsonwave Temple placed extremely tight restrictions on spacetime techniques, but Ninedust was still able to cause spatial illusions to appear. In the outside world, the power of this strike would've been inconceivable!

BOOM! The staff smashed against an armored warrior, sending it flying away as if it was nothing more than a tiny little shrimp.

"Come up with a few more 'supreme techniques' like that," Ning said with a laugh. "Later on, you can let these other Daolords get a taste of them."

"Right. I'll make sure they know that I'm not easy to deal with." Ninedust had been intoxicated by this life of battle. These fights were helping him to discover many of his flaws and allowed him to perfect them. When he was able to reach a certain level of perfection, he was naturally able to come up with a new supreme technique.

"The other supreme Daolords have either fused two Supreme Daos or three Supreme Daos..." Ning mused silently to himself, "But they still have room for improvement. They can gain new insights and thus come up with more and better supreme techniques. I, however, have already reached the apex! It'll be very hard for me to improve in the near future."

"Mm. I suppose I should focus on the [Heartsword] for now." Ning was beginning to realize how hard it would be for him to upgrade his Omega Sword Dao any further. None of his five stances had been able to reach the fourth stage, and so he immediately chose to work on the [Heartsword] sword-art instead."

"The [Heartsword]..." A complete copy of the full [Heartsword] sutra appeared within Ning's mind. The golden-furred alien had given it to Ning's avatar during his visit to Vastheaven Palace, and Ning's avatar had immediately studied it.

The [Heartsword] art was an incredibly marvelous and miraculous sword-art! In importance, it actually succeeded the legacies of Hegemons! Although it was 'merely' a sword-art, the Dao Alliance absolutely refused to transmit it to any other organizations. Even the Brightshore Kingdom was only able to

procure the first ten stances after paying an utterly enormous price. If you wished to learn the full thing, you had to be a member of the Dao Alliance and pay an incredible price for it.

Ning's performance in the Waveshift Realm had been simply dazzling. He had risen to prominence by slaughtering Sectlord Timedream and the Kingfreak, and his power was second only to Winesage! The Dao Alliance was naturally going to invest its resources in him. Given that they also had a favor to ask of Ning, they chose to just go ahead and gift the entire [Heartsword] to Ning! But of course, Ning was not permitted to transmit this to any others.

"How marvelous." The more Ning learned regarding the [Heartsword] art, the more stunned he felt. The [Heartsword] art was a supreme sword-art that represented the perfect combination of Ki Refining principles, Fiendgod Refining principles, and Heartforce Cultivation principles.

Emperor Heartsword's sword-arts, on a stand-alone basis, were merely on the same level as Emperor Mirrorsnow's! However, this perfect combination of all three paths of cultivation made it so that his rather unremarkable sword-arts were able to unleash astonishing levels of power that surpassed even the likes of the eight lords of the Sacred Cities, putting him incredibly close to the Hegemon level! He was known as the Emperor who was closest to the Hegemons in power! How terrifying a concept was this?

"My current sword-arts have already transcended both space and time, putting me on par with Emperor Mirrorsnow's level," Ning mused. "If I can master the fifteenth stance of the [Heartsword], I'll have eclipsed the eight lords of the Sacred Cities and be very close to the Hegemons as well."

Moments later, Ning chuckled. That was nothing more than a fantasy. Ever since Emperor Heartsword had departed, there had never been a second cultivator capable of mastering the fifteenth stance of the [Heartsword]! This was because this sword-art was simply too arcane and abstruse.

The first stance was known as the 'Heartsword' stance. The second stance, the 'Killsword' stance. The third stance, the 'Great Firmament' stance. The fourth stance, the 'Horizon's Edge' stance. The fifth stance, the 'Silent World' stance. The sixth stance, the 'Unicorn's Heart' stance. The seventh stance, the 'Cosmic Heart' stance.

The first six stances were at least understandable. Starting from the seventh stance, however, the technique became increasingly abstruse. Thankfully, Ning was incredibly talented in sword-arts and thus he mastered the seventh stance in the Sword Palace of the Brightshore Kingdom. It could be said that he had gained an elementary level of mastery in the [Heartsword].

However, this was still nothing more than an elementary level of mastery. The later stances were even more difficult to comprehend!

The eighth stance was named 'Ineffable'.

The ninth stance was named 'Blissheart'.

The tenth stance was named 'Killheart'.

The eleventh stance was named 'Teardrop'.

The twelfth stance was named 'Swordtide'.

The thirteenth stance was named 'Snowland Blood'.

The fourteenth stance was named 'Remorseless Unto Death'.

The fifteenth stance was named 'One Sword, One World'.

These stances were all incredibly abstruse, but they could be divided into several different tiers. The eighth stance to the tenth stance represented the first 'tier'! Most cultivators skilled in the [Heartsword] were stuck here in the first tier, unable to advance any further.

The eleventh and twelfth stances represented the second tier. Supposedly, cultivators who reached this level would see the power of the [Heartsword] technique skyrocket, but in every generation the number of cultivators who could reach this level could be counted on one hand.

The thirteenth and fourteenth stances represented the third tier. According to the records, only a single major power aside from Emperor Mirrorsnow had ever reached this level, but his name was a mystery! The records stated that at this level, one's level of power would skyrocket by such a level that using the [Heartsword] art provided an even greater boost in power than using a Universe treasure!

The fifteenth and final stance! Only Emperor Heartsword, the creator of this technique, had ever reached this level! By relying on this stance, he had been able to unleash quasi-Hegemon levels of power from his fairly mundane sword-arts.

"If I can even reach the third tier, I might be able to give Hegemons a good fight once I become a Daolord of the Fourth Step," Ning mused. This truly was an unearthly, incredible set of sword-arts, but it was also the hardest of all sword-arts to train in. The actual movements to each stance were not that important; what really mattered was the 'heart'.

"Time to begin."

Even the tallest of buildings have to start from the ground floor. Ning held all six Northbow swords as he fought, occasionally injecting some of the 'Cosmic Heart' elements into his stances. At other times, he'd attempt to replicate the eighth stance, 'Ineffable'. The [Heartsword] art focused on the heart, not on the actual stances, and so it was incredibly difficult to train in. Ning was incredibly talented in heartforce and had the largest heartworld of all the supreme Daolords in the Endless Territories, but he still found training in this technique to be extremely laborious. Despite that, he was still able to at least generate part of the 'feeling' of the eighth 'Ineffable' stance.

The 'Ineffable' stance couldn't be manufactured intentionally. One had to follow one's own heart and completely infuse it into one's sword-arts. Everything had to follow the natural flow... and when you were able to sense it, it would have been completed.

The eighth stance actually wasn't that bad. The later ones were even more abstruse and more difficult to study.

### [The Desolate Era](#)

#### **Book 33: Crimsonwave Temple Chapter 8: Ineffable, Blissheart**

"Ineffable." When this sword-stance struck out, an invisible current of heartforce would naturally merge into it; there was no need to 'force' it or do it on purpose.

A layer of thin, invisible, mist-like heartforce appeared on the surface of the sword, causing the power of the attack to immediately increase and even speed up.

“What a strange feeling.” Ji Ning’s six Northbow swords howled forth, knocking down all of the warriors before him. Some were sent flying backwards, others were bowled over. “This is the first time I’ve felt something like this. When I use this sword-art, I feel as though I’ve transformed into a sword. What a wonderful, enjoyable feeling. I feel as though the power of my sword-arts has risen by 20%.”

Mastering the seventh stance, ‘Cosmic Heart’, merely represented gaining a basic grasp of the [Heartsword]; it was of negligible benefit to him. The eighth stance, ‘Ineffable’, already allowed him to increase the power of his sword-arts by 20%! It must be remembered that Ning trained in the Omega Sword Dao; improving upon the power of his sword-arts was extremely difficult.

