

Desolate 1161

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Book 33: Crimsonwave Temple Chapter 14: [Daoheart]

Whoosh. A cold wind blew out from the deep abyss in front of Ji Ning. Ning however just stood there blankly, not seeming to even notice it at all.

The [Vitalis] technique allowed one to disguise one's truesoul aura. It could merely be described as a rare technique that wasn't really of much use for either the Daomerge or cultivation in general. This [Daoheart] technique, however, was of enormous benefit to cultivators!

For cultivators, the Dao-heart mattered more than anything else! Without a sufficiently strong Dao-heart, you couldn't even so much as become a Celestial Immortal. Once your Dao-heart collapsed, you might even fail to control the powerful Immortal energy coursing through your body, resulting in death via self-detonation! All Samsara Daolords, especially supreme ones, had incredibly formidable Dao-hearts.

Usually, the stronger a person was the more powerful his Dao-heart would be as well, which meant that on average Eternal Emperors had stronger Dao-hearts than Samsara Daolords did. But of course, there were a few extremely rare exceptions.

When Ninedust had been poisoned by that redscatter venom, he had been in such agony that he wanted Ning to kill him. The redscatter venom had originally been devised for usage against powerful Eternal Emperors, who had very strong Dao-hearts. It would weaken them, but it wouldn't incapacitate them to the point where they would beg for death. This alone was a testament as to the difference in Dao-hearts between Ninedust and powerful Eternal Emperors.

However, as more time passed Ninedust's Dao-heart had been tempered and strengthened by the redscatter venom. Towards the late stages of his poisoning, he had no longer screamed in pain. If someone was to apply redscatter venom to him again, he might be dramatically weakened but he wouldn't beg for death. This signified that his Dao-heart had improved!

"Redscatter venom is terrifying, but it's also a good treasure for tempering one's Dao-heart. Alas, the effect only lasts for twelve days," Ning mused. In the end, twelve days simply wasn't long enough, especially given how incredibly rare and expensive redscatter venom was. When applied at the right time in a duel between Eternal Emperors, it could allow in one being able to slay a foe outright. Hence, no one would be so wasteful as to use it to temper the Dao-heart.

"This [Daoheart] technique... once you use it, you'll suffer such tremendous agony that you'll feel as though you've been hit by redscatter venom!" Ning was truly stunned.

It sounded quite simple; it was nothing more than a pain technique, right? But it must be understood that supreme Daolords had such incredibly formidable Dao-hearts that they would calmly smile in the face of death itself! To cause them to feel such agonizing pain that they would be at the verge of suffering a mental breakdown was incredibly hard to do. That was what made the redscatter venom so valuable! This [Daoheart] technique, however, was able to cause increasingly terrifying levels of pain. This sort of technique was completely unheard of in the Endless Territories!

According to the records, the [Daoheart] technique was divided up into seven levels of heart purgatories. Even the very first level was enough to cause tremendous agony to a supreme Daolord, and the higher levels were even worse. The seventh purgatory was so agonizing that supreme Daolords could instantly see their truesouls shattered and destroyed from the pain!

Ning stared at the stone pillar before him. "This stone pillar has only recorded down the first three purgatories; only Eternal Emperors will have the chance to learn the fourth to seventh purgatories! It seems as though even the Sithe Daolords were only able to train in the first three. I have to be able to master the first three purgatories if I wish to be able to traverse the tri-colored chains."

Each of the three colored sections of the tri-colored chains in front of him would cause an agonizing amount of pain to fill his body. One had to have mastered the first three purgatories in order to safely cross the chains.

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"Time to begin!"

A cold wind howled past the white-robed Ning as he waved his hand, causing the temporal acceleration cabin to appear next to him. Ning entered the log cabin, then began to train.

"Mo...ya...ta..." Ning's soul began to recite the words to this technique. This was a soul voice with a strange cadence and profound melody to it. Slowly, Ning began to feel an increasing level of pain. This pain filled every inch of his body and began to grow stronger and stronger as Ning continued the chant. The longer he chanted, the greater the pain he felt. After an hour had passed, Ning's forehead was creased in a frown and a fierce look was in his eyes.

"...kong...la...luo...Sithe." Ning finished chanting through the first purgatory and opened his eyes, his forehead matted with sweat.

"How terrifying. It has been a long, long time since I've felt as much pain as this... but it was still within the realm of what I could tolerate." Ning immediately shut his eyes and began to work on the second purgatory.

Ning was the most powerful Heartforce Cultivator of the Endless Territories and the master of the Omega Sword Dao. His Dao-heart was already incredibly strong!

Even if he wasn't a Heartforce Cultivator, his Dao-heart still would've been quite strong. Long ago, he had been stuck at the fourth stage of heartforce, 'mortal dust', because of his stubborn attachment to his parents. As a result, he had been unable to calm his mind and heart enough to reach the fifth stage of heartforce, 'truth'. However, his determination to revive his parents was so strong that his Dao-heart was still incredibly strong even then. Similarly, there were many Eternal Emperors and even Hegemons who were not Heartforce Cultivators but who had Dao-hearts of inconceivable strength.

But of course... Heartforce Cultivators would by definition have extremely strong Dao-hearts! Even then, however, there were variations amongst Heartforce Cultivators. Some were stronger, some were weaker. Ji Ning, Timedream, Cloudwalker, Winesage... their Dao-hearts naturally were ranked in this order from first to fourth.

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“...tian...fu...can...Sithe.” Ning’s face was completely red, and his veins were bulging out of his trembling body. Despite that, he still managed to forcibly and fully recite the second purgatory.

“I’ve finished the second purgatory as well.” Ning wasn’t very happy. The fact that he was able to master the first and second purgatories so easily meant that they would be of little to no use to him.

“Time for the third purgatory of the [Daoheart] technique... the Jinayi purgatory.”

Ning took a deep breath, allowing his protruding veins to settle back down and the color of his skin to go back to normal. “Zi...mi...shi...ya...” Ning began to recite the words to the third purgatory.

Agony!

It was like a colossal mountain of pain had just come crashing down upon his fragile body. He almost immediately felt as though he was about to suffer a mental breakdown. Although Ning had a powerful Dao-heart and things he cared immensely about, he currently had a feeling of incredible weakness, as though he wasn’t able to hold on for much longer and was about to collapse.”

Clack clack clack clack... Ning just sat there in the lotus position, but sweat was pouring down his face and the bones in his body were clacking and cracking. His muscles and his tendons were at the point of tearing apart, and even his gums were beginning to ooze blood that began to drip out from the corners of his lips. Ning, however, didn’t notice any of this at all.

His Dao-heart was completely focused on guarding his spirit and his beliefs while his soul continued to chant the words to the technique. The pain continued to increase! Everything in front of him began to turn black as all sound disappeared from the world. There was nothing aside from the endless pain!

“Ah...” Ning suddenly felt his entire mind go blank. His soul naturally stopped chanting the words to the technique and the agony quickly receded, allowing him to regain consciousness.

He lowered his head to look at himself. His arms and his crossed legs were all matted with sweat, with a few rivulets of blood splattered in.

“I was in such pain that I couldn’t even continue to chant that mantra.” Ning actually smiled delightedly at this discovery. “Hahaha! Good, good! That means my Dao-heart isn’t strong enough yet. I wasn’t even able to master the third purgatory of the [Daoheart] technique on my first try. Since the Sithe used this to train supreme Daolords, that means the most powerful Sithe Daolords had even stronger Dao-hearts than me.”

“Haha. At least the third purgatory of the [Daoheart] technique is of use to me.” Ning was delighted. If he had passed on his first try, that would’ve meant that the third purgatory was similarly useless.

“Let’s do this again. The pain I felt was less than what Ninedust went through,” Ning mused. It wasn’t that the third purgatory of the [Daoheart] technique was weaker than the effects of the redscatter venom; Ning wasn’t able to judge that. All pain, however, was relative. The redscatter venom and the agony it brought had been enough to cause Ninedust to scream in agony and beg for Ning to kill him! However, if it had been Hegemon Brightshore who had been struck by the poison, he would’ve been able to continue smiling and laughing without seeming to feel a thing. Pain was a relative concept. The pain brought by the third purgatory of the [Daoheart] technique was at most able to prevent Ning from continuing his chanting.

However... the redscatter venom caused Ninedust endless pain without end, pain for a full twelve days.

“Continue.” Ning once more began to chant the mantra. The seven stages to this [Daoheart] technique were known as the seven purgatories of the heart. Amongst the Sithe, even the most supreme of Daolords were only able to master the first three purgatories.

The first three purgatories were viewed as nightmares by even those supreme Sithe Daolords! They generally would spend countless years training before each abyss, suffering endless mental torment. If they were unable to completely master the technique within a single chaos cycle, the Sithe would forcibly remove them from this place. Only some of their supreme Daolords were able to master all three of the purgatories.

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One attempt after another. Ning’s soul continuously chanted the mantra to the technique, enduring the endless agonizing that descended upon him. Each time, the agony caused him to despair and drove him unconscious. The pain was simply beyond what he could endure, and so he failed again and again. Each time, his only goal was to increase his limit further and further.

While training, Ning set up fairly simple barriers and wards around him. Once anyone came, Ning would naturally be alerted by it. Thus, he was able to completely invest himself in training.

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Time continued to flow on. As Ning continued to suffer more and more torment, he was able to recite the mantra for longer periods of time. After a total of twenty-one years...

“...qian...fu...la...jie...na...yi...Sithe.” Ning finally completed his recital of the third purgatory’s mantra. Although he was wracked by agony, he was at least able to maintain the presence of mind to finish the recital.

“Success.” Ning opened his eyes.

Whoosh. Ning waved his hand, putting away the temporal acceleration cabin. He then stared at the stone pillar for a moment, then walked towards the tri-colored chains.

By now, a large group of supreme Daolords had descended upon the second world, where the furious fight over the final Voidsea Daoseal continued.

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Book 33: Crimsonwave Temple Chapter 15: Nine Hundred Years

As Ji Ning walked across the tri-colored chains, he could sense throbs of pain reach out to him from his feet and then spread throughout his body. He continued to advance one step at a time, but his body began to quiver. He gritted his teeth, enduring the pain.

“For these chains to be able to cause so much pain for so many years to so many people... they must be valuable treasures.” Although Ning was agonized, he maintained enough clarity of mind to murmur softly to himself.

Finally, he finished traversing the tri-colored chains.

“The fourth command talisman.” Ning stared at the ancient black-gold talisman, then reached out and grabbed it. Ning raised his head to stare upwards at the steps that led to the top of the altar. At the very top levitated the extremely precious ninth command talisman.

Swoosh.

Ning strode forward towards, beginning to move up the various steps. There were a total of 8003 steps to this great altar. Rainbow light suddenly manifested at the very top of the altar, resolving into a white-robed figure. Realsoul Polo smiled as he walked downwards towards Ning.

“Realsoul Polo?” Ning was startled.

The realmsoul glanced at Ning, then smiled. “Darknorth, you are quite fast. You were able to master both [Vitalis] and [Daoheart] quite quickly.”

“Are there any other new techniques in this altar?” Ning asked.

“None.” The realmsoul shook his head. “You should celebrate the fact that you learned two such exquisite techniques. How numerous do you take them for? As for the altar... this altar has a total of 9000 wards and barriers. If you can defeat all 9000 of them, you’ll be able to acquire the incredibly precious ninth command talisman.”

As he spoke, he waved his sleeves. Swoosh! Triangular motes of golden light immediately appeared at the top of the altar. The light spread out to form multiple layers of barriers that repeatedly folded in on each other, forming a dazzling golden barrier. Ning could immediately tell that there were indeed thousands of layers to this formation; although he couldn’t count the exact number, 9000 was a distinct possibility.

“Will the barriers automatically regenerate?” Ning asked. If they were to immediately regenerate, then he would have to break through all 9000 in a single strike.

“Hahaha, if they automatically regenerated, you could be ten times as strong as you currently are and still fail to break through.” Realsoul Polo relaxed off to one side as he watched.

“Good.” Ning immediately manifested three heads and six arms. All six of the golden swords on his back came flying out and landed within his hands.

