

Desolate 1281

[The Desolate Era](#)

Book 37: Flamewing God Chapter 29: You Are The Best

“Darknorth, the stories say that Chaos Primordials wander through the cosmos by themselves. They are fairly dumb and are easily angered... and the only thing they like to do is eat!” Azurefiend sipped his wine, glancing sideways at the distant Flamewing God as he spoke mentally to Ji Ning. “These things supposedly will eat almost anything. When they run into a realmverse, they’ll go so far as to slowly work its way through and devour the entire realmverse and everything within it. While they wander the Chaosverse by themselves, they’ll generally create their own estate-treasures and put living creatures inside, having those creatures provide food and wine for them to eat and drink whenever they so desire.”

Ji Ning nodded. He knew all this, of course. Ever since he had acquired the verdant azuresoul, he had immediately searched for every scrap of information regarding Chaos Primordials that he could find. How could he possibly not know that Chaos Primordials loved to eat? This was the reason why Autarch Bolin had modified that verdant azuresoul with the goal of using it to control a Chaos Primordial.

“Brother Azurefiend, I acquired many different types of spirit-fruit and rare delicacies from the Hegemons and Emperors who came to the Jadedfire Realm last time. Want to try some?” Ning said.

“You’d be willing to share?” Azurefiend’s eyes lit up. Rare spirit-fruits and delicacies were of tremendous interest to major powers, but many were so rare that major powers would only eat them sparingly. They would generally unwilling to eat them casually and in large amounts.

“Of course! Come, sample some of this wine. This came from Hegemon Blackwood,” Ning said as he picked up a large gourd and unstopped it.

Whoosh. An aroma of fragrant wine immediately spread out to fill the entire hidden region. Hegemon Azurefiend’s eyes gleamed with a greedy light as he stared at the gourd. “Haha, it seems that looting from Hegemons and Emperors really is the fastest way to acquire treasures. I’ve only tasted this ‘Six Bandit Caves’ spirit-wine a single time in the past. Hegemon Blackwood truly is impressive in the Dao of Numerancy; someone must have asked him for help and used this wine in trade. Quick, let me taste some of it!”

“I don’t have much of this wine. You have to drink it slowly! Once we finish this gourd, we won’t have any more left,” Ning said.

“Heh heh, I’ll definitely savor it.” Hegemon Azurefiend was truly excited. He really was a glutton.

The distant Flamewing God sniffed the air, then lifted its head and turned to stare in their direction. A chunk of meat fell out of its open mouth and onto the ground, but it didn’t even notice. It stared intently at the gourd of wine on Ning’s desk, the smell of the wine driving it crazy.

Although its estate-treasure held many living creatures inside who were devoted to providing it food and drink, only ordinary types of sustenance could be provided. Truly rare spirit-fruits and delicacies could only be harvested from extremely unique environments, as they were formed based on drawing

upon various unique types of energy from the Chaosverse. How could an estate-treasure possibly create good food?

"We each drink one glass at a time. Take it slow and don't even think about trying to hog it for yourself," Ning said in a stingy manner.

"Fine, fine!" Hegemon Azurefiend was feeling quite impatient. Ning nodded, pouring them each a glass. Whoosh. A deep red liquid that was almost ruby-colored came dribbling out of the gourd and into the two wine glasses. It looked absolutely mouth-watering.

"Eh?" Ning