“Darknorth, you found a way to enhance the strength of your swords?” Ninedust had been working alongside Ning, and he immediately sensed Ning’s transformation.

“Haha, you’ve found ways to improve yourself. Why can’t I?” Ning was in a delightful mood. After just five years of researching the [Heartsword] art, he had become proficient in the eighth stance. This was actually much faster than he had predicted. According to the records he had reviewed, the [Heartsword] was supposed to be extremely difficult to train in.

Ning had forgotten, however, that his sword-arts were derived from the third-stage Omega Sword Dao, while his heartforce made him the strongest Heartforce Cultivator in all the Endless Territories.

“After entering Crimsonwave Temple, I’ve developed two consummate techniques,” Ninedust said smugly. “I’ve grown much more than you have.”

“You won’t be smug for much longer.” Ning began to work on the ninth stance, the ‘Blissheart’ stance.

“This feeling truly is absolutely marvelous.” Ning actually closed his eyes as he continued to execute his sword-arts, but he maintained in complete control of himself and his surroundings. “I understand. This sword-art really can throw the wielder into a state of utter contentment and bliss.”

He immersed himself in this feeling. Just six short months later...

“Blissheart.” Ning’s sword-light transformed once more. In the past, every strike had been covered with a mist-like layer of heartforce. Now, the mist was clearly much denser than before, and with each strike it was like a fog drifted in alongside it.

Whooooosh. No sword-shadows could be seen around Ning; the only thing visible was a series of mist-streaks.

Boom! Boom! Boom! Ning’s power increased dramatically, allowing him to blow through the warriors like rotted wood. The warriors, however, gathered themselves and continued their furious attacks.

“Darknorth, y-you... you grew stronger yet again?” Ninedust was flabbergasted.

“Haha...” Ning laughed loudly. “I told you a while ago that you won’t be smug for much longer. Now do you know how badass I am?” He had mastered the ‘Blissheart’ stance, and his sword-arts increased 50% in power!



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“What’s going on?”

“Impossible.”

“How can they be advancing this quickly?”

Daolord Tigrone, Daolord Dreamlore, and Daolord Skyshatter were in the same dimensional walkway, and they were also fighting the endless hordes of warriors. They were stunned by what they saw. Given that the three of them were working together, they technically should’ve held the upper hand over Ning and Ninedust! A while ago, they had been slowly but steadily narrowing the gap between them and Ning’s team. Their initial calculations had indicated that they would be able to catch up in five or six years.

Ning’s mastery of the ‘Ineffable’ stance didn’t have too much of an impact on their calculations... but now that Ning had mastered the ninth stance, ‘Blissheart’, the difference was apparent!

“Daolord Darknorth is already incredibly strong. How could he have grown even stronger?” Daolord Skyshatter frowned.

“Daolord Darknorth has been training for less than a full chaos cycle, but he’s already become a supreme Daolord.” Daolord Dreamlore said coldly, “He naturally has plenty of room to improve. I imagine he’s come up with a new supreme technique for himself.”

The Radiant King, Palace Lord Dawnstar, and the others had all slowly developed their supreme techniques after becoming Daolords of the Fourth Step. The same was currently true of Ninedust as well. As Dreamlore saw it, Ning was most likely searching for the ultimate attack which would fit himself the most.

“Daolord Darknorth truly is difficult to deal with,” Daolord Tigrone growled. “To beat the two of them and seize the Voidsea Jadeseal won’t be easy.”

“There’s only two of them but three of us,” Daolord Dreamlore said coldly. “We aren’t idiots like Kingfreak and Timedream.”

“Right. When we work together, only Winesage is a threat to us.” Daolord Skyshatter felt quite confident as well.

Tigrone felt certain he possessed the strongest defensive abilities of all the supreme Daolords.

Dreamlore felt certain he possessed the strongest attacks of all the supreme Daolords; he had actually beaten the Radiant King in a head-on fight!

Daolord Skyshatter was equal to the other two in might.

The deceased Timedream and Kingfreak were ranked well below the top ten in close combat power, while Timedream’s heartforce techniques were useless against Ning. The Tigrone-Skyshatter-Dreamlore alliance was completely different! The only one they worried about was Winesage; they didn’t care about any other Daolords at all!

“Winesage has a Universe treasure, but I have to admit that Darknorth is a truly dazzling figure,” Daolord Dreamlore said coldly. “We have to fight with all our power. Otherwise, we’ll probably be defeated by the two of them.”

“Right.” Tigrone and Skyshatter both nodded. Upon seeing how quickly Ning’s team was advancing, not even Dreamlore dared to underestimate them.

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The dimensional walkway of the first world. Ning’s group was currently battling against a final group of warriors. This time, there were thirty-nine warriors surrounding and attacking them. This meant they had to deal with thirty-nine second-tier Daolords at the same time!

If Ning was fighting by himself, he would’ve been beaten long ago.

Rumble... Ninedust transformed into a vast wave that swept across all thirty-nine warriors, his upper body still visible and wielding that longstaff as he furiously assaulted those around him. The warriors, however, were assembled into a war-formation and were valiantly charging towards the two.

“Break!” Ning was fighting the armored warriors head-on. Streaks of mist flew out with his swords, and the warriors were knocked aside each time the mist connected with them. Even the slightest scrape would cause them to be sent flying backwards. Unfortunately, there were still thirty-nine of them; when some were pushed back, others would immediately charge forwards and take up their positions, allowing the ones who had been pushed back to regroup and then charge as well.

They had to find a chance to create an opening!

Ning and Ninedust had to battle furiously for more than a month before they were finally able to knock the thirty-nine warriors out of the dimensional walkway.

“Aaaaaaaah.” Ninedust stared at the black throne, then lifted his head up and let loose a loud howl. “We finally beat’ m!”

“Whew.” Ning smiled as well, but he felt a bit of regret in his heart. He had spent neary ten years battling within the first world, but he still had yet to master the tenth stance of the [Heartsword], the ‘Killheart’ stance.

“Keep having fun back there, the three of you.” Ninedust turned back to glance at Daolord Skyshatter, Daolord Dreamlore, and Daolord Tigrone. The three of them were surrounded by thirty-six armored warriors.

“Damn.”

“They’ve made it to the second world.”

“These warriors are too tough to deal with, and any Dao-seals we use are actually cancelled out.” Daolord Skyshatter and the other two were starting to grow anxious. They went so far as to use Dao-seals, but the dazzling golden light radiated by the golden globe above them quickly suppressed and wiped out all the effects of the Dao-seals they used. The Sithe used this place to temper their Daolords; no cheating would be permitted here.

Ning gave the three a long, final glance. If he hadn't been able to master the ninth stance, 'Blissheart', it probably would've taken him another ten years to traverse the dimensional walkway. The three probably would've caught up to him.

"Those three cannot be underestimated," Ning mused.

"Let's go, Darknorth," Ninedust said.

"Let's go." Ning nodded.

Ning and Ninedust both walked straight towards the black throne. Instantly, the golden globe above them shot down a streak of dense light which covered the black throne and an area of thirty meters around it. Boom! Both the sword-wielding, white-robed Ning and the staff-wielding, silver-robed Ninedust disappeared without a trace.

"Faster, faster, faster! Fight harder! We need to make it to the second world as soon as we can!" Daolord Skyshatter and the other two were going crazy.

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The world twisted and changed around them before reality reset itself around Ning and Ninedust.

"Eh?" Ning glanced at what was up ahead. In front of them was an enormous palace that was held up by a series of black pillars. The pillars were covered by many carvings and diagrams, including sword-arts diagrams, saber-arts diagrams, flame diagrams, wave diagrams, golden light diagrams, flaming chariot diagrams, animal diagrams... all sorts of diagrams were here, and they all emanated auras of mystery and power.