“Let’s go.” Ning willed it, and a barrier immediately appeared next to him which quickly expanded to cover the entire altar.

Temporal acceleration... 100x acceleration!

The altar was not alive and thus it didn’t cause too much energy to be used up to accelerate time for it.

“Oh, quite clever.” Realsoul Polo smiled as he watched from the side.

“This is the final challenge in the third world, after all. I’ll wager it won’t be that easy to beat,” Ning said. Moments later, a sharp light flashed through his eyes. “Suppress!”

Ning willed his massive heartworld projection to come crashing down. A heartbeat later, his nine novessence arts came out in the form of energy dragons, coiling together to form a Yin-Yang Chaos

Domain in accordance with the principles of the Omega Sword Dao – Yin Yang which furiously pressed down against the altar. Even though the altar was now suffering the combined pressures of the heartworld projection and the nine novessence arts, the 9000 barriers were still able to easily endure.

“Break!” Ning immediately executed his Omega Sword Dao – Blood Drop while applying the [Heartsword] technique.

Sword-light flashed through the air as Ning’s mist-formed sword stabbed against the barrier, moving faster than a hundred times the speed of light. The first barrier was pierced through like paper, but the power of the strike was greatly reduced. In the end, the mist-formed sword was unable to stab through the second barrier.

“Eh, just so-so. This speed indicates that it’ll take me perhaps one day to break through all 9000 barriers. It seems setting up a temporal acceleration field was overkill.” Ning spoke in an intentionally arrogant manner while giving Realmsoul Polo a meaningful glance.

“Don’t get cocky.” Realmsoul Polo watched from afar, an amused smile on his face. “The ninth command seal won’t be so easily acquired.”

Slash! Slash! Slash! Slash! Ning struck out repeatedly against the barriers, piercing through a total of 151 barriers. The next time Ning struck out, he wasn’t able to break through the barrier.

“The barriers are increasing in strength.” Ning frowned, then revealed a smile. “Still, at least the barriers weaken each time I attack them. They don’t regenerate even when they are weakened but not breached.” For example, although the 152nd barrier was not destroyed by Ning’s full-strength strike, it had dimmed and was clearly much weaker than it had been previously.

So long as the barrier didn’t recover its energy, then he would eventually be able to break through the 9000 barriers given enough time.

“Break! Break! Break!” Ning quickly struck out with his six Northbow swords, applying the Blood Drop stance each time. The Omega Sword Dao – Blood Drop’s greatest strength lay in its penetrative power!

When dealing with barriers, this sort of penetrating attack was the best type of attack to use. In addition, the Omega Sword Dao – Blood Drop was Ning’s most powerful attack! This naturally made the breaching process quite fast.

Slash! Slash! Slash! The six Northbow swords continuously struck out as fast as illusions. One mist-formed sword after another struck out against the barriers, causing the barriers to quickly disperse under the weight of the barrage of attacks.

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After roughly half a day, Ning broke through the 1000th barrier.

After roughly six days, Ning broke through the 2000th barrier.

After roughly half a month, Ning broke through the 3000th barrier.

After roughly nine months, Ning broke through the 4000th barrier.

After nearly half a year, Ning broke through the 5000th barrier.

“I underestimated these 9000 barriers.” Ning was furiously assaulting the 5001st barrier with his six Northbow swords. This barrier was extremely tough; when Ning first assaulted it, he felt as though he couldn’t breach it at all, that the barrier wasn’t even weakening in the slightest. Only after more than ten thousand strikes did the barrier slowly begin to weaken, and once it did it began to weaken at a very fast rate. In the end, it finally collapsed.

“These barriers... they are strong enough that not even a full-strength blow from the eight lords of the Sacred Cities would be able to breach them,” Ning mused.

The barriers were so much more powerful than his attacks that his strikes were like drops of water sprinkled across stones, having virtually no impact at all. However, given enough time the wind and the rain could wear down even the mightiest of mountains! When the barrier finally dropped down close to Ning’s level of power, Ning would naturally be able to sense it begin to weaken and break down.

“I still haven’t been able to master the eleventh stance of the [Heartsword].” In recent days, Ning had been working on the eleventh stance of the [Heartsword] technique, the ‘Teardrop’ strike.

The eighth to tenth stances of the [Heartsword] represented a tier, while the eleventh to twelfth stances represented a different tier. Each tier represented a qualitative transformation!

Ning was so incredibly talented that in just a few short decades he was able to go from the eighth stance to the tenth stance, but these three stances belonged to the same tier. The difficulty of the eleventh stance, however, was on a completely different level from the tenth.

“I was over-confident. No wonder the records regarding the [Heartsword] stated that the number of people in each generation who could master the eleventh or twelfth stances could be counted on one hand! Even the most talented of swordsmen who have been alive for 108,000 chaos cycles find it hard to reach this level, while I’ve spent just ten or so years on it.” Ning regained his normal calm, then smiled. “In recent years, I’ve been focusing on my Omega Sword Dao – Blood Drop. I feel as though I’ve gained quite a few insights into it. Perhaps I’ll break through with it.”

In the past five years, Ning had unleashed countless strikes with the Omega Sword Dao – Blood Drop. By now, he had more insights into the Blood Drop stance than any of the other four stances, and so it stood the best chance of reaching the fourth stage. If he could reach the fourth stage with his Blood Drop stance, then the power of his Omega Sword Dao – Blood Drop would increase yet again.

“Continue.” Ning continued to furiously strike out with his sword, even though he felt almost like an ant trying to move a mountain.

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After nearly twenty years, Ning broke through the 6000th barrier.

After nearly a century, Ning broke through the 7000th barrier.

After nearly three centuries, Ning broke through the 8000th barrier.

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Ning's [Heartsword] and his Blood Drop stance had yet to make any breakthroughs. Although he had gained some insights, especially after having used the Blood Drop stance so many times and after having spent so much time working on upgrading it, he still hadn't been able to reach the fourth stage. His improvements were rapid, but it still wasn't enough. This was a sign as to how hard it would be to reach the fourth stage with all five stances. As for fusing them together into a fourth-stage Omega Sword Dao? How difficult would that be?"

Slash! Slash! Slash! A furious barrage of mist-formed sword energy lashed out in an illusory fashion, stabbing against the final barrier. Finally, an explosion boomed out!

After more than 900 years here at the altar, Ning had finally managed to defeat the final barrier.

"I finally breached it." Ning revealed a delighted look. He had spent over 900 years furiously assaulting the barrier nonstop. Ning had never done something like this before!

"The ninth command talisman." Ning walked to the ninth command talisman, then reached out and grabbed it.

"Hahaha..." Realmsoul Polo began laughing from up high, his voice echoing throughout every inch of Crimsonwave Temple. "Daolords, the ninth command talisman for harvesting fruit has already been acquired by Daolord Darknorth! The rest of you need to hurry up!"

"You actually..." Ning raised his head to stare at Realmsoul Polo, shocked.

"The command talismans won't be won that easily." Realmsoul Polo looked down at Ning, a smile playing on his lips. "You can rob others of them, but others can rob you of them as well."

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Book 33: Crimsonwave Temple Chapter 16: Consecutive Deaths

"They can try." Ji Ning really wasn't afraid at all. He then raised his head to look at the realmsoul and asked, "Senior, how am I to return to the second world?"

"Simple. Every single world has a map diagram covering the ground." Realmsoul Polo pointed towards the great floating island Ning had started off on. It was true that the floating island did indeed have a inky circular diagram that was roughly nine meters in diameter, and the diagram was covered with black runes that seemed quite mysterious.

"Just step into that diagram. In ten breaths worth of time, you'll be transported straight to the throne of the second world. The second world and the first world both have similar diagrams in them," Realmsoul Polo said.

"Oh?" Ning thought back to what he had seen. Indeed, it was true. However, since Crimsonwave Temple was covered with so many sculptures, paintings, and diagrams, at the time Ning hadn't realized the inky circle had meant anything.

"To the second world, then." Ning put away the ninth command talisman, then immediately transformed into a streak of light as he flew down the dais. He first walked past the tri-colored chains,

enduring the pain they bought him, then continuously shifted his truesoul aura as he walked past the seven-colored chains.

“The last Voidsea Jadeseal has been seized by Daolord Feich!” Realmsoul Polo’s voice reverberated throughout every inch of Crimsonwave Temple. “All three of the remaining Voidsea Jadeseals have been collected. Daolords, hurry up and do your best to acquire the command talismans. They are far more valuable than the Voidsea Jadeseals, and every single talisman is more than valuable enough to drive Eternal Emperors mad with desire. They represent enormous amounts of valuable fruits... and right now, only five of them remain!”

Ning was still walking on the seven-colored chains. When he heard Realmsoul Polo said this, he couldn’t help but feel so angry that he ground his teeth until they nearly broke. The realmsoul really wanted to just see the world thrown into chaos!

However, the realmsoul had merely spoken the truth. The fruits truly were more valuable than the Voidsea Jadeseals! Even Hegemons grew excited over these fruits, while the Dao Alliance was dazzled by the prospect of acquiring them. In terms of price and value, they were indeed far more valuable than Voidsea Jadeseals! To Daolords, however, supreme Daomerge treasures were naturally more important than anything else, no matter how valuable.

“Only five of the command talismans remain? It seems Ninedust has acquired one as well.” Ning had been planning to head to the second world, but after exiting the seven-colored chains he immediately flew like a streak of light towards the Ninedust Sectlord’s location.

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Whoosh. “Ah, good. They haven’t arrived yet,” Ning mused to himself as he reached Ninedust’s passageway.

At present, the only person within the passageway was Ninedust and Ninedust alone! What Ning didn’t realize was that when Realmsoul Polo had publicly announced that he had acquired the ninth command talisman, all of the supreme Daolords who had been fighting over the Voidsea Jadeseal in the second world began to grow anxious. “That means Darknorth is probably going to come here and fight with us over the Voidsea Jadeseal as well. His assassination arts are extremely terrifying to deal with. We need to end this faster!”

The battle had already been ferocious to begin with. Once word that Ning might be arriving spread, the battle reached a fever pitch before finally Daolord Feich ended up seizing the Voidsea Jadeseal.

Although he had managed to acquire it, he was a low-key supreme Daolord who was only on par with Fiendqueen Dustrain and the others. The other Daolords weren’t willing to accept this result and so the battle continued.

“Eh?” Ning arrived at Ninedust’s passageway. He immediately saw the rhomboid stone pillar and the words atop of it introducing the [Vitalis] art. When he then looked at the seven-colored chains and the tri-colored chains, he immediately understood that all of the passageways contained the same techniques with them.

Ning had been hoping that perhaps the three passageways would all contain different techniques!

“Ninedust is still inside.” Ning stared at the temporal acceleration cottage in front of the tri-colored chains. Ninedust was inside that cottage. “It seems he has yet to master the [Daoheart] technique.”

In terms of Dao-heart strength, Ning was indeed significantly superior to Ninedust; Ning was a Heartforce Cultivator, after all!

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The third world, Ninedust’s passageway. Ning sat there on the rocky ground in the lotus position by himself. Due to the barrier in front of him, there was no way for him to step onto the rainbow chains. Each supreme Daolords was only permitted to choose one passageway; there was no way to enter the other ones.

After waiting for four full hours, Ning suddenly opened his eyes.

Whoosh! A streak of light flew towards him, resolving into the form of a black-robed figure who looked at the seated Ning. The black-robed figure said, “Brother Darknorth, I must congratulate you. If I had known things would end up like this, I would’ve joined you in fighting over the command talismans.”

“Brother Winesage, my guess is that most of the other supreme Daolords have joined forces.” Ning rose to his feet. “It looks as though you are still on your own. Why don’t you join forces with me and Ninedust?”

“Haha, why should I join forces with anyone?” Winesage scanned the area. “Darknorth, can you tell me which passageway still has all of its command talismans?”

“That one.” Ning pointed towards the third passageway.

“Thank you.” Winesage immediately flew in that direction.