"Hmph." Six golden-armored warriors were standing in front of them, with three more crimson-armored warriors standing shoulder-to-shoulder off in the distance. Very far away, a black-armored general was seated on a distant throne. The general was playing around with a palm-sized chunk of jade.

"The Voidsea Jadeseal." Ning and Ninedust both stared at the palm-sized chunk of jade in the hands of the black-armored general who was seated on the distant throne. They had both seen a Voidsea Jadeseal before and thus recognized it right away.

"Daolord Darknorth. Daolord Ninedust." Rainbow light gathered next to them, coalescing into a white-robed figure. It was Realmsoul Polo. The realmsoul smiled and said, "Congratulations on making it to the second world... but you two need to hurry it up. Winesage was able to make it to the second world after just a single year in the first world."

## [The Desolate Era](#)

### **Book 33: Crimsonwave Temple Chapter 9: The Second World**

"Just one year?" Ji Ning's heart sank. After he had mastered the ninth 'Blissheart' stance, he and Ninedust had taken nearly ten additional years.

"Thus, your opponents shall not merely consist of Daolords behind you like Dreamlore. Winesage shall be your opponent as well. Once he acquires the first Voidsea Jadeseal, he'll definitely come for yours."

Realmsoul Polo pointed in front of them. "This palace holds a total of 134 pillars, with each pillar containing multiple formations left behind by the Sithe race. If you have enough time, you can go study them."

Ning and Ninedust glanced sideways at the realmsoul. Study? They were fighting for every scrap of time. Who had the time to waste on studying? In addition, the majority of supreme Daolords merely dabbled in non-core techniques.

"In this palace, you'll need to defeat the six golden-armored warriors, the three crimson-armored warriors, and then finally defeat the black-armored general. Only then shall you be able to seize the Voidsea Jadeseal." The realmsoul smiled. "Oh, right. The runic cores at the center of their chests are their weak spots. If you can stab it, they'll admit defeat."

"Move as fast as you can. If you move fast enough, you might even be able to seize the other Voidsea Jadeseals... and if you are too slow, you'll lose even yours." The realmsoul grinned, then vanished.

"Let's go." Ning and Ninedust transformed into two streaks of light that charged straight forwards.

"Just two Daolords? And you dare attack?" The six golden-armored warriors standing next to each other shared a smile, then began to move in unison. Whoosh! Each of them brandished a long golden halberd as they strode forwards.

Ninedust wielded his longstaff and charged straight towards them. As he reached them, he instantly transformed into an enormous flood of water.

Ning transformed into his three-headed, six-armed form as he shot forward with all six Northbow swords, then suddenly vanished.

Whoosh! The halberds in the hands of the six golden-armored warriors struck out simultaneously. Smash! Smash! Smash! The waters in front of them exploded as an invisible burst of power spread out in every direction, causing Ning to reveal himself after having used his 'Shadowless' evasion art.

"Fuck off!" Ning flew forwards with incomparable valor, immediately using his Omega Sword Dao – Heavenbreaker and sending six massive fog banks crashing down. Boom! Boom! Boom! The strikes landed on the halberds of the six golden-armored warriors, causing all of them to stagger backwards from the strikes.

"He's very strong."

"He's able to suppress us by himself?" The six golden-armored warriors shared a glance.

"Careful," Ning sent mentally to the Ninedust Sectlord. "All six of them are at the supreme Daolord level of power."

"Six supreme Daolords. Interesting." The Ninedust Sectlord charged once more, carrying the vast ocean with him. As for Ning, his actions were even more dominating; his sword-light transformed into streaks of dense fog and lashed out at his foes. It must be remembered that the Northbow swords enhanced all of Ning's sword-arts. Now that he also had the [Heartsword] sutra enhancing them, his combat power was truly astonishing.

Ninedust was able to tie down two of the golden-armored warriors, while Ning battled the other four by himself.

Swish! Every so often he would suddenly disappear, followed by that strange, fog-like sword-light emerging out of nowhere. This was the Omega Sword Dao – Shadowless. A sword stabbed straight into the dazzling runic core located over the golden-armored warrior's chest!

"Eh?" The golden-armored warrior's face tightened. He lowered his head to take a look, then let out a snort. "Nice sword-arts." He immediately stepped back.

When the six of them worked together, they complimented each other very well and made for a formidable team. Ning's sword-arts, however, moved more than a hundred times the speed of light and was unfathomably unpredictable, making it difficult for even their tough defenses to withstand it.

"Hahaha..." Ninedust laughed loudly. "Darknorth, let's move fast. We need to get that first Voidsea Jadeseal quickly, so that we can go for a second one."

Ning smiled as well. Now that one warrior was down, beating the others would be much easier. They quickly defeated the other five in succession. All six of the warriors retreated, moving to one side.

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There were six golden-armored warriors, three crimson-armored warriors, and one black-armored general. With the golden-armored warriors defeated, it was the three crimson-armored warriors who now stood in Ning and Ninedust's path.

"You two are pretty strong. You were able to beat those six idiots fairly easily," one of the tall, crimson-armored warriors snickered.

"You are the idiot!"

"If you try to fight us six-on one, we'd beat you until you went crying to your mother." The six distant golden-armored warriors immediately began to unleash a torrent of curses, while the three crimson-armored warriors just smirked at them.

"You've already been beaten. Stop bragging."

"Looks like it'll be up to us brothers. Hah!" The three crimson-armored warriors seemed quite smug as they looked at Ning and Ninedust. "Let me tell you a little story. In the other area, that 'Daolord Winesage' was able to beat the six golden-armored warriors in one strike, but he was stymied by the three crimson-armored warriors for six full years. Right now, he's still trying to figure out how to deal with the black-armored general."

"Oh?" Ning and Ninedust traded a glance. They knew just how strong Winesage was. Given his Universe treasure, there was no question that he could crush the six golden-armored warriors effortlessly. Despite that, the three crimson-armored warriors had held him back for six years?

"Let's go," Ning ordered. Whoosh! Whoosh! Both he and Ninedust charged forwards.

Boom! With the very first strike, a crimson-armored warrior landed a cleaving blow with his warblade, causing Ninedust's body to crumble apart into a wave of water. "Darknorth, I can't block these hits. They are too strong."

Bang! Ning started fighting against a crimson-armored warrior as well. That particular warrior wielded a war club, and he delivered a furious blow downwards at Ning, almost as though he was crashing down from a mountain. The two collided head-on, and an incredibly dense wave of energy smashed into Ning, causing him to stumble three steps back. As for the crimson-armored warrior, he took a single step back.

"Eh?" Ning's face tightened. "He's just as strong as me?" He had grown significantly more powerful, but even now he was merely on par with the crimson-armored warrior. If the three joined forces... no wonder Winesage had been stymied for six full years!

"Daolord Darknorth has a few tricks up his sleeve. Big brother, third brother, let's fight together!" the crimson-armored warrior shouted, and the other two immediately charged towards him.

Rumble... all three of the three crimson-armored warriors were Ning's equal in might, and they were extremely skilled in working together. Ning was being completely suppressed in this battle. Although Ninedust was able to occasionally cause some trouble and disrupt the enemy formation, he wasn't able to have a material impact on the fight.

"Darknorth, their teamwork is flawless. There's no way for us to stab the runic cores on their chests," Ninedust said anxiously.

"They are too strong. When the three of them work together, there's nothing I can do to them." Ning frowned. "The only way we can win is through greater numbers. If more Daolords come and work with us, we might be able to find a chance to strike the runic cores."

They needed either superior numbers or overwhelming power a la Winesage.