Just a short while later, Ning saw a large group of individuals be teleported into the third world atop the stone island before him. There were a total of twelve supreme Daolords, with the leader being a devilish violet-robed figure whose eyes gleamed with violet light and who had long, unbound black hair. The other eleven supreme Daolords were clearly following him.

“Darknorth?” When the violet-robed devil saw Ning, he smiled a cold smile. “What a coincidence. We actually ran into Daolord Darknorth.”

“King Paleos?” Ning was surprised. After entering the Waveshift Realm, he had never heard anything that indicated King Paleos was a particularly powerful Daolord. King Paleos was a member of the Aeonian race! He was very low-key, and everyone in the outside world belonged him to merely be a second-tier Daolord. The most famous Daolord of the Aeonian race had been King Gorsch... but now, it seemed, King Paleos was also quite powerful.

Boom! Rainbow light swirled around the air above them, forming into the towering figure of a white-robed man.

“All surviving Daolords have reached the third world. Let me explain... the third world has a total of three passageways! Every single Daolord is only permitted to challenge a single passageway. Originally, each passageway held three command talismans within them, with the total value in each being roughly

the same! But of course, only five command talismans remain.” Realmsoul Polo’s voice echoed throughout the world.

As the realmsoul was speaking, Ning received certain news from the Brightshore Kingdom. “What?!” Ning was shocked. The Dao Alliance had issued a new Daolord ranking!

In recent years, the Daolord rankings had changed to a shocking degree.

“Daolord Dreamlore ranks number three?”

“King Paleos ranks number six?”

“Daolord Skyaxe died?”

“King Cliffbank died?”

Ning was completely stunned when he saw the new rankings. A total of six supreme Daolords had died in the fight over the final Voidsea Jadeseal, and the Daolord rankings had completely changed. The first was Winesage, the second was Darknorth, the third was Dreamlore, the fourth was Palace Lord Dawnstar, the fifth was the Radiant King, the sixth was King Paleos, the seventh was Daolord Owlblack, the eighth was Ninestone, the ninth was Daolord Skyshatter, and the tenth was Daolord Tigrone...

A brand new group of supreme Daolords had arisen! Many had been very low-key in the past and not very well known, but in the fight over the Voidsea Jadeseal they had revealed their fierceness.

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King Paleos’ violet eyes were focused on Ning. He said coldly, “Only five of the nine command talismans remain. You, Darknorth, should’ve acquired three of them. Your ally, the Ninedust Sectlord, seems to have acquired one as well... but the twelve of us haven’t acquired so much as a single one, nor have we acquired any Voidsea Jadeseals. Daolord Darknorth, don’t you think this is a bit unfair?”

“Daolord Darknorth.” Fiendqueen Dustrain was behind King Paleos, and she spoke out in a similarly cold voice, “We don’t ask for me. We can forget about the other two talismans, nor will we force the Ninedust Sectlord to hand over his. The ninth command talisman, however... you must hand it to us! Hand us the ninth command talisman and we won’t cause you any trouble.”

“Hand over the ninth command talisman.”

“Hand it over, Daolord Darknorth.”

“Not even Winesage is a match for us. Darknorth, you should go ahead and hand it over.”

King Paleos and the other supreme Daolords all stared at Ning. They were all supreme Daolords. If they were in a smaller group of just four or five, they might be very nervous when facing Ning, but there were twelve of them right now; they wouldn’t be afraid of even Winesage! In fact, they had already battled against Winesage earlier. Why would they fear Daolord Darknorth?

Thus far, the twelve of them had acquired nothing at all. If they were able to harvest the fruits of the ninth command talisman, they would be able to split the harvest and trade for some rare materials from

the various Hegemons or the Dao Alliance. In that way, at least, their visit to the Waveshift Realm wouldn't have been in vain.

Ning frowned. The command talismans represented the fruits of the Crimsonwave Temple, so valuable that the Dao Alliance and the Hegemons were going crazy over them. The ninth command talisman was the most valuable and an absolutely priceless item. Ning was planning on using them to rescue Yu Wei!

Clang! Clang! Clang! Ning's body blurred as he manifested three heads and six arms. Six streaks of golden light immediately shot out from his back and landed in his hands.

The three-headed, six-armed, white-robed youth stared coldly at the supreme Daolords, six Northbow swords at the ready. "Cut the crap, you pack of fools. Come and die!"

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Book 33: Crimsonwave Temple Chapter 17: Furious Battle

"Quite bold. Daolord Skyaxe was similarly bold when facing me... but in the end, I killed him. A pity. I haven't had the chance to battle against the Radiant King or Dawnstar yet. If I had, I wouldn't be ranked merely number six. Come and show me how strong you are, oh mighty second-ranked Darknorth." King Paleos manifested six arms as well, each arm wielding a strange sawtoothed weapon.

"Surround him and kill him," Fiendqueen Dustrain barked coldly.

"Darknorth doesn't have an invulnerable form; it'll be much easier to kill him."

"Since he's courting death, let us give it to him. Once we kill him, we'll be able to take all of his command talismans." The supreme Daolords were all boiling with the desire to kill.

Ning's face tightened as a fierce light shone from his eyes. He glared at King Paleos and said coldly, "So you were the one to kill Daolord Skyaxe?"

"Yes. Otherwise, how would I be ranked at number six?" King Paleos asked.

"Damn you." Ning was infuriated. There were very few supreme Daolords he was friends with, but Daolord Skyaxe was one of them. When he had been weak and besieged by Daolord Shaka outside Skywood City, one of the eight Sacred Cities of the Dao Alliance, he had begged the Brightshore Kingdom for aid. Palace Lord Soleman and Daolord Skyaxe had immediately come to his aid, and as a result Ning had become friends with both of them.

Although the relationship naturally wasn't nearly as deep as the one he shared with Ninedust, who he had shared life-and-death experiences with, they were still good friends.

"Afraid?" King Paleos smirked.

"DIE!" Ning was boiling with murderous rage.

BOOM! A terrifying wave of invisible force instantly lashed out towards them from Ning, striking against the souls and truesouls of the twelve supreme Daolords.

“Ah!” “Ahhh!” Two of the supreme Daolords instantly turned pale, followed by their heads drooping downwards. The faces of many of the other Daolords also tightened slightly, but at least they were able to maintain their clarity of mind.

“What a terrifying heartforce art.” King Paleos’ face tightened as well.

“Kill!” Just now, Ning had used the [Heartforce Eradicator] art. It was linked to his Omega Sword Dao, and so now that Ning had reached the third stage of his Omega Sword Dao the power of his [Heartforce Eradicator] had also significantly improved. However, to directly slay a supreme Daolord was still no easy feat.

And yet, Ning’s goal wasn’t to actually slay any of them outright. His goal was to crush their morale and douse their bravado.

Boom! Next, his vast heartworld projection came crashing down. At the center of that massive, illusory world was that enormous sword-shaped mountain, and it came plunging straight down towards all of the supreme Daolords, causing their bodies to stiffen. As far as heartworld projections went, at present there was no Daolord who was a match for Ning!

A heartbeat later, nine energy dragons came howling out of Ning’s body, forming the Yin-Yang Chaos Domain around him.

“One person wants to suppress the twelve of us by himself? He’s too arrogant.”

“He doesn’t know his own limits.”

“Break!”

King Paleos and the others used their own secret arts as well. Some were strong, some were weak, but when joined together they vastly outstripped Ning in power. The difference was, Ning’s heartworld projection and his secret arts were able to merge together seamlessly! These supreme Daolords weren’t able to merge their secret arts together; if they tried, they would begin to interfere with each other.

However, they had gained some experience from their previous battle against Winesage. There were some secret arts that could work together, such as Five Elements arts or Yin and Yang arts. In this way, their secret arts could be improved in power as they worked together to suppress Ning.

However, Ning’s heartworld projection was also capable of restricting and suppressing part of the secret arts. The two sides began a battle of secret arts and heartworld projections. Ning was forced to shrink the radius of his secret arts, but he was still able to hold.

“Kill!” Six Northbow swords in hand, Ning charged straight towards the strongest foe, King Paleos. King Paleos might be strong, but Ning held him in no regard at all. Ning would dare to battle even Winesage in solo combat; why would he fear King Paleos?

“He didn’t pick the weakest member but instead went after me?” King Paleos’ long black hair fluttered behind him as he sent his six serrated blades howling towards Ning. As he did, a thick black fog spread out from him.

Swish! Swish! Swish! Swish! Swish! Swish!

Six streaks of mist-formed swords appeared before him with incredible speed, so fast that King Paleos' face instantly turned pale. "How can he be this fast? He's even faster than the Radiant King. In fact, perhaps only Daolord Dreamlore is a match for him in speed!" He had yet to truly battle against the Radiant King or Daolord Dreamlore, but during the previous fights over the Voidsea Jadeseals he had watched both of them strike with despair-inducing speed.

Darknorth's swords were just as fast... no, they were even faster than the Radiant King's strikes! Perhaps only Daolord Dreamlore and his dazzling, blood-streaked bloodblade strikes were on par with Darknorth.

Clang! Clang! Clang! King Paleos furiously defended himself against Ning's onslaught. His six serrated blades were quite strange and unpredictable. When used for defense, they were quite formidable.

"What?!" King Paleos could sense that every single one of his blades were enduring a terrifying amount of power with each strike. His fingers were turning numb and his body was trembling.

Fast and furious!

The Omega Sword Dao – Blood Drop was the fastest and most penetrating attack Ning had to muster. But of course, in raw power alone it wasn't even close to the Heavenbreaker in might. Although the Northbow swords boosted the Blood Drop stance the most, this stance was still weaker than the Heavenbreaker stance. Despite that, it still contained quite a bit of power! This was especially true after Ning had mastered the tenth stance of the [Heartsword], as this allowed Ning to infuse every single strike with incredible weight.

King Paleos felt as though every single strike brought him incredible pressure. If it was just a matter of speed, he would have a solution. If it was just a matter of power, he would also have a solution! The problem was, Ji Ning's swords not only surpassed the Radiant King in speed, they actually surpassed King Paleos' ultimate attacks in power as well!

"How is this possible? How could he be this much stronger than me? I-impossible... I've reached a perfect level of power. I'm not a match for Winesage, but that's because Winesage has a Universe treasure. None of the other supreme Daolords could dominate me like this!" King Paleos couldn't believe it, nor did he want to believe it. He had always been very proud of himself and had been very dissatisfied with his ranking as the sixth Daolord. As he saw it, any Daolord who didn't have a Universe treasure would only be on par with him at most.

Slash! Slash! Slash! Slash! Ning's swords were simply too fast! Mist-formed swords flew everywhere, creating an almost illusory dreamscape.

For the sake of destroying the 9000 barriers as quickly as possible, Ning had grown accustomed to launching a furious barrage of attacks. Now that he was boiling with the desire to murder the man before him, he was able to strike 129 times with unmatched speed. King Paleos' defenses were quite impressive and he used all six serrated blades to defend at the same time... but perpetual defense would result in defeat. In the end, one strike from Ning slipped past his guard.

Slash! A streak of sword-light stabbed straight into King Paleos' body, but King Paleos transformed into a blood-tinged black fog.

“An invulnerable form?” Ning frowned. Dealing with cultivators who had invulnerable forms was quite taxing. Ninedust was an example of someone who had an invulnerable aquaform.

“Attack together and kill him!” With the billowing black fog, streams of bloody light reformed to manifest into King Paleos. He bellowed loudly, “Daolords, no one can beat him in a one-on-one fight. Join forces to kill him!”

“Surround him and kill him!”

“Don’t get greedy.”

“Careful!”

King Paleos had been defeated in a single exchange by that furious barrage of sword-mist and had only survived thanks to his invulnerable form. This instantly frightened all of the other supreme Daolords. This Darknorth was simply too terrifying! For him to be able to fight against four supreme Daolords and kill both Timedream and Kingfreak was one thing, but King Paleos was far stronger than the Kingfreak or Timedream in close combat. Despite that, he had also been defeated in a single exchange?!

What they didn’t realize was that Ning had mastered the tenth stance of the [Heartsword] in Crimsonwave Temple. If it hadn’t been for this technique, he still would’ve been able to beat King Paleos but he wouldn’t have been able to do it just through a simple barrage of Blood Drop stance strikes.