"Perhaps I'll have a chance to master the tenth stance, the 'Killheart' stance." Ning was surrounded and attacked by all three of the three crimson-armored warriors, but his defensive sword-arts were very strong and thus he was still able to hold on. He began to take advantage of this enormous pressure to think on the tenth stance of the [Heartsword], the 'Killheart' stance.

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Time continued to flow on, with a half-year passing by in the blink of an eye. Ning and Ninedust remained locked in combat against the three crimson-armored warriors, but of course they continued to be at a disadvantage in the fight. In short, they were being completely dominated.

Boom!

Suddenly, a thunderous explosion caused the entire Crimsonwave Temple to shake. Everyone in the temple heard and felt it, be it the Daolords battling in the second world such as Ning, Ninedust, Dawnstar, Cloudwalker, Ninestone, Shaka, and Snowjoy, or the Daolords still stuck in the first world such as Daolords Dreamlore, Tigrone, the Starking, the Radiant King, Skyaxe, Dustrain.

“Daolords.” Realmsoul Polo’s voice boomed out, filling every inch of the Crimsonwave Temple.  
“Winesage has already acquired one of the three remaining Voidsea Jadeseals. Be careful – he’ll be coming for yours next!”

“What?”

“Shit!”

The faces of Dawnstar, Cloudwalker, Ninestone, Shaka, and Snowjoy all turned pale. The path Cloudwalker’s team had chosen was the path which Dawnstar had originally taken! The four of them joined forces upon entering the first world and thus moved even faster than Ning’s group had. This was the advantage of raw numbers! The fact that Ninestone and Snowjoy were exceedingly strong defensive specialists made them very well-suited for dealing with the first world.

“We need to move faster.”

“Not good.”

“We need to speed it up.”

“Everyone, let’s work together.” The supreme Daolords who were still within the three dimensional walkways of the first world were beginning to grow anxious. They were still in the first world while Winesage had already acquired a Voidsea Jadeseal!

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Ning and Ninedust felt their hearts turn cold as well. They hadn’t even beaten the three crimson-armored guards, while Winesage had already acquired a seal?

“He might be headed straight here for yours,” the three crimson-armored guards teased in amusement.

“Don’t be worried though. If Winesage comes we’ll attack him as well, and the two of you can focus your attacks against him. The two of you plus the three of us... that should shut him down, right?” the three crimson-armored guards suggested. They had spent unfathomable lengths of time being bored and lonely here in Crimsonwave Temple. The happiest days of their lives were when supreme Daolords came to visit.

### [The Desolate Era](#)

#### **Book 33: Crimsonwave Temple Chapter 10: Killsword**

“Darknorth, what should we do?” Ninedust was anxious as well.

“Seize every moment and try to beat these three crimson-armored warriors as soon as we can,” Ji Ning said immediately. “Winesage’s actions have probably driven all of the supreme Daolords into a panic. Seven, eight, or even more of them might well work together to blow through the first world as soon as possible. Once they reach the second world, we probably won’t be able to deal with these three in peace.”

“Alright.” Ninedust agreed with this assessment.

In the Endless Territories' rankings of Daolords, there were over twenty publicly acclaimed 'supreme' first-tier Daolords! If you factored in the low-key ones that very few had heard of, there had to be at least thirty or more.

Although the warriors in the dimensional walkway of the first world were tough to deal with, they were still just equivalent to second-tier Daolords. If seven or eight supreme Daolords joined forces against them, they'd be able to burst past with ease.

"We don't have much time left," Ning said anxiously.

"Kill!" Both Ning and Ninedust fought even more frantically.

"Haha, the two of you aren't bad, but you aren't strong enough to beat us."

"It is useless! You should wait for the other Daolords to arrive, then join up with them." The three crimson-armored warriors continued to crush the Ning-Ninedust combination.

"Kill! Kill! Kill!" Ning only grew more and more frantic. He knew that they were running out of time; his only chance lay in mastering the tenth stance of the [Heartsword], the 'Killsword' stance. He had already spent many years studying it again and again, but hadn't been able to master it thus far.

"Haha... Winesage has gone to Palace Lord Dawnstar's dimensional walkway. However, five supreme Daolords including Dawnstar have joined forces against him. My guess is that Winesage is going to give up. He'll be coming straight for your walkway instead," the three crimson-armored warriors said.

"Palace Lord Dawnstar's tunnel has five supreme Daolords in it, but the two of you are by yourselves. It'll be quite tough for you to deal with Winesage. He might actually take the Voidsea Jadeseal away from you."

The crimson-armored warriors clearly knew exactly what was going on elsewhere as well.

"Are we out of time?" Ninedust grew increasingly anxious.

"Break!" Ning's streaks of foggy sword-light suddenly transformed. The foggy mist suddenly condensed and solidified into clear streaks of sword-light, and the power of Ning's sword-arts once more skyrocketed! They became even faster and were filled with even greater power!

"So this is the 'Killsword' stance?" Ning finally understood the essence of the tenth stance of the [Heartsword] – the Killsword stance.

It required one to not only feel intoxicated and blissful, but to also feel a sense of incomparable resolve and determination! Only when this determination and resolve reached a certain level of strength could heartforce be woven more perfectly into one's sword-arts. One's heartforce would move in a more natural way and achieve a greater level of harmony, allowing the power of one's sword-arts to increase. This was reflected in the real world by the dense fog solidifying into the shape of a sword!

Slash! Slash! Ning executed the Blood Drop stance. The Omega Sword Dao – Blood Drop! This was Ning's most powerful attack, as the Northbow swords increased its power fivefold! Now that even more heartforce was infused into it via the 'Killsword' stance, its power doubled yet again!

The ninth stance, 'Blissheart', increased his power by 50%.



The tenth stance, 'Killheart', increased his power by 100%!

Thanks to his [Heartsword] and the Northbow swords, Ning's Omega Sword Dao – Blood Drop was now ten times more powerful than it had any right to be! It was a technique that focused on obliterating everything in its path with unstoppable speed, and now it had sped up even more and reached an incomprehensible level of might.

Clang!

Slash!

The crimson-armored warrior used his warblade to execute the same stance as he had in the past to block Ning's sword-arts, but his face suddenly turned pale. He was able to just barely block two strikes from Ning, but he wasn't able to withstand the third strike. Slash! The tip of the sword stabbed straight into the runic core at the center of his chest.

"I lost?!" The crimson-armored warrior was stunned.

"Big brother!" The other two crimson-armored warriors were stunned as well. Even when the three of them were fighting together, their big brother had been stabbed in his runic core? How were the two of them supposed to hang on?

"How could this have happened?"

"Impossible."

The two remaining crimson-armored warriors continued to struggle, unwilling to give up.

"Excellent!" The Ninedust Sectlord was delighted and surprised by this. Moments ago, he had been at the brink of despair. Now, he felt as though he had been given a new lease on life. A short while later, the runic core on the chest of a second crimson-armored warrior was pierced through. A heartbeat later, the final crimson-armored warrior was defeated as well.

"Too fast. His sword is too fast!"

"Winesage is overwhelmingly strong, but at least we could take his attacks head-on. Darknorth's sword is simply too fast, so fast that we can't even defend against it." The three crimson-armored warriors were thoroughly convinced by their defeat.

Overwhelming strength or overwhelming speed... which was better?

These represented two extremes. If your power reached certain heights, you could brute-force through anything you wished and nothing could stop you. However, if your speed reached certain heights, your enemy wouldn't even be able to touch you while you would be able to launch attacks with ease.

Winesage relied on his Universe treasure to reach incredible heights of power, allowing him to actually send the crimson-armored warriors flying with each blow. However, their defensive teamwork was so tight and perfect that even when sent flying they could avoid giving Winesage the chance to stab their runic cores. This was why Winesage had been stymied for six full years by the three crimson-armored warriors.

As for Ning? When he had battled against Daolord Shaka, his attack speed had already surpassed Shaka's. Now that he had mastered the 'Killsword' stance, his speed once more broke through its previous bottleneck to reach a brand new level!

He was simply too fast, making defending against him an incredibly difficult task. As a result, the three crimson-armored warriors were all consecutively defeated in short order.

"You won." The three crimson-armored warriors all retreated.

"Impressive, Darknorth. Impressive! Your sword is simply too fast, far faster than Daolord Shaka's. My guess is that not even the Radiant King is necessarily a match for you in speed. Your attack speed might be the fastest amongst all Daolords," Ninedust said excitedly.

"To be faster than the Radiant King isn't all that impressive! Only when I'm faster than Daolord Dreamlore would I be the fastest of all Daolords," Ning said. Daolord Dreamlore's usage of the bloodblade had surpassed the Radiant King in attack speed, allowing him to gain victory.

"Let's hurry up and defeat the final black-armored general." Ning didn't have any time to waste, and he immediately charged towards the seated black-armored general.

"Right." Ninedust hefted his longstaff and charged towards the final challenge as well.

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Within another hall within the temple.

Palace Lord Dawnstar, Palace Lord Cloudwalker, Ninestone, Snowjoy, and Shaka were here. They had joined forces and had already fought their way to the black-armored general, but the general was simply too fearsome.

"Haha, this black-armored general is roughly on par with the eight lords of the Sacred Cities. Even if the five of you work together, it'll be virtually impossible for you to stab his runic core," Winesage said with a laugh.

"Winesage, one Voidsea Jadeseal is enough; don't get too greedy!" Dawnstar and the others were working together, assisting the three crimson-armored warriors and preventing Winesage from advancing. All newcomers would be assaulted by all of the warriors upon reaching the second world.

"Winesage, you have no chance at all." The combined forces of Dawnstar, Ninestone, Shaka, Cloudwalker, and Snowjoy brought Winesage a tremendous amount of pressure. Given the situation, there was no way he could defeat the three crimson-armored warriors at all.

"Hmph." After battling for a short while, Winesage realized that he really had no chance at all. He let out a calm laugh and said, "The black-armored general is far too strong. You'll need to find more helpers to work with you. As a group, you have to exceed the level of the eight lords of the Sacred Cities in at least one area, be it speed or power or something else, if you wish to have a chance at succeeding."

In raw power, Winesage was still somewhat weaker than the eight lords of the Sacred Cities, but the Universe treasure brought him up to par. As a result, he was able to battle the black-armored general for a long period of time while seeking out a mistake or error. All he had to do was touch the runic core across the black-armored general's chest and he was able to claim victory.

There was a big difference between just touching the chest and actually winning, after all!

For example, Ning and Ninedust stood no chance of truly defeating those three crimson-armored warriors. But merely touching the runic cores? Ning, via the speed of his Blood Drop stance, was able to succeed in this mission.

“Haha. I won’t play around with you any longer. I’m going to go see how Darknorth is doing.” Winesage let out a laugh, then gracefully retreated and moved towards the other region at high speed.

In the second world, the three major regions were all interlinked.

“Whew!” Dawnstar, Cloudwalker, and the others all let out sighs of relief.

“Winesage is heading towards Darknorth,” Ninestone said.

“Darknorth’s going to be in trouble, but we don’t have any time to spare with helping him,” Dawnstar said. “We need to try to seize every moment and try to find a chance to strike the black-armored general on the chest. As long as we can touch that runic core, we’ll have won.”

“Agreed.” They all understood that more and more supreme Daolords would begin to arrive, which meant that their chances would grow increasingly slim.

## [The Desolate Era](#)

### **Book 33: Crimsonwave Temple Chapter 11: Winesage Arrives**

Ji Ning and Ninedust jointly charged towards the black-armored general.

The black-armored general seated on the throne was toying with the Voidsea Jadeseal with one hand, seeming quite relaxed. He put the seal down next to him on the throne, then rose to his feet.

“Aside from Dao-seals and similar treasures, you are permitted to use any secret arts or domain-type effects,” the black-armored warrior said calmly.

“Oh?” Ning and Ninedust were both stunned. Secret arts and heartworld projections were both permissible? In their previous battles, all such techniques had been suppressed! Ning had actually tried to use his heartworld projection and secret arts against the golden-armored warriors and the crimson-armored warriors, but alas the effects had been neutralized.

As for Dao-seals, of course those would always be forbidden. This place was created by the Sithe to train and temper their Daolords; using Dao-seals would completely and truly make the entire exercise pointless.

“Nine novessence arts and heartworld projection, descend!” Ning didn’t hesitate at all in executing these two techniques, causing an awe-inspiring Yin-Yang Sword Domain to descend along with the manifestation of his heartworld projection. Both came crashing straight down against the black-armored general.

The black-armored general gripped the warblade by his side. “Your heartworld projection and your secret arts aren’t bad.” The black-armored general suddenly manifested a total of three layers of black

light over his body. The black light completely covered and protected him from the might of the nine novessence arts and the heartworld projection. "Unfortunately, they aren't quite enough to do anything to me." He instantly drew his warblade.

Whoosh! A streak of dazzling black saber-light instantly sliced across the skies and chopped towards Ning. It was simply too fast; as soon as the saber was drawn, the saber-light had reached Ning! When Ning saw that terrifying saber-light appear before him, he felt his heart tremble.

"He's at the level of the eight lords of the Sacred Cities." When Ning saw the saber-light, he instantly understood how strong the black-armored general was. The streak of saber-light vastly surpassed a hundred times the speed of light, and in power it was just as strong as a strike from Winesage. It completely surpassed the level which supreme Daolords were capable of reaching.

Swish! Ning suddenly vanished without a trace. Slash! The saber-light sliced through the position Ning had previously been in, carving a deep gouge within the field of sword-intent generated by the Yin-Yang Sword domain. Moments later, the gouge quickly disappeared but Ning was nowhere to be found.

Of Ning's five Omega Sword Dao stances, two were defensive while the other three (Heavenbreaker, Shadowless, Blood Drop) had various special effects.

The Shadowless stance allowed him to turn completely invisible and evade even godsense.

The Blood Drop stance, when used with the Northbow swords, was Ning's most powerful attack.

Although his heartworld projection and the nine novessence arts were unable to harm his opponent, they at least rendered him unable to defeat Ning's Shadowless stance.

"Eh? Where's he hiding?" The black-armored general frowned as he immediately swept out with his warblade, launching an omnidirectional attack.

"Hahaha! You won't be able to find him." Ninedust laughed loudly as he transformed into an awesome wave that furiously surged out towards the black-armored general and coiled around him.

The black-armored general's saber-light was impeded by Ninedust's waves and also slowed down by Ning's heartworld and the nine novessence arts. With Ning already knowing where the saber-light would land, he was naturally able to avoid it with ease.

Slash! A mist-formed sword suddenly struck out from nowhere and stabbed against the outermost layer of black light covering the black-armored general. Slash! All three layers were pierced through, but the speed of the sword was lessened as well.

When Ning struck, his strike would appear in front of you instantaneously!

"Eh?" The black-armored general's face tightened as he immediately struck out with his own warblade to block Ning's strike. His defensive saber-arts were quite flawless, allowing him to block Ning's strike almost instantly.

Slash! Slash! Slash! Slash! Slash!

As the black-armored general's warblade clashed against Ning's Northbow sword, the other five Northbow swords suddenly appeared as well, having transformed into five streaks of sword-shaped fog that stabbed straight through the three layers of black light.

"What?!" Because his warblade had just clashed against Ning's first Northbow sword, the black-armored general's reaction speed was just a little too slow... and Ning's other five Northbow swords were just too fast.