“Careful?” Ning swept them with his gaze. “It doesn’t matter how careful you are.”

Whoosh. Ning vanished without a trace.

“That’s his assassination arts! Careful, he can appear anywhere!”

“Be careful, everyone.”

“Attack! Attack! Don’t let him get close to us!”

The supreme Daolords began to blindly launch attacks in every direction. Ning’s heartworld projection and nine novessence arts ensured that so long as he remained within their range, there would be no way for his enemies to find him once he used his assassination arts.

Whoosh. Ning appeared out of nowhere, then struck at the supreme Daolord closest to him.

“Block, quick!”

“Join forces!”

Some used magic treasures, others used secret arts. All of them threw attacks towards Ning as quickly as possible.

Boom! Slash! Ning’s six Northbow swords executed varying sword-arts as he blocked the attacks and continued his charge. His defensive abilities were far stronger than King Paleos’.

“Dodge, quick!”

“Dodge!”

The supreme Daolords were so terrified that they frantically retreated, moving closer to their peers. Only when five of them worked in unison would they be able to resist Ning.

“He’s utterly terrifying.”

“Darknorth’s sword-arts are completely flawless. He’s able to easily defend himself against our combined attacks while continuing to charge at us!” This was the first time these Daolords experienced the terror of Ning for themselves.

Ning was already incredibly strong to begin with. Now that he had the Northbow swords and the tenth stance of the [Heartsword], Ning’s advantage over the other supreme Daolords had only grown. Winesage was able to dominate the other supreme Daolords, and so too was Ji Ning. The difference was, Ning’s ‘Shadowless’ evasion art was so unpredictable and mysterious that the other supreme Daolords were terrified of it and him.

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Book 33: Crimsonwave Temple Chapter 18: One Man Army

“What?” King Paleos, Fiendqueen Dustrain, and the others were all shocked. Things were turning out completely contrary to what they had expected. Not even Winesage had put them in such dire straits! Although Winesage was able to crush any supreme Daolord in a head-on fight, when the twelve of them worked together they were able to dominate him. Faced with their combined attacks, even Winesage was in rather bad shape.

But Daolord Darknorth was actually beating them silly? Was Darknorth even more powerful than Winesage?

What they didn’t realize was that Ji Ning was indeed better than Winesage in dealing with group attacks! Ning’s sword-arts were more perfect and flawless, allowing him a truly airtight defense against mass attacks! His Shadowless sword-arts allowed him to vanish without a trace, making it so that his enemies couldn’t focus their fire against him while he was able to launch counter-attacks as he pleased.

All of these factors combined to ensure that at any given moment, no more than five supreme Daolords were able to fight against Ning! This was why Ning had the advantage and held the initiative. These supreme Daolords were all so frightened that they began to cluster closer to each other, no longer daring to launch attacks.

“Darknorth, let’s call it off,” King Paleos roared mentally.

“Call it off?” Ning rebutted coldly, “Acceptable, but you need to get the fuck out of this passageway.” Ning knew that not even Winesage would be able to kill these twelve Daolords now that they were working together, much less himself.

“By what right are you denying us entry to this passageway? You can already harvest the fruit you need; this passageway is meaningless to you. If we want to force our way in, you won’t be able to stop us!” King Paleos said furiously.

“Hmph.” Ning came to a halt as well. He just stood there, the area around him covered by his heartworld projection as the nine energy dragons coiled around him in accordance with his Yin-Yang sword-intent. “I cannot enter this passageway, true, but if you wish to enter it you must first master the [Vitalis] art... and so long as I am here, you can forget about quietly meditating on it and mastering it.”

“King Paleos, Darknorth is telling the truth. The rhomboid stone pillar does indeed say that one has to master the [Vitalis] art and learn how to disguise one’s truesoul aura before one can safely pass through those seven-colored chains.”

“Darknorth isn’t going to let us train in peace.”

“Damn.” The twelve supreme Daolords all felt resigned. Ning wasn’t able to kill them, but he was entirely capable of disrupting them while they attempted to train, making it impossible for them to master this technique.

“Let’s go.” King Paleo gritted his teeth. He had no choice but to retreat.

“Go.” Although the other supreme Daolords felt insulted and humiliated, they all ended up retreating. In truth, these Daolords were all ranked towards the bottom of the first-tier, which was why they agreed to fight under King Paleos’ banner in a group of twelve. In the past, Fiendqueen Dustrain might’ve ranked in the top ten... but now? So many powerful, low-key supreme Daolords had emerged that she had long ago been shoved out of the top ten.

“Hmph.” Ning watched as the supreme Daolords flew away, then dispelled his heartworld projection and his secret arts. He continued to silently stand guard over this region.

He had to help Ninedust... or to be precise, he had to help himself. Ninedust had said early on that he would give Ning all of the command talismans he acquired! Thus, Ning naturally had to do his best to prevent any of the other Daolords from entering this passageway.

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“Darknorth has reached an incredible level of power. He and Winesage have clearly surpassed the rest of us by a tremendous amount.” King Paleos’ group of supreme Daolords quickly arrived at a new passageway. This was the passageway which Ning had already traversed.

“Are we going to give up, just like that?” Fiendqueen Dustrain sent mentally. She was the second-in-command of this squad.

“Hmph...” King Paleos let out a cold snort. His eyes suddenly lit up when he stared at the rhomboid stone pillar. “The [Vitalis] art.”

Fiendqueen glanced at it as well, then shook her head. “The command talismans in this passageway have already been taken. It must have been Darknorth who did it.”

“Doesn’t matter. The [Vitalis] art can be learned here.” King Paleos pointed at the rhomboid pillar. “Let’s memorize the technique then begin to train! Once we master it, we’ll head to the passageway the Ninedust Sectlord took. So long as we can make it past the rainbow chains, Darknorth won’t be able to attack us.”

“Right.”

“King Paleo speaks the truth.”

All of them agreed with this plan. They could learn the technique but decline to actually enter the passageway. Later on, they could choose to challenge the Ninedust Sectlord’s passageway or perhaps a different one.

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Three passageways. More than thirty supreme Daolords.

Because Ning’s original passageway had already been cleaned out, everyone’s attention turned towards the other two passageways.

Whoosh. Whoosh. Whoosh. Whoosh. Four figures came flying over.

On the stone island, Ning raised his head to look at them. His eyes narrowed. The new arrivals were Daolord Dreamlore, Daolord Tigrone, Daolord Skyshatter, and Daolord Owlblack.

“The four of them?” Ning didn’t dare to feel the slightest bit of arrogance. All four of them were ranked in the top ten, and the current top ten was much stronger than the previous top ten. Many Daolords who had been previously low-key had emerged, and every single one was difficult to deal with.

Dreamlore was ranked number three and was second only to Ning himself. Both Dawnstar and the Radiant King had been defeated by him, a testament to his power.

“You wish to stop us and to assist your good friend Ninedust?” Daolord Dreamlore smirked as he glanced at Ning. “Darknorth, you’ve already helped him acquire a Voidsea Jade seal; are you going to help him again? What a selfless man you are.”

“I’m actually helping myself,” Ning said calmly.

“What, you actually plan on stopping the four of us?” the heavily-armored and muscular Daolord Tigrone spoke in a deep, rumbling voice.

“Heh heh heh...” Daolord Owlblack laughed, his voice grating and piercing to the ear. “He really doesn’t know his own limits.”

“There’s one of me and four of you... but you still won’t be able to do anything to me,” Ning said icily.

Dreamlore and the others frowned. The four of them could suppress even Winesage in a frontal attack, but they had to admit that if Ning wished to hide they wouldn’t even be able to track him down. He had a heartworld projection, his nine novessence arts, and even that assassination art.

“So long as I am here, there’s no way you’ll be able to train in the [Vitalis] art in peace,” Ning said.

“Leave. Go somewhere else.”

“Nice one,” Daolord Owlblack smiled coldly.

“That’s a nasty move.” Daolord Skyshatter ground his teeth.

There really was nothing the four of them could do. Cultivation required silence and focus; if Ning was causing trouble for them, how could they possibly train?

“Darknorth, there are only three passageways in total. You’ve already cleaned out one of them, so there really are only two left. The other is current being challenged by Winesage, Dawnstar, Ninestone, and Cloudwalker, and the others. The other Daolords probably won’t be able to catch up to them and so many of them will come here instead. They’ll master the [Vitalis] art and then charge through in mass. I want to see how many of them you can stop!” Daolord Dreamlore said coldly, “We’re leaving now.”

The four of them smiled coldly as they flew away.

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Ning knew that a ‘one man army’ like himself wouldn’t be able to hold everyone off forever. However, every moment he held them off for was an extra moment for Ninedust. Ninedust was helping him out, after all; the more command talismans he acquired, the more fruit he would be able to harvest and the better his chances of reviving his wife were.

“Hmph.” Ning radiated an eager desire to do battle.

Time continued to flow on, with Ning standing a silent guard. As for the Ninedust Sectlord, he was still stuck on the [Daoheart] technique. More than a month went by.

Whooooosh. An awe-inspiring group of figures flew over from afar.

Ning raised his head, his face tightening. The arrivals were Daolord Dreamlore’s group of four and King Paleos’ group of twelve.

“Kill!”

“Charge onto the seven-colored chains!”

The sixteen supreme Daolords charged forwards, executing their secret arts and sending out a flood of magic items to attack. Ning’s face had turned solemn long ago, and he hurriedly used his heartworld projection and his nine novessence arts to attack while using his Shadowless evasion art to vanish without a trace. In the face of such a gathering of power, he didn’t dare to fight head-on.

“Tigrone, Skyshatter, the two of you stand guard for now while the two of us charge through the chains. As agreed, the four of us will evenly split any fruit we acquire,” Dalord Dreamlore sent mentally. He knew very well that he himself wouldn’t be able to keep a command talisman safe by himself. The four of them would have to continue to work together.

“Agreed.” Daolord Tigrone and Daolord Skyshatter both nodded as Owlblack and Dreamlore both charged towards the seven-colored chains.

“Stop right there!” Ning’s heartworld projection and nine novessence arts were compressed to a smaller region, serving as a ‘bottleneck’ in front of the seven-colored chains. If anyone wished to cross through the chains, they would have to first cross this region.

Ning revealed himself, six Northbow swords at the ready within the ‘bottleneck’.

“You wish to block all of us?” Dreamlore smiled coldly. “King Paleos!”

“Attack!”

“Let’s attack!” King Paleos’ led six of his supreme Daolords to press the assault as well. It had only been a month or so, after all. Even though they had temporal acceleration treasures, only some of them had mastered the [Vitalis] art.

“You won’t be able to stop us.” King Paleos led the six supreme Daolords, joining Daolord Dreamlore and Daolord Owlblack as they charged towards Ning.

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Book 33: Crimsonwave Temple Chapter 19: Triage

King Paleos, Fiendqueen Dustrain, Daolord Owlblack, and Daolord Dreamlore led the group of nine supreme Daolords in charging straight towards Ji Ning.

One against nine? Not even Winesage would be able to pull that off, to say nothing of Ji Ning. Not only that, even the other supreme Daolords hanging back such as Daolord Tigrone and Daolord Skyshatter were charging towards Ning, seeking to tie him down.

“He won’t be able to stop us.”

“Nobody can stop this many Daolords.”

“Haha, we’re going to make it through.” The supreme Daolords were filled with confidence.

The three-headed, six-armed Ning stood there by himself at the beginning of the seven-colored chains. His six Northbow swords were at the ready, while the nine novessence arts and the heartworld projection covered the surrounding area. He just watched calmly as the host of supreme Daolords charged towards him.

Whoosh! Ning suddenly vanished without a trace.

“Careful, don’t let him ambush you. His assassination art is extremely unpredictable.”

“Be careful.”

They all began to wildly blast the entire area while sending their own secret arts and heartworld projections to contend with Ning’s head-on. As they did so, they continued their charge.

Swoosh! Swoosh! Swoosh!

“We made it!”

“I made it as well.” One supreme Daolord after another landed on the seven-colored chains. As soon as they did so, they were able to sense an invisible force wrap around them that protected them from the battle raging just outside. No combat was possible on the chains.

“Let’s go!” King Paleos charged forwards as well. Clang! Suddenly, a black hole appeared directly in front of him. A moment later, he was blasted backwards with a huge booming sound.

Clang! Daolord Owlblack fought in a barehanded style and was extremely strong in close combat, but just like Paleos he was blasted backwards with an explosion.

“Careful! That’s Darknorth!” King Paleos and Daolord Owlback were both furious.

Ning had to briefly reveal himself while attacking, and he swept the group with a cold gaze. A heartbeat later, he vanished once more. It was very difficult for Ning to kill them, but his defensive sword-arts were so superlative and the [Heartsword] technique so formidable that it was very easy for him to stop them in their tracks and knock them flying, one after the other.

"I refuse to believe it." Daolord Dreamlore's youthful face had a look of cold malice on it as he struck out with his massive two-handed bloodblade.

"Fuck off." Whoosh! An incomparably dazzling streak of bloody light suddenly appeared. It was like a scene of peerless beauty that would cause those who saw it to be intoxicated by it. Even Daolord Dreamlore himself was completely absorbed and entranced when he executed this attack. This 'bloodblade' was a very mysterious and unique weapon. He had been entranced by it, and his Dao was able to truly and fully merge with it.

"Fast! Even faster than me!" Ning was shocked. His swords were incredibly fast, but when he saw that dazzlingly beautiful streak of bloody light he knew that his attacks were still significantly slower in comparison.

Ning's six Northbow swords struck out in unison. Ning had been able to use merely a single sword to knock Daolord Paleos, Daolord Owlblack, and Fiendqueen Dustrain back, but he didn't dare to be the slightest bit overconfident against Daolord Dreamlore's dazzling strike.

Six streams of mist-formed swords struck out, each of them moving faster than a hundred times the speed of light.

Clang! Clang! Clang! In the end, he had an advantage in that he only needed to focus on defense. Although the Radiant King and Palace Lord Dawnstar had been defeated by Daolord Dreamlore, they were still able to preserve their lives. In comparison, Ning's close combat abilities could be described as truly perfect and flawless!

Although he was using the Omega Sword Dao – Blood Drop, in the instant that his sword-light collided it transformed into the Omega Sword Dao – Soleheart. After truly developing the Omega Sword Dao, Ning's offensive techniques could transform into defensive techniques, and vice versa. All techniques could be instantly converted into different techniques without even the slightest trace or opening.

Boom! Daolord Dreamlore only felt an enormous shockwave sweep past his body, sending him stumbling backwards. A look of shock appeared on his face. This was the first time that his attack had been crushed head-on!

Although Dawnstar and the Radiant King had been able to survive his assault, they had been left in very bad shape. Even if Winesage was to face off against this attack of his, Winesage would be forced to simply defend, given that Winesage was just too slow. Darknorth, however, was able to crush him!

"Impossible. Impossible!" A berserk look appeared within Daolord Dreamlore's eyes. "Again!" He was filled with the utmost devotion and sincerity towards his bloodblade.

Swoosh! Yet another dazzling streak of bloody light filled the skies.

"Hmph." Ning's six streaks of mist-formed sword energy once more appeared as well. They were like the spokes to a giant wheel, and when they stabbed out they quickly began to swivel together to form a

massive black hole that smashed directly against bloody streak of light, destroying it and knocking Daolord Dreamlore flying backwards.

“Daolord Dreamlore, you might be faster than me... but you only have a single bloodblade. If you had six, I’d probably find it much tougher to deal with you.” Ning’s voice rang out.

His sword wasn’t as fast as Daolord Dreamlore’s, but at least he was closer to Dreamlore’s speed than any other Daolord. The difference wasn’t as great as it was for the likes of Winesage and Dawnstar! Given that he was able to defend with all six Northbow swords at the same time while using incredibly tough defensive sword-arts, he was naturally able to endure the blow and knock his opponent backwards.

“Damn that Darknorth.” The nearby King Paleos, Daolord Owlblack, and Fiendqueen Dustrain all began to grow anxious. Dreamlore was knocked flying back, an ugly look on his face. After he had defeated the Radiant King and Dawnstar, he had felt extremely confident in being able to challenge the second-ranked Daolord Darknorth... but reality had just slapped him in the face! He could sense the enormous disparity in power between the two of them.

What he didn’t know was that ever since Ning had mastered the tenth stance of the [Heartsword] art, Ning had already closed the gap between himself and Winesage! This meant there was now a huge gap in power between Ning and all other supreme Daolords which was only worsened by how balanced and flawless Ning’s sword-arts were!

“What should I do?”

“The other Daolords have already made it across. The only ones left here are us.”

“Damn that Darknorth. He’s quite crafty.”

Dreamlore, King Paleos, Owlblack, and Fiendqueen Dustrain were all frantic with impatience. Nine of them had started this charge, and Ning truly wasn’t able to stop all of them at once... but he was more than capable of tying down four of them.

Whoosh. Ning once more reappeared in front of the seven-colored chains. “You shall not pass.” Ning looked at the four of them.

“What should we do? When we attack, Darknorth just hides and ignores us.” Tigrone, Skyshatter, and the others who were holding back and planning to cross the chains began to grow anxious as well.

Ning completely ignored them. His attention was focused on the four.

Ning knew that it was fairly hard to master the [Daoheart] technique. As for defeating the 9000 barriers? Those weaker first-tier Daolords wouldn’t pose Ninedust any risk at all.

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At this very moment, Ninedust was within the floating stone island in front of the second abyss. He was training in the [Daoheart] technique with his temporal acceleration cottage. He had failed time and time again, and thus he knew exactly what was going on outside thanks to those moments of clarity. “I need to speed up. Darknorth is buying me as much time as he can. I need to speed it up!”

Whoosh. Whoosh. Whoosh. Five supreme Daolords appeared before him.

“Ninedust, hand over the Voidsea Jadeseal!”

“Hand it over, Ninedust!”

The five supreme Daolords immediately surrounded and attacked Ninedust. To them, the Voidsea Jadeseal was what truly mattered. The command talismans might technically be more valuable, but they were only of use to Eternal Emperors. No amount of treasures the Eternal Emperors might give them would make any difference if they weren't able to complete the Daomerge! To them, all nine command talismans weren't as valuable as a single one of those Voidsea Jadeseals.

Whoosh. The temporal acceleration cottage vanished, while Ninedust transformed into an endless sea of water that filled the surrounding area. Part of the sea coalesced into a humanoid figure that spoke out: “I, Ninedust, swear on my very life itself that I have already used up the Voidsea Jadeseal I acquired. If I violate or betray this oath, may my soul and truesoul be shattered and dispersed.”

His booming voice filled the entire world around them.

“Uh?”

“But...”

The five supreme Daolords who had been permitted by Ning to enter this island were all stunned. Even Daolord Dreamlore and the others on the first island were all stunned.

He already used it up? One of the main reasons why they had so frantically attempted to make it onto the second island was because they wanted to take Ninedust's Voidsea Jadeseal from him! This was what truly drew their attention.

None of them wanted to believe it, but Ninedust had already sworn a lifeblood oath. That meant this was definitely true.

“Damnit.”

“He actually used it.”

“Just what I was afraid of...”

“He must've used it up when we were busy fighting over the final Voidsea Jadeseal in the second world...”

“Sly bastard.” All of them felt resentment and regret. Still, all that resentment was of no use. Since Ninedust had already used it up, they didn't want to waste any more time on him. He had an invulnerable aquaform, after all; he wouldn't be easily defeated.

“This [Daoheart] technique... it's absolutely marvelous. Absolutely inconceivable!”

“The [Daoheart] technique?” After a brief moment of disappointment, the five supreme Daolords turned their attention to the [Daoheart] technique. All of them were stunned and wildly delighted, and they quickly began to memorize and train in the technique. Techniques which could be used to strengthen the Dao-heart were truly priceless. This technique alone made their visit to Crimsonwave Temple worth it.

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Book 33: Crimsonwave Temple Chapter 20: The Final Command Talisman

“What’s a [Daoheart] technique?” King Paleos called out loudly.

“A technique that can be used to enhance the Dao-heart,” one of the five supreme Daolords immediately shouted back.

King Paleos, Daolord Dreamlore, and the others instantly grew excited.

“Gentlemen, if you are willing to choose a different passageway I’d be willing to transmit the [Daoheart] technique do you,” Ning said.

“No need. They’ve already sworn lifeblood oaths to share any and all techniques we find,” Daolord Tigrone said in a gravelly voice. The reason why he was willing to forgo charging into the passageway was precisely because the others had all sworn lifeblood oaths to share any techniques they found as well as to split any fruit they acquired.

“Oh?” Ning said calmly, “It doesn’t matter. The four of you can forget about making it across.”

Ning’s defensive prowess was such that not a single attack had landed on him yet. In truth, even if he had been hit his Hegemon armor would’ve been able to absorb the blow. Tying down four supreme Daolords was entirely within Ning’s capabilities.

“The four of us won’t be able to make it across,” King Paleos sent mentally. “Tigrone, Skyshatter, the two of you need to train in the [Vitalis] art as soon as possible. Once you master it, you can join the four of us in our attempts. If all six of us work together, he probably won’t be able to stop us.”

“Alright.” The main reason why Tigrone, Skyshatter, and the rest didn’t join the attempt was because they hadn’t mastered [Vitalis]. Ning could simply ignore them and thus was able to easily focus his efforts on stopping just the other four.

For a time, the battlefield grew silent. Ning continued to stand there by himself in front of the seven-colored chains, a single man who could stop even an army in its tracks.

Another five days went by.

“Hahaha...” Loud laughter rang out as the Ninedust Sectlord stepped onto the tri-colored chains and began to stride across them.

“Damn.” The faces of Daolord Dreamlore, King Paleos, and the others all turned pale.

“Excellent.” Ning revealed a delighted look.

Ninedust walked across the tri-colored chains. Although the level of pain increased as he continued to advance, he was still able to endure it and make it across to the altar, where he acquired the sixth command talisman at its base.

“Haha, Darknorth, it took me forever to master the ‘Dao-heart’ challenge. I really feel a bit embarrassed.” Ninedust turned to stare at Ning, calling out to him.

“Stop wasting time and words. Hurry up and crack the altar open! Remember, use a temporal acceleration treasure! This challenge is the hardest of all,” Ning called out loudly.

“Got it!” Ninedust responded.

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Although King Paleos and the others were very anxious, there was nothing they could do. Ning had focused on the four of them with laser-like precision. Given that the heartworld projection and the nine novessence arts were all aimed at them, there really was no way for them to get across.

Another half month went past. Finally, Tigrone and Skyshatter both mastered the [Vitalis] art as well.

“Let’s go together.”

“I want to see how he’ll stop this many of us!”

Dreamlore, King Paleos, Owlblack, Dustrain, Tigrone, and Skyshatter joined forces to charge towards the seven-colored chains.

“Huh? What’s going on?” Daolord Tigrone found out that... nothing happened at all. No one impeded him as he charged onto the seven-colored chains.

“Eh? I made it?” Fiendqueen Dustrain was stunned as well.

The two hurriedly crossed the seven-colored chains. However, Dreamlore, King Paleos, Daolord Owlblack, and Skyshatter were all stopped by Ning.

“The four of you aren’t allowed to cross.” Ning’s voice rang out. He had specifically decided on which Daolords he could let across. In the end, he just wasn’t strong enough and wouldn’t be able to block everyone, and thus he had to pick and choose who he would and would not let cross.

The five he had initially let onto the seven-colored chains were all supreme Daolords who ranked at the back of the line. They posed no threat at all.

As for Fiendqueen Dustrain? When Ninedust had first arrived at the Waveshift Realm, he had already been on par with her! However, back then Ninedust had only recently become a Daolord of the Fourth Step and hadn’t come up with any ultimate attacks for himself yet. Thanks to the legacy of the Ancient Hegemon as well as his experiences in Crimsonwave Temple, he had already come up with a total of three killer attacks and had definitely surpassed Fiendqueen Dustrain in power.