Whoosh! The black-armored general's warblade sliced out a beautiful arc in the air. As the defender he always held a certain advantage, because he only had to defend a fairly small area, allowing him to deflect many attacks from the enemy with ease. However... his warblade had been weakened and slowed down by its impact against Ning's Northbow sword! This had an impact on his defensive stance.

Slash! One of the streaks of sword-shaped fog stabbed straight into the black-armored general's runic core.

"What?" The black-armored general was stunned. He just stood there blankly. "I lost? I lost that fast?" He had lost so quickly that he couldn't even believe it.

"B-but..." The six golden-armored warriors and the three crimson-armored warriors who had retreated early on all stared dumbly. The black-armored general was on par with the eight lords of the Sacred Cities! But of course, he had certain flaws compared to the actual lords... with the main flaw being that he only had a single weapon! Most true Emperors would manifest at least six arms to fight against foes, whereas the black-armored general would only use a single warblade against his foes as this was what had been designated by the Sithe.

The difference in power was too great, after all. Generally speaking, supreme Daolords would be crushed by the black-armored general. Many 'ordinary' supreme Daolords found it impossible to even penetrate the three layers of black light!

The Shadowless stance made it impossible to predict where the attack would come from. As soon as Ning attacked, his swords would have already gone through the three layers of black light, making it difficult for the general to defend.

The worst part was, Ning's sword was incredibly fast. All six of them were incredibly fast, and they were also extremely unpredictable! Given that the black-armored general only had a single warblade to deal with the six Northbow swords, and given that the Shadowless stance allowed Ning to close in on him unhindered... alas, he was defeated at the first go.

"I can send you flying with a single blow from my saber." The black-armored general shook his head in disbelief.

"But your saber-light wasn't able to touch me, not even once." Ning shook his head as well. In the end, the black-armored general wasn't a true Eternal Emperor; he didn't even have domain-type secret arts. Winedust, for example, was able to use both a heartworld projection and secret arts to prevent Ning from moving too close to him via the Shadowless stance; if Ning attempted to do so, he would be exposed by the domain.

“I’m able to silently approach you without giving you any hint as to where I am! Given how fast my six Northbow swords are... if I’m still unable to touch your runic core despite all these advantages then that would mean I’m ridiculously weaker than the eight lords of the Sacred Cities.” Ning was in quite a good mood, both at how strong he had become as well as at his final success.

“The Voidsea Jadeseal...” Ninedust stared at the jade seal atop the throne, his eyes gleaming with excitement. This was a legendary treasure, the most powerful Daomerge treasure available. It had drawn the attention of virtually all of the supreme Daolords of the Endless Territories. Today, it would become his?

“What are you looking at? Go take it!” Ning barked.

“T-then I’ll really go grab it...?” Ninedust felt rather embarrassed, as Ning was primarily responsible for their success. But in truth, he had played a major role as well. His invulnerable aquaform was very tough for foes to deal with, and the way in which he had transformed into waves that hindered their foes made things much easier for Ning. Otherwise, Ning by himself would’ve taken forever to overcome even the first world.

“We agreed early on that it’d be yours. Stop wasting time! If you delay any longer, I’m gonna fight you for it,” Ning said.

Swoosh! Seemingly panicked, Ninedust reached out with his right hand, moving lightning-fast as he grabbed the jade seal atop the throne.

“Ninedust, you...” Ning stared at him. “Was it really necessary to grab it that fast? You moved more than a hundred times the speed of light!”

“Yeah, just keep laughing. I really don’t care right now. Ahaha!” Ninedust was in quite a good mood. Even if Ning was to stab him with a hundred knives, he’d still continue to chortle.

Ning smiled as well. He had felt quite guilty towards Ninedust this entire time, but now he felt much better.

Whoosh. A streak of light appeared off in the distance, then flew straight towards them. It was Winesage.

“Fellow Daoists.” A sonorous voice boomed out, echoing throughout every inch of the Crimsonwave Temple. “The second of the three final Voidsea Jadeseals has been acquired by Daolord Ninedust!”

Winesage trembled slightly, looking almost like a bloodlusted mortal who suddenly had a bucket of icewater poured over him. He landed on the ground, staring dazedly at Ning and Ninedust and the throne next to them.

“You...” Winesage couldn’t believe it. This was simply too fast! He had just acquired his a short while. Somehow, Ning and Ninedust had successfully acquired one as well?

“Haha, it’s on me. Come and take it, if you can.” Ninedust was quite smug. Given his invulnerable aquaform, he really didn’t fear any Daolords at all.

Ning stood by Ninedust’s side, a smile on his face as he looked at Winesage. “Winesage. You arrived too late.”

## The Desolate Era

### **Book 33: Crimsonwave Temple Chapter 12: The Third World**

Winesage narrowed his eyes, then let out a smile. "Darknorth, I truly admire you. Without a Universe treasure and with just brother Ninedust assisting you, you were able to defeat all of these warriors... and then you gave the Voidsea Jadeseal to Ninedust!"

The way in which Winesage viewed Ning had changed. During the last competition, the jade seal had ended up in Daolord Solesky's hands. This time, Ning had been the main contributory to their victory against the black-armored general, but he had ended up giving the Voidsea Jadeseal to Ninedust! Winesage knew that if Darknorth was able to act in such a way despite the allure of the Voidsea Jadeseal, he would definitely be a friend worth making.

"You were literally just a few seconds too late. Otherwise, Ninedust and I would've been in serious trouble," Ning said.

"Palace Lord Dawnstar and the others haven't taken away their Voidsea Jadeseal yet. Why don't we join forces to take it from them? Neither of us have any chance if we go by ourselves, but our chances are significant if we join forces. The fastest one shall be the one to win the Voidsea Jadeseal," Winesage said.

Dawnstar and the other four alone were enough to tie down Winesage! Once you added the three crimson-armored warriors and the black-armored general into the mix, it would be no easy feat at all. Even if he and Ning joined forces, they only stood a chance and were not assured of victory. The main reason why Winesage wanted to try working together with Ning was because he had decided that Ning was a friend worth making.

"No need." Ning shook his head.

"You aren't going to take part?" Winesage was surprised.

"Not taking part," Ning said.

"Once someone ends up with the Voidsea Jadeseal, it'll be a hundred times more difficult to pry it out of their hands," Winesage said. Of all the Daolords present, the only one he cared about was Ji Ning.

"No need to try and persuade me. I've already made up my mind," Ning said.

"Then I won't force things." Winesage transformed into a streak of light and flew towards Dawnstar's direction at high speed. He was a supreme Daolord; a single Voidsea Jadeseal would only allow him to partially simulate the Daomerge. He naturally felt that the more seals he had, the better!

In the eyes of Daolords, although the local fruit was valuable it was of no use to the Daomerge. None of those things truly mattered. The Daomerge was what supreme Daolords like Winesage cared about the most, and so they paid much less attention to the third world.

"Let's go." Ning looked at Ninedust.

"Are we really not going to take part? Darknorth, if we go we'll at least have a chance," Ninedust said. Now that he had acquired a Voidsea Jadeseal for himself, he naturally wanted to help Ning fight for one as well.

“More and more supreme Daolords are arriving. What they can’t have, they won’t let others have either,” Ning said. “The fight over the last Voidsea Jadeseal will be a furious one; our chances are less than one in ten.”

Ninedust argued, “But even if our chances are slim, we should still give it a shot.”

“We can do that later. Push comes to shove, we can take it from the person who wins it.” Ning walked straight towards the throne. Ninedust nodded then followed him as well.

Boom! A surge of power spread out from the throne and encompassed both Ning and Ninedust. Swoosh! The two of them vanished without a trace.

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There were a number of reasons as to why Ning had opted not to take part.

First of all, there were simply too many supreme Daolords present. Even if they weren’t able to beat Ning, they’d be able to obstruct him.