It must be remembered that breaking through the 9000 barriers was all about attack power! Ninedust’s attack power was definitely above Fiendqueen Dustrain’s, and so she wouldn’t prove to be much of a threat. As a result, Ning let her across.

As for Daolord Tigrone? His defensive prowess was truly unrivalled, but his attacks were much weaker. He also wouldn’t be much of a threat.

But Dreamlore, Owlblack, Skyshatter, and Paleos were the four most dangerous Daolords present. Ning naturally would have to stop them!

“You fight dirty, Darknorth.”

“Daolord Tigrone and Fiendqueen Dustrain, do your best to acquire that command talisman. If you can kill Ninedust, all the better.”

“It’ll be up to the two of you.”

Dreamlore and the others had to give up, even though they didn’t wish to.

“Let’s go find the Radiant King, Daolord Feich, and the others. The final Voidsea Jadeseal is on Daolord Feich,” Daolord Dreamlore ordered. He immediately led Owlblack, Skyshatter, and King Patreos as well as the other Daolords in leaving. These nine supreme Daolords began to charge towards the other passageway in search of Daolord Feich.

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Everything fell silent.

Dustrain, Tigrone, and the rest of the supreme Daolords were all focused on the [Daoheart] technique. As for Ninedust, he had already reached the altar. He first used the temporal acceleration treasure to cover the entire thing, then began to assault the 9000 barriers.

“No one’s coming?” Ning’s life was now quite relaxed. “Maybe I should go take a look and see how the other passageway is doing.” Ning flew towards the direction of Winesage’s passageway. When he reached the edges of the passageway, he stared at the distant islands.

“Wow!” Ning was stupefied by what he saw.

The situation in this passageway was far more chaos. Winesage, Dawnstar, Cloudwalker, and Ninestone were at the peak of the altar, working together to assault the 9000 barriers while also assaulting each other.

As for the situation on the levitating stone island in front of the second abyss? It was even more chaotic! The Radiant King, Daolord Snowjoy, Daolord Shaka, the Starking, Daolord Feich, and a number of other supreme Daolords were battling each other, with Daolord Snowjoy and Daolord Shaka working together but surrounded and assaulted by the other five.

“Daolord Feich!” A furious shout rang out, followed by King Paleos, Daolord Dreamlore, Daolord Owlblack, and Daolord Skyshatter arriving. They easily traversed the seven-colored chains and joined the wild melee.

“Damn.” The faces of the Radiant King and the others turned pale.

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It really was a wild, chaotic battle. The wild battle at the top of the altar was over the third command seal in that passageway, while the wild battle in front of the second abyss was over the Voidsea Jadeseal.

The only peaceful place was at the outermost region, where the supreme Daolords were all trying to calmly train in the [Daoheart] technique and thus couldn’t be bothered to fight with each other.

“This passageway really is quite chaotic.” Ning stood at the intersection between the two regions, keeping a watch on both sides. He couldn’t be bothered to take part in the battle, as once he did everyone would be wary of him. In fact, they might gang up on him!

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Time flowed on. In the blink of an eye, another year went by. The wild battle continued, with two more supreme Daolords perishing. Both were fairly weak ones, and both died by Daolord Dreamlore’s hands. His bloodblade was simply too vicious and cruel.

Boom! A sonorous explosion rang out as the 9000 barriers atop the altar simultaneously shattered. Ninestone howled with rage as he charged towards Winesage. Much like Tigrone, Ninestone possessed terrifying defensive abilities.

“Get it!” Cloudwalker and Dawnstar simultaneously charged forwards as well.

“Beat it.” Winesage was doing the same.

BOOM!

“Hahaha... brother Winesage, you’ve already acquired the other two command talismans in this passageway. You are being a bit too greedy, don’t you think?” Palace Lord Dawnstar was the one to seize it, delighting Cloudwalker, Ninestone, Snowjoy, and Shaka. The five of them were part of the same time; they had agreed long ago to split the fruits they acquired evenly!

“Damn.” Winesage frowned. He had been the first to arrive and had long ago mastered the [Vitalis] art and acquired the first command talisman. He had also been able to master the [Daoheart] technique with a single try, as the tempering process the Dark Kingdom subjected its Daolords to was utterly terrifying. Given that he was also a Heartforce Cultivator who had been alive for an extremely long period of time, his Dao-heart was indeed superior to Ning’s. This was why he had been the one to acquire both of those talismans.

However, the 9000 barriers were simply too difficult to deal with.

Dawnstar, Cloudwalker, and Ninestone had quickly arrived at the altar as well. By then, Winesage had already shattered the first 8000 barriers... but alas, in the end it was Dawnstar who picked up the trophy.

“The eighth command seal has already fallen into the hands of Palace Lord Dawnstar.” The towering image of a white-robed man appeared above the chaotic battlefield, staring down at the Daolords as his voice echoed throughout the Crimsonwave Temple. “At present, only a single command talisman remains unclaimed, the seventh talisman. Daolords, this is the last one! If you miss it, you probably won’t have another chance like this.”

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When Ning heard the realmsoul’s voice, he hurriedly looked towards Ninedust’s passageway. Right now, Ninedust, Daolord Tigrone, and a little-known Daolord were simultaneously attacking the 9000 barriers together. Ning truly hadn’t expected that Daolord Tigrone and that fairly weak first-tier Daolord would both have such powerful Dao-hearts.

These command talismans mattered to Ning more than anything else right now. He had already done everything he could for Ninedust. The rest would be up to him.

“Ninedust...” Ning watched anxiously. These fruits would be the basis for his negotiations with the major powers. The more he could acquire, the better.

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Thankfully, Winesage and the others didn't take part in the fight over the final command talisman. In truth, there was no way for them to take part even if they wished to. Every single Daolord could only choose a single passageway, after all.

In their eyes, the Voidsea Jadeseal mattered the most!

“The Voidsea Jadeseal.”

“Quick.”

“Go for it!”

As if by silent agreement, Winesage, Dawnstar, Cloudwalker, and Ninestone all hurried onto the tri-colored chains and charged back to the flying stone island in front the second abyss, taking part in the wild battle.

Of the five Voidsea Jadeseals, one had been used up by Emperor Solesky, one had been used up by the Radiant King, and one had been used up by Ninedust. Only two remained untouched. One was in Winesage's hands; everyone knew that there was no way to take it from him. The last one was in Daolord Feich's hands.

“Go for it!”

“Kill him!”

The more chaotic a battle became, the more berserk the weaker Daolords grew. They knew that their only chances would be during wild battles like this. As supreme Daolords, they all had tough life-preserving abilities, ensuring that if they acquired the seal they would stand a good chance of keeping it.

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Time flowed on and the battle continued.

Daolord Feich was indeed good at staying alive. He was aided by the fact that some of the Daolords had long ago sworn oaths to join into true alliances together and help each other resist their foes, no matter who won the seal. Thus, even though another five supreme Daolords perished, Daolord Feich remained alive.

Boom!

The altar within Ninedust's passageway. By now, a total of four supreme Daolords were assaulting the 9000 barriers. Finally, with a loud explosion, the barriers came crashing down.

Whoooooosh. A flood of water instantly swept towards the talisman.

“Ahahaha!” Ninedust roared with laughter, his voice echoing in the world around him. “Darknorth, I have it!”

When the distant Ning saw this, he was so excited that his aura flared mightily, causing energy waves to appear around him. He laughed loudly, “Haha, the heavens have chosen to aid me! The heavens have chosen to aid me!”

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Book 33: Crimsonwave Temple Chapter 21: Harvesting the Fruit

Given Ji Ning’s personality, he generally wouldn’t lose control of himself like this. The fact that he did was a testament to how excited he was. Ninedust had been competing against three other supreme Daolords; there was a very high chance that he would fail. Of course Ning was excited by his success!

“He was actually the one to obtain it?” Daolord Tigrone was so angry he gnashed his teeth.

“I was just about to stop him when he transformed into an endless wave.” Fiendqueen Dustrain ground her teeth angrily as well. She had arrived at the altar at just the nick of time, but she still hadn’t been able to intervene.

Whoosh. After acquiring the talisman, the Ninedust Sectlord transformed into a vast wave that surged out and reformed into human form atop the tri-colored chain. He endured the pain as he quickly walked across the tri-colored chains to the seven-colored chains where Ning was awaiting him.

“I didn’t let you down, Darknorth. Haha! I, Ninedust, am quite capable,” Ninedust said smugly. As he spoke, he handed the three command talismans he had in his position over to Ning. “Here, take’m.” Ninedust was in an excellent mood right now. He had owed Ning a huge favor when the latter had let him take the Voidsea Jadeseal; given his arrogant temperament, he really felt rather uncomfortable owing Ning so much. Now that he was able to make some reparations, he immediately felt much better.

“Thank you.” Ning immediately accepted all three talismans without being shy. They truly were quite important to him.

Whoosh. Rainbow light appeared in the skies above them, condensing into the towering and white-robed figure of Realmsoul Polo. The realmsoul stared down at them and boomed, “Daolords, the Voidsea Jadeseals and the command talismans needed for harvesting the fruit have all been taken. If you wish to fight each other for them, feel free. Those who wish to harvest the fruit can take the command talismans to the corresponding Grovekeepers, who have already come. If you wish to leave, you can do so upon exiting the Crimsonwave Temple. I’ve already set up a spatial tunnel outside Crimsonwave Temple that lets you exit from the Waveshift Realm.”

“We have to be careful. Let’s go trade for the fruit right away,” Ning said cautiously.

“Yes, let’s go.” Ninedust nodded.

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Ning’s worry was that everyone else would fight him over his command talismans, as he had a total of six of them. However, his guess was wrong. Those weaker supreme Daolords were not capable of tying

him down; they simply weren't powerful enough to take things from him. As for the stronger ones, all of them went to fight over the Voidsea Jadeseals.

"So even the final command talisman has been taken? I need to speed this up." Winesage frowned. A large number of Daolords had gathered atop the stony island before the second abyss, including the likes of Palace Lord Dawnstar, Palace Lord Cloudwalker, Ninestone, Snowjoy, Shaka, King Paleos, Daolord Skyshatter, Daolord Owlblack, Daolord Dreamlore, and even the Radiant King, who had returned to try his luck.

In short, a large group of the most elite Daolords in the Endless Territories had arrived.

Boom!

Winesage had been shoved to the sidelines. He was so powerful that no one else wanted to work with him, putting him in an awkward situation.

"This is the right moment!" Winesage suddenly produced an extremely ordinary-looking dart that was roughly half the size of his palm. The dart didn't seem unusual in any way; in fact, none of the battling Daolords sensed anything amiss at all.

Swish!

The dart suddenly shot out, bringing with it a terrifying aura of power that caused all of the many battling supreme Daolords to feel their hearts tremble.

"Not good."

"Careful."

"Dodge!" The subconscious terror they felt caused all of them to know that something bad was happening. By now, all of them saw the object which had inspired terror in them... that streak of dazzlingly fast light.

As soon as the dart had shot out, Winesage had shot out as well behind it.

"No!" Daolord Feich's face turned ashen as he stared at the terrifying dart fly towards him. He almost instantly produced a round, glowing mirror in his hands. Crack! The surface of the mirror shattered, causing a much larger mirror to appear right in front of him.

Ever since he had acquired the Voidsea Jadeseal, he had been hunted by others. Although the Radiant King and the other Daolords in his group had all sworn lifeblood oaths to defend each other regardless of who acquired the seal, there was a limit to how hard they had to fight. As a result, Daolord Feich had encountered quite a few dangerous situations. This was his very last life-saving treasure.

Swish! The streak of light shot into the mirror. The mirror instantly cracked and then completely shattered into tiny pieces. The streak of light continued to shoot forwards, stabbing straight into Daolord Feich's body.

Whoosh. Daolord Feich's immediately transformed into a mass of gray mist.

“Ahhhhhhh! W-what the hell is this?!” An agonized scream rang out from the gray mist, followed by the mist reforming into a corpse. Daolord Feich’s corpse.