Second, Ning belonged to the Brightshore Kingdom. Brightshore Kingdom members had all sworn oaths not to fight against other members of the kingdom! Ninestone, Palace Lord Cloudwalker, Palace Lord Dawnstar... Ning wasn’t even able to battle against them! In a wild group melee like this, it would be like him fighting with a handicap. This further lowered his chances of winning a Voidsea Jadeseal.

Third, the Voidsea Jadeseals were of very limited use to Ning. Once he became a Daolord of the Fourth Step, the power of his Omega Sword Dao would reach an incredibly terrifying level; most likely, the Voidsea Jadeseal would only be able to simulate a tiny, tiny portion of the Daomerge for his Omega Sword Dao. Other supreme Daolords would be able to simulate half of the Daomerge, which would be of invaluable assistance, but for Ning the benefit would be fairly minimal.

Fourth, Ning cared more about reviving his wife Yu Wei. If he could reunite his family again, he’d be satisfied with merely living 108,000 chaos cycles! The Daomerge wasn’t something others could help him with, but saving Yu Wei was. He needed to acquire enough treasure so that he could ask some truly mighty figures to assist him! Given that even the Hegemons and the Dao Alliance had gone crazy over the fruits of Crimsonwave Temple, he naturally had to harvest as much as he could.

Whoosh! Ning felt a cold breeze stir past him. He hurriedly inspected his surroundings.

He stood atop a cold, ancient-looking stone island, and in front of him was an unfathomably deep abyss. A long, icy set of seven-colored chains stretched off into the distance, where it connected to another distant and levitating stone island. That second stone island had a gold-black octahedral command talisman levitating above it, with some strange runes right above it. Ning immediately recognized the runes as symbolizing the word ‘three’.

Behind that stone island was yet another deep abyss. A tri-colored set of chains stretched out from the stone island and across the abyss to a sacrificial altar that had another command talisman at the bottom. This one had runes symbolizing the word ‘five’ hovering right above it. The altar had a series of steps leading up to it, and at the very top of the altar there lay a command talisman that had strange runes symbolizing the word ‘eight’ above it.



“Three, five, and eight?” Ning was intrigued.

“Darknorth, the Grovekeeper said that there are nine command talismans in total. The ninth one is the most valuable, with the second most valuable being the sixth, seventh, and eighth talismans. Next in value come the third, fourth, and fifth talismans, while the first and second ones are the least valuable,” Ninedust said. Ning nodded.

Whoosh! Rainbow light coalesced next to them, resolving into the form of a white-robed man. It was Realmsoul Polo, and he smiled at Ning and Ninedust. “The two of you moved quite quickly. You came straight to the third world! The battle in the second world is still proceeding quite fiercely; given your power, the two of you might stand a chance.”

“We’ve decided to try and acquire as much fruit as we can instead,” Ning said.

“Alright.” Realmsoul Polo explained, “The rules in the third world are a bit different. Each Daolord can only choose a single corridor to proceed through.” As he spoke, he waved his hand and caused the mist at the horizons to vanish, revealing two other places. Once again they saw floating islands, abysses, and altars.

“The third world has three passageways,” Realmsoul Polo said. “Once you enter one of the passageways, you cannot enter any of the other ones. This is a mechanism to prevent any single Daolord from acquiring too many of the command talismans.”

Ning and Ninedust nodded slightly.

“But can we take them from others by force?” Ning suddenly asked.

“Haha. If you are strong enough to seize command talismans from other Daolords, go for it. I won’t mind even if you manage to acquire all of them,” Realmsoul Polo said. “The command talismans for these three passageways are of varying values, but on the whole the difference between the three passageways isn’t that great. Go ahead and choose one of the passageways. Oh! As the first to reach the third world, I’ll give you one piece of advice; the ninth command talisman is extremely, extremely valuable.” After speaking, the realmsoul let out a chuckle and vanished.

“Darknorth?” Ninedust looked at Ning.

“Let’s go take a look at the other passageways to take a look,” Ning said.

“Let’s go.” Ninedust and Ning immediately transformed into streaks of light that flew towards one of the other passageways. Soon, they had passed through the other two regions and reached their destination.

Ning and Ninedust possessed astounding ocularity clarity and were thus able to see the three command seals within this passageway right away. They were the first, the fourth, and the ninth.

“The ninth talisman is here.” Ning said solemnly, “Then that means the final passageway holds the second, the sixth, and the seventh talismans.”

The three passageways were separated thusly:

The first passageway held the first, fourth, and ninth command talismans.

The second passageway held the second, sixth, and seventh command talismans.

The third passageway held the third, fifth, and eighth command talismans.

“The total value in each of three passageways is roughly the same, but since the fruits harvested by the ninth command talisman ripen once every 100,000 chaos cycles, they are more valuable than all other fruits. The rarer a fruit is, the more irreplaceable it is,” Ning said. “I choose this passageway. I have to get the ninth command talisman.”

After studying the [Seven Leafpill Chapters], Ning knew a great deal regarding the Dao of Alchemy. Some alchemical materials were interchangeable with others, with just the price being changed slightly. The rarer an item was, however, the more important it generally was as a principal ingredient.

The ninth command talisman allowed the harvesting of the only fruits which ripened every 100,000 chaos cycles. Most likely, it was of the most interest to Eternal Emperors! They might be able to pay several times more than the ‘market’ rate for it. Ning’s hopes of reviving Yu Wei rested on this fruit.

“Then I’ll choose the other tunnel, the one with the second, sixth, and seventh command talismans,” Ninedust said.

“If we move separately, then...” Ning was a bit hesitant.

“Don’t worry.” Ninedust smiled. “I have my invulnerable aquaform; no one can kill me! And every single Daolord can only choose a single passageway; if you choose this one, that means the two of us can at most acquire three of those talismans. If we move separately, we can perhaps acquire a total of six! Haha. So long as I acquire any of them, they’ll all belong to you, Darknorth! You helped me acquire the Voidsea Jadeseal; now, it is my time to help you acquire the command talismans. Although these things aren’t nearly as valuable as Voidsea Jadeseals to us Daolords, I really don’t have anything better to offer you. There’s no way I’m handing out the seal I acquired to anyone, you included.”

## [The Desolate Era](#)

### **Book 33: Crimsonwave Temple Chapter 13: Speechless**

“Haha, done.” Ji Ning understood what his friend was trying to do; Ninedust didn’t feel comfortable accepting the Voidsea Jadeseal without doing anything for Ning in return. At their level, Daolords were unwilling to do actions that went against their basic nature and caused them to feel guilty. They would strive to repay any favors that were owed.

But of course, there were some truly vile Daolords whose Dao-hearts were as vile as they were. Backstabbing, betrayal, robbery, deceit... they could do anything, because this was the nature of their Dao-heart! As a result, these evil Daolords generally had few to no truly good friends. Timedream was a good example; he had relied on applying heartforce techniques to the Kingfreak when the later was young and weak, slowly guiding the Kingfreak into being utterly devoted to him.

“We’ll probably spend quite a bit of time here in the third world,” Ning said. “You can spend a month using up the Voidsea Jadeseal first. That way, you can publicly swear a lifeblood oath that you’ve already used it and thus will no longer be pursued or attacked by the other Daolords.”

“Right.” Ninedust nodded. “Understood. I’ll be leaving now.” Whoosh. Ninedust flew towards a different passageway, with Ning watching as he left.

Ning then turned towards his own passageway. This was what mattered the most to him; he had to walk to the end of this passageway and acquire the ninth command talisman.

“That stone pillar...?” Ning stared at a rhomboid-shaped pillar at the edges of the abyss. The pillar was covered with many dense runes. These runes didn’t seem nearly as profound as the Dreamdust script, the azureflower runes, or the ‘Crimson Wave Temple’ runes, but they were still unlike any script that Ning had ever seen before. Despite that, Ning immediately understood what they meant.