Winesage had been flying directly behind that streak of light. As soon as Daolord Feich’s corpse appeared, Winesage waved his hand and immediately collected it.

“Hmph. You should feel proud to have died to my ‘cycleseed dart’.” Winesage hadn’t really been willing to use this treasure, as it was the most powerful killer weapon he had at his disposal. Even people as powerful as the eight lords of the Sacred Cities would probably be heavily wounded if struck! After he acquired the Universe treasure in the Terror Starsea, the Universe treasure had guided him to another ancient battle-site of the Dawn War, where he had acquired two mighty relics. The ‘cycleseed dart’ was one of the two, and it was an extremely venomous and insidious treasure.

Daolord Feich hadn’t been strong enough, and so he had almost instantly died once hit.

“For the sake of the Voidsea Jadeseal, everything is worth it.” Winesage only felt a sense of jubilation. He had been alive for far too long, over a hundred thousand chaos cycles. He had braved many dangers over these years for the sake of his Daomerge! Now that the Voidsea Jadeseals had appeared, he would be willing to pay any price to acquire them.

“With the help of two Voidsea Jadeseals, my chances at succeeding with the Daomerge shall be greatly improved.” Winesage turned to sweep his gaze across the many Daolords. All of them, including Dawnstar, the Radiant King, Dreamlore, and Paleos were all staring at him nervously.

That treasure he had displayed was far too terrifying! Although Daolord Feich only had an imperfect ‘invulnerable form’ which had merely been on par with that of Timedream, one must remember that Ning had spent an inordinate amount of time before he had killed Timedream! Just now, however, Daolord Feich had been slain in an instant. How could everyone not feel stunned?

“It’s impressive that he had even a single treasure like that. I refuse to believe Winesage has another one,” the Radiant King sent mentally.

“Right.”

“And we’re much stronger than Feich.” Daolord Owlblack’s eyes glowed with savage light.

“I would’ve knocked that streak of light aside with just a single strike.” Daolord Dreamlore’s eyes gleamed with madness as well. “Winesage has TWO of the Voidsea Jadeseals, and he hasn’t had the chance to use any of them. Both of them are still on him. Attack!”

“Attack!”

“Kill him.”

All the Daolords moved at the same time. They didn’t care about Ji Ning at all right now. Six command talismans? Even if Ning had all nine, they would still view a single Voidsea Jadeseal as being far more valuable... and Winesage had two of them!

“They actually are attacking?” As soon as the Daolords began to attack, Winesage gritted his teeth and began to flee.

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A black earth golem was chatting with Ning and Ninedust.

“Senior, here is the ninth command talisman.” Ning produced the relevant talisman.

“Yes.” The Grovekeeper lowered his head to look at it, then reached out to accept it. Instantly, one arm after another began to emerge from the vast black earth back in the first world and started to harvest the fruits from the many large, semi-translucent trees nearby. The black arms pulled the fruit into the earth, then caused them to reappear next to the Grovekeeper. Every single tree only had a single fruit. The fruit was semi-translucent as well, with a faint reddish tinge to them. When Ning and Ninedust looked at the red glow, they felt their hearts grow peaceful.

“A total of three hundred fruits.” The Grovekeeper looked at Ning. “These are known as the coldflame cauldron fruits, and they are priceless beyond compare. Even in unique places like Crimsonwave Palace, they take 100,000 chaos cycles to ripen.”

“Understood.” Ning stared at the three hundred fruits flying towards him, then waved his hand and collected all of them.

“Come, let’s go over there.” Ning led Ninedust towards yet another one of the Grovekeepers who had appeared in the third world.

‘Darknorth, look over there!’ Ninedust hurriedly pointed off into the distance.

“Wow.” Ning was surprised. “What’s going on with Winesage? How’d he piss off all the Daolords and get them to attack him?”

Every single Daolord was pursuing and attacking Winesage! This was primarily because Winesage had never chosen to ally with any of the other Daolords. Ning had once invited Winesage to join forces with him, but Winesage had been too proud to do so.

Poor Winesage.

“Forget him. Let’s go harvest that fruit,” Ning said. As he spoke, he and Ninedust flew towards the seventh Grovekeeper and asked him to harvest the fruit from the seventh command talisman.

Boom! Winesage was incredibly strong, and his Universe treasure gave him the strength he needed to endure. With each clash, four or five supreme Daolords were sent flying. However, the other supreme Daolords continued their pursuit, even tossing out Dao-seals and other treasures.

“I have to stand within this diagram for ten seconds before I’ll be sent back to the second world?” Winesage ground his teeth. “Why do I have to wait this long?”

“Winesage, there’s no chance you’ll be able to stand there for ten seconds.”

“You won’t be able to escape.”

The many supreme Daolords were all working together to assault Winesage, giving him no chance to defeat them individually at all. Given how many people were assaulting him, it was simply impossible for Winesage to stand there without moving for ten seconds. How was he supposed to escape? If this

continued, he'd eventually be defeated. But was he supposed to actually hand over the Voidsea Jadeseal? He wasn't willing to!

Winesage suddenly saw two figures off in the distance who were chatting with the Grovekeeper in a leisurely fashion. It was Ning and Ninedust.

"Darknorth, give me a hand!" Winesage sent frantically.

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Book 33: Crimsonwave Temple Chapter 22: Ji Ning's Request

"Here are five hundred and sixty of the golden sandsifter fruit." The Grovekeeper delivered one gleaming golden fruit after another to Ji Ning, who waved his hand and accepted them.

"Darknorth, give me a hand!" Winesage's voice rang out within Ning's mind.

"Eh?" Ning frowned as he turned to look at the furious battle raging off in the distance. There were more than twenty Daolords encircling and attacking Winesage, but Winesage was so incredibly strong that he was able to ensure his enemies weren't able truly work together flawlessly. Each time, Winesage 'only' had to deal with ten of them at most.

"What's wrong, Darknorth?" Ninedust asked.

"It's Winesage. He asked me for assistance." Ning smiled. "He's just barely hanging on right now, but with so many Daolords attacking him he's unable to remain within the teleportation diagram for ten seconds. There's no way for him to leave the third world, much less Crimsonwave Temple."

Ninedust laughed. "It's his own fault for hogging two of the Voidsea Jadeseals, and not even rushing off to use them! He was too self-confident."

"Agreed." Ning nodded. In truth, using the seals in the Waveshift Realm was indeed a bit wasteful. Daolords would generally make plentiful preparations before using up the Voidsea Jadeseal, but for safety's sake Ninedust had used his up long ago. That way, he could ensure that he wouldn't be attacked by everyone else.

"Darknorth, give me a hand! Just tell me what you want!" Winesage sent frantically.

"Why should I help you?" Ning and Ninedust stood off in the distance, watching relaxedly from afar. Ning sent back placidly, "You are being assaulted by numerous Daolords, and you aren't able to escape them. You are locked into combat. Before you die, you'll probably be able to kill a few of them. I could simply go in then and mop up the rest."

"Before I die? I'm not going to commit suicide for the sake of these seals," Winesage sent back. "If the situation truly turns dire, I'd rather offer one of them up and ensure that I stay safe."

"Then go ahead and hand me one of the Voidsea Jadeseals, both of your command talismans, and some of your other treasures. If you do, I'll help out," Ning sent mentally.

"That's a bit much, isn't it?" Winesage replied mentally, "All I need to do is hand a Voidsea Jadeseal over to King Paleos! If I do that, King Paleos and his group of eight Daolords will be willing to swear lifeblood

oaths not to attack me and even help me out! With the eight of them helping me instead of attacking me, I'll be able to escape with ease."

Ning couldn't help but nod when he heard this. Right. The attacking Daolords weren't all on the same page either; they were divided up into multiple 'factions'. The Daolords under King Paleos constituted one faction, the Radiant King led a second faction, Daolord Dreamlore's four-man team made up a third faction, while Palace Lord Dawnstar's five-man squad made up a fourth faction.

Any of the four factions could be bribed using a Voidsea Jadeseal! So long as one of the four joined Winesage, Winesage would be able to break this stalemate.

"It seems I won't have a shot at winning the Voidsea Jadeseal," Ning mused to himself. In truth, he didn't even really want it that much; he had intentionally started off with a very high ask. "Well, give me all the treasures you own, aside from the Voidsea Jadeseals and your weapons. Do that and I'll help you," Ning sent back.

"All my treasures? Those two talismans are enough!" Winesage was growing rather angry. "Darknorth, I've been alive for more than a hundred thousand chaos cycles and have experienced countless dangers. Am I supposed to just give you all of my treasures? Don't you feel that you are asking for a bit much?"

"Not at all. Compared to the Voidsea Jadeseals, those things are worthless." Ning shook his head.

"Two command talismans. That's it." Winesage ground his teeth. "There's no way I'll give you anything else! I need to at least be able to keep myself safe. There's no way I can just give you all of my treasures. Those treasures are enough for me to bribe a few of those Daolords into joining me."

"Hmph." A cold light flashed through Ning's eyes. "True, you need to stay alive. Fine! I can agree to let you keep two life-preserving treasures. Aside from those two treasures, the Voidsea Jadeseals, and your weapons, everything else you own now belongs to me! If you agree, I'll immediately come over and help out. If you refuse... then I'm going to join in and attack you as well!"

"You...!" Winesage's face turned gray. Ning was going to attack as well? Ning was a tremendous threat to him. When Ning had defeated the black-armored general in the second world, Winesage had immediately understood that Ning had grown much more powerful and was now close to him in might! Once Ning intervened, the situation would immediately turn even grimmer.

"You can keep the Voidsea Jadeseals, your weapons, and two life-preserving treasures. I'll wager that you only have a few valuable ones anyhow," Ning sent back. "Letting you choose and keep two of them isn't a bad offer."

Winesage ground his teeth. What a nasty piece of work this Darknorth was, kicking him when he was down! However... Winesage belonged to the Dark Kingdom, while Darknorth belonged to the Dao Alliance and the Brightshore Kingdom. They belonged to enemy organizations to begin with, and Winesage had even attacked Ning previously! Everyone was doing this for the sake of the treasures they wanted. Personal feelings had nothing to do with it.

"Fine." Winesage gritted his teeth and accepted Ning's offer, but his heart was bleeding.

He was the number one Daolord of the Endless Territories and had braved many dangerous areas, earning even a Universe treasure for himself. He had naturally accumulated an enormous number of

treasures! Now, he had to hand nearly ninety percent of them over to Ning... how could he NOT feel heartache at the prospect?

Still... his lifespan was coming to an end. The Daomerge was what truly mattered!

“Good.” Ning revealed a smile. “Shall we swear a lifeblood oath?”

“Of course we have to swear a lifeblood oath!” Winesage said frantically.

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Ning knew that acquiring a Voidsea Jadeseal was rather unlikely. In truth, he was different from the other Daolords; he never really wanted one of the seals that much to begin with. He was perfectly happy earning two of the command talismans. For him to earn the many other treasures which Winesage had accumulated over the years made him even happier.

“Ninedust, I just negotiated a little something with Winesage.” Ning quickly explained what had happened to Ninedust.

“Ah?!” Ninedust revealed a delighted look. “Hah! Savage! Too bad, though, that you weren’t able to get one of those Voidsea Jadeseals. Still, if he was willing to part with one of them he wouldn’t hand over all these other treasures.”

“The two of us will split those treasures once we get them,” Ning sent.

“Split them?” Ninedust was startled. “No way. No way! You go help him out. I won’t be of much use.”

“Both of the command talismans are mine, but we’ll split all the other treasures. I’ve already taken the lion’s share,” Ning said with a calm smile. Winesage certainly had many treasures, but all of them combined probably weren’t worth as much as the fruits! Even Hegemons and the Dao Alliance had gone crazy over those fruits! Winesage had ‘only’ been alive for a hundred thousand chaos cycles; compared to the mighty Hegemons, that was nothing. The Hegemons certainly had far more treasures by far! Thus, his treasures were probably worth just a fraction of what the fruits were worth.

Ninedust had already given Ning three command talismans. How could Ning not give him some treasure in compensation?