“If I wish to pass through the first abyss, I must first learn the [Vitalis] technique...” Ning was dazed by what he read.

All living creatures had their own, distinct life auras. These auras came from the distinctive characteristics of their souls and truesouls. No type of divine ability or transformation could truly disguise this. The likes of the [Eight-Nine Arcane Art] and other similar techniques could mask or simulate certain aura ‘leaks’, but the intrinsic life aura itself could not be changed! The aura each soul and truesoul had was the best way of verifying or attesting to who a person was.

“B-b-b-but... this [Vitalis] technique can actually change a truesoul’s life aura?” Ning could hardly believe this. “If even a truesoul’s life aura can be changed... then they could use a casual disguise and I would be completely unable to recognize them!”

Terrifying, utterly terrifying. For example, if someone transformed into Patriarch Subhuti and appeared in front of Ning, if even the truesoul life aura was imitated then Ning would be tricked. If caught off-guard in such a manner, Ning could very well fall for a sneak attack!

“The Sithe were utterly terrifying. How could they have come up with a technique like this? I’ve never even heard of such techniques in the Endless Territories, but the Sithe put it within the third world. Clearly, many of their supreme Daolords must’ve known this technique.” Ning was secretly terrified. If even their Daolords were this terrifying, how deadly had their Eternal Emperors had been?

No wonder the Sithe had once sought to conquer and enslave all other cultivators. Apparently, even the Terror Starsea was nothing more than one of many battlefields where the Dawn War had occurred.

“Whew.” Ning quickly read and memorized the [Vitalis] technique. Only then did he let out a sigh of relief. The [Vitalis] technique wasn’t completely flawless; for example, close friends and loved ones could often tell what their counterparts were thinking from a single glance or gesture. If someone else had merely transformed and used the [Vitalis] technique, that person would be unable to duplicate that sort of tacit understanding. This was one of the most basic flaws.

However, if one wasn’t aware of the [Vitalis] technique and also sensed that the truesoul life aura was that of a loved one’s, one generally wouldn’t think too much of it even if their counterpart was acting rather oddly. They’d think that their counterpart was probably worried or frustrated about something and thus was acting rather differently. This wasn’t that big of a flaw.

The true, major flaw with the [Vitalis] technique was that of karma!

Karma was a system of cause and effect that linked all things! This was one of the highest level and yet most understated webs that tied and bound all individuals. There were some who were so skilled in karma that when they slew a foe, they would be able to use their karmic senses to trace down that enemy's Primaltwin and avatars and wipe them out as well!

Anyone you had befriended or even so much as spoken to would be connected to you by karma. Ning, for example, was very tightly bound to his friends and loved ones by karmic threads. He was even connected by karma to the Brightshore Hegemon and Emperor Goldisle of the Dao Alliance, as he had met and spoken with both separately.

If anyone dared to imitate Ning and appear before Hegemon Brightshore... given how strong Hegemon Brightshore was, he was probably able of karmic scrying! He would be able to instantly tell that there were no pre-existing karmic ties between him and the person in front of him and thus could be certain that it definitely was not Ji Ning.

"There are almost no Daolords capable of sensing and scrying karma." Ning shook his head. "Not even the majority of Eternal Emperors are capable of this. You have to be a specialist in karma or have reached an incredible level of power."

All Daos shared certain commonalities. Ning didn't specifically study the Dao of Time or the Dao of Space, but he had reached such inconceivable heights in the Dao of the Sword that he was able to transcend both space and time. Similarly, the power within the Sword Hegemon's Dao-seal was so great that it could freeze and suppress both spacetime as well as karmic scrying.

"This [Vitalis] technique is still an incredible technique," Ning mused to himself. If he managed to learn this technique, he could for example imitate someone else and go pay a visit to Hegemon Netherlily of the Ancient cultivators! Since Hegemon Netherlily had never seen him before and there were no karmic ties between them, Ning probably would be able to deceive her.

Thus, this technique was a superb and terrifying technique for disguising one's self and infiltrating other organizations.

"The Sithe probably relied on this technique to arrange for many Daolord spies to be sent into the various cultivator organizations," Ning mused. "However, the Sithe have already been destroyed. Even their techniques have fallen into the hands of us cultivators."

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Each of the seven colors of the rainbow chains which stretched across the first abyss represented a type of truesoul life aura! One had to be able to transform one's life aura to match those chains in order to safely traverse them. If the truesoul aura was not imitated perfectly, then one would be swept into that endless abyss and perish!

The Sithe used very brutal methods to train their Daolords.

"[Vitalis]..." After learning this technique, Ning felt more and more certain that the Sithe had reached truly inconceivable heights in certain areas. For example, their mastery of truesoul-related techniques clearly surpassed that of the Endless Territories by a significant amount. Otherwise, they would never have been able to create a technique such as this.

What Ning didn't know was that although the Sithe had been exterminated, the many treasures and techniques they had left behind were furiously fought over in countless places. Crimsonwave Temple was nothing more than one of the many relic sites left behind by the Sithe.

"Focus." Ning made use of his temporal acceleration treasure. Years passed inside although just half a month or so had gone by outside. He was now able to use a tiny amount of his truesoul and godsense to form a 'lifecloak' around him, with the lifecloak capable of simulating any truesoul aura Ning had met before.

This amount of his truesoul and godsense was of negligible impact to Ning. He was a heartforce cultivator, after all, and a very high-level one at that. Learning this technique was thus quite easy for him.

"Success." Ning put away the spacetime cabin and turned to stare at the stone pillar. He sighed silently, "Their abilities were utterly unearthly, but their ambitions were simply too vast. In the end, they were wiped out!"

Ning understood that the little he knew about the Sithe came from what Realmsoul Polo and the Grovekeeper had told him. He realized that this was nothing more than the tip of an iceberg, and that he still knew very little as to what the truth was.

The Grovekeeper had merely been an artificial construct created by the Sithe race in order to take care of the trees here in Crimsonwave Temple. He had never been able to leave this place. As for Realmsoul Polo, he was nothing more than a servant of Emperor Waveshift's.

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Ning stood there atop the seven-colored chains, every single colored chain containing a different truesoul aura. The different colors all stretched out across several meters, allowing the Daolords enough time to falsify their truesoul auras.

Whoosh. Whoosh. Whoosh.

Ning continuously transformed. First he was a terrifying demon, then he became a suave and graceful cultivator. If they closed their eyes, not even Brightmoon or Patriarch Subhuti would be able to recognize that this aura came from Ji Ning.

Soon, Ning traversed the entire set of chains reached the giant rocky island on the other side.

"The first command talisman." Ning stared at the octahedral black-gold command talisman levitating in the air, then reached out to grab it. The command talisman's surface was warm on one side but cool on the other, and the temperatures on each side continuously alternated. This first command talisman, along with the second command talisman, were amongst the least valuable of the command talismans. However, the fruit they gave access to only ripened once every 30,000 years. Given that the Sithe were willing to place such valuable trees here in Crimsonwave Palace, the fruit would definitely still be extraordinary.

"One talisman down. Keep going." Ning stared off into the distance towards the tri-colored chains leading across the second abyss. At the end of the tri-colored chains was the altar which held the fourth command talisman at the bottom! At the very top of the altar was the ninth command talisman.

“Eh?” Ning stared at the stone pillar which stood deep at the ends of the second abyss. “If I wish to pass through the second abyss, I must master the [Daoheart] technique...” This stone pillar was also covered with dense runic script that explained yet another mysterious, ancient technique of the Sithe race.

He had been stunned when he saw the [Vitalis] technique. This time, he had already mentally fortified himself, but upon seeing the [Daoheart] technique he was still completely dumbfounded.