In addition, it was likely that they would acquire a number of life-preserving treasures from Winesage. As good friends, splitting them was nothing. Even Sectlord Timedream had given quite a few treasures to the Kingfreak! In addition, at Ning’s level these treasures were generally of very little use to him. What he needed was truly stunning treasures such as the Crimsonwave Temple fruits, treasures which would drive even Hegemons wild with lust.

“Let’s go. Follow me.” Ning transformed into a streak of light.

“Time to attack?” Ninedust immediately grew excited. Thanks to his invulnerable aquaform, he was even better at staying alive than Ning was. He naturally felt eager to take part in this fight!

“I don’t think that’ll even be necessary,” Ning said.

Boom! Ning transformed into a streak of light that charged over from afar. His heartworld projection came crashing down, as did his nine novessence arts. Ning was like an enormous comet blazing through the skies towards the battlefield, while the Ninedust Sectlord roared with laughter by his side.

“Daoloooooords! I’m coming for you all!” He transformed into a vast wave of water that swept through the world like a tidal wave towards the enemy Daolords.

“Is that Darknorth?”

“That’s Daolord Darknorth!”

The faces of the many Daolords assaulting Winesage all tightened, with Dawnstar, Cloudwalker, and Ninestone in particular frowning unhappily. These three were of the Brightshore Kingdom and thus weren’t worried about Ning attacking them, but they wouldn’t be able to attack Ning either.

“Daolord Darknorth, we didn’t go to cause you any trouble. Why are you getting involved?!” King Paleos roared angrily.

“Darknorth, we don’t want your command talismans. Don’t interfere!” Daolord Dreamlore snapped.

All of them were furious. Darknorth had already acquired quite a few command talismans, attracting their envy. They all knew just how valuable those things were! However, for the sake of the Voidsea Jadeseal, they didn’t want to get into a lengthy altercation with him.

“So what if I DO interfere?” A thunderous voice rang out from the heavens as the vast comet of heartforce and energy came crashing down into the battlefield. The Yin-Yang Chaos Domain began to merge together with Winesage’s secret arts as the two joined forces, striking out at their foes.

Swish! Ning disappeared into thin air. He had just used his Shadowless evasion art to move within range of Winesage’s secret arts! Winesage and him were in the same region now. Although Winesage knew that Ning had entered that region, he didn’t force Ning to reveal himself; instead, he aided Ning as best he could.

“He vanished.”

“Darknorth just vanished. Be careful!”

The other Daolords all had ugly looks on their faces.

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Book 33: Crimsonwave Temple Chapter 23: Adventure’s End

They would rather surround and attack Winesage than have to deal with Darknorth. Although Winesage was slightly stronger than Darknorth, he fought in a direct and aboveboard manner. The Daolords all knew where he was, at least! This made surrounding him and attacking him much easier. If Winesage wanted to attack one of them, the others would see it coming and be able to prepare for him accordingly. Daolord Darknorth, however, was another story.

He had assassination arts that allowed him to vanish without a trace, keeping all of the Daolords on their toes. This sort of feeling was quite uncomfortable!

Whoosh. Ning appeared out of nowhere close to two of the Daolords.

“He’s over there!”

“Retreat, quick!”

“Don’t take him head-on!”

The two Daolords were so terrified that they turned pale. By now, everyone knew that Winesage and Darknorth stood at the very apex of power amongst the supreme Daolords. Even the third-ranked Daolord Dreamlore had been blasted back by a single strike from Darknorth! The difference in power was quite apparent.

Swoosh. Ning charged straight forwards, easily deflecting the secret arts and treasures that were assaulting him.

Swish! Swish! Two streaks of mist-formed sword energy tore through the air. Although those two supreme Daolords strove to defend, they were still both knocked flying back from this single clash. One had been struck on the body while the other had been able to block with a shield-type treasure, but even then he was sent flying from the tremendous power of Ning’s sword.

“Everyone, let’s pause for a moment.” Ning’s voice rang out.

The twenty-plus attacking Daolords all had ugly looks on their faces, but they did indeed pause as they all stared at Ning.

Whoosh. Only now did the vast waveformed Ninedust reach Ning’s side, where he quickly returned to his human shape once more.

Winesage, Ning, and Ninedust stood shoulder-to-shoulder.

Ning smiled as he looked at the Daolords before him. “Daolords, you should know quite well that with Winesage, myself, and Ninedust working together, we would be able to defeat even ten supreme Daolords... and given my assassination arts, I imagine that it wouldn’t be too hard to actually kill a few of you.”

“Hmph.” These supreme Daolords were extremely unhappy to hear this, but they all knew that Ning was telling the truth. Just now, he had merely struck out with two swords against those two supreme Daolords. If he had focused all six swords on one of them, he probably would’ve been able to smash that supreme Daolord to death! By himself, he might not be that grave a danger, but with Winesage and Ninedust assisting him, Ning would be an utter terror to deal with. This was only worsened by the fact that Dawnstar, Ninestone, and Cloudwalker couldn’t even attack Ning.

“Darknorth,” Palace Lord Dawnstar called out.

“Brother Dawnstar, treasures go to the strong and the deserving,” Ning said. “All of us have come here to compete over the treasures, and we do that based on how strong we are as well as how lucky we are. Winesage has promised me enough treasures to agree to help him out. If this battle continues... you won’t be able to harm us, but some of you will probably die.”

“Hmph.” Daolord Dreamlore and the others all had ugly looks on their faces.

“Darknorth ended up taking advantage of the situation.”

“Winesage won two of the Voidsea Jadeseals, while Darknorth acquired almost all of the command talismans. These two bastards.” The supreme Daolords felt rather resentful at this outcome.

“What, do you really want to keep fighting instead of bringing this to a close?” Ning said calmly, “I really don’t care one way or the other.”

“Gentlemen, shall we keep fighting?” Winesaid said coldly

All of the Daolords were prepared to act without remorse for the sake of these treasures... but alas, they had encountered the even more remorseless Ji Ning and Winesage.

The supreme Daolords exchanged glances. Although they didn’t want to accept this, they could read the writing on the wall. Winesage himself was far stronger than all other Daolords. As for Darknorth, he had already been strong prior to entering Crimsonwave Temple, and he had now grown to become even more terrifying. Once these two terrifying Daolords joined together, they truly would be a deadly force to reckon with.

“You two really are nasty pieces of work.” Daolord Dreamlore turned and started to walk away. “Let’s go.”

“Let’s go.”

“Let’s leave.” One supreme Daolord after another began to step into the teleportation diagram.

Ninestone looked at Ning. “Darknorth, I imagine you ended up making a killing off of Winesage. Impressive.”

“King Nine.” Ning nodded. “It was all luck.”

“I want to have your luck,” Palace Lord Dawnstar muttered.

“Let’s go. We have some fruit to harvest as well,” Palace Lord Cloudwalker said.

There were a total of nine command talismans. Ning had eight of them, while Dawnstar’s group had acquired one as well... the eighth command talisman!

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The Daolords were all quite intelligent. They’d only fight if they felt that had a chance at victory. If their chances were nil, who would be so foolish as to get into a fight and possibly die? Thus, once Ning and Ninedust showed themselves, Ning only had to display a bit of his power in order to let them know that it was time to leave.

“You utter savage.” Winesage turned to look at Ning, a mixed look on his face. “You didn’t have to do a damn thing, but now I have to give you all my treasures.”

“Cut the crap. Hurry up and hand’m over,” Ning said with a grin on his face.

There was nothing Winesage could do. Still, although he looked quite helpless and unhappy, he was actually in an excellent mood. His lifespan was coming to its end, after all! If he failed his Daomerge,

what would be the point of keeping all those treasures? If he succeeded, he would become a Hegemon, making the treasures of even less use to him! This was why the Voidsea Jadeseal and the Universe weapon truly were the only things that really mattered to him right now.

“Take it. I’ve killed quite a few supreme Daolords and collected all of their treasures. Now, all of it will belong to you.” Winesage handed over a round disc.

Ning accepted the disc. Once he scanned it, he immediately revealed a look of delight. Due to the lifeblood oath binding them, Ning didn’t worry about Winesage holding anything back at all; if Winesage had, he would’ve already seen his truesoul shattered by the lifeblood oath.

“Come, come, come! Ninedust, this portion is yours.” Ning swept through the disc with his godsense, then quickly split the treasure up into two portions. One portion, Ning put into a storage gourd which he then handed to Ninedust.

“Fine.” Ninedust didn’t decline, electing to accept the gourd. Once he scanned it: “My goodness, that’s a lot of treasure! That’s far more than I had originally.” Ninedust was delighted.

“This is Winesage we’re talking about! How could you and I compare to him when it comes to wealth?” Ning smirked.

The nearby Winesage couldn’t help but let out a cold snort when he heard this. Still, he chose to stay next to Ning and Ninedust. Only by travelling alongside them would his safety be guaranteed.

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Ning, Ninedust, and Winesage travelled together to each of the Grovekeepers, using up the various command talismans to acquire the fruit they needed. Crimsonwave Temple had a total of nine types of fruit, and Ning managed to acquire eight of them.

In truth, this was primarily because he had chosen from the beginning to give up on the Voidsea Jadeseals and instead focus his time and attention on the third world. That was why he had acquired so many command talismans... especially seeing as how it was his decision to let Ninedust take a jade seal that resulted in Ninedust giving him all three command talismans! But of course, the other reason was that Ning was indeed strong enough. He and Winesage completely eclipsed all other Daolords in power.

Whoosh! Whoosh! Whoosh! Three streaks of light flew out of Crimsonwave Temple. They included a white-robed youth with a golden scabbard on his back, a black-robed man, and a silver-robed man bearing a staff.

“We finally made it out.” Winesage smiled.

“Let’s go. Let’s leave this place.” Ning stared forwards towards the giant spatial tunnel in front of them that traversed the skies. Clearly, the realmsoul had established this tunnel as a way out of the Waveshift Realm.

“Time to leave.” Ninedust revealed a delighted look as well.

All three of them had won many things here.

Winesage had acquired two of the Voidsea Jadeseals.

Ninedust had won a Voidsea Jadeseal and had also acquired many treasures.

Ji Ning hadn't acquired any of the seals, but he had harvested the priceless fruits of eight command talismans.

"Time to go." The three transformed into streaks of light that soared into the skies, quickly departing from the Waveshift Realm.

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A large host of figures were waiting outside the spatial tunnel that exited the Waveshift Realm. These were all ancient Eternal Emperors. They normally were secluded in different parts of the Endless Territories, but they had all gathered here today.

At the very front of the vast host, there were six groups of tremendous power. These were the leaders of the Dao Alliance, the Brightshore Kingdom, the Aeonians, the Aberrant special lifeforms, and the Ancient cultivators. All of them stared towards the tunnel with anticipation.

Whoosh. Whoosh. Whoosh. One Daolord after another flew out.

"They're coming out."

"Here they come." Quite a few of the ancient Emperors had been waiting anxiously.

"Owlblack," a white-haired elder called out.

"Ah? Patriarch!" Daolord Owlblack immediately called out respectfully upon seeing this man.

"Do you know who ended up with the coldflame cauldron fruits?" the white-haired elder immediately asked.

"The coldflame cauldron fruits. Who took them?"

"Where are they?"

"Who acquired the coldflame cauldron fruits?"

Quite a few ancient Eternal Emperors echoed this question. However, the truly high-status figures like the Hegemons were quite calm, because they had received word long ago that Ning was the one to acquire the ninth command talisman.

Whoosh. Whoosh. Whoosh. More Daolords continued to arrive. Finally, three more streaks of light flew out. They were Winesage, Ninedust, and Ji Ning.

This entire time, the three awesome Hegemons known as Netherlily, Windrain, and Brightshore had been quite calm and quiet, as had the leaders of the other three major powers. Upon seeing the white-robed youth who had a golden scabbard on his back appear, they immediately flew in unison towards him.

"Darknorth."

"Daolord Darknorth."

“Darknorth, my young friend.” One call after another rang out. The most supreme Emperors of the Endless Territories were all staring at Ning, smiles on their faces and looks of incomparable friendliness in their eyes. Even the leaders of the Dark Kingdom and the Aeonians were beaming towards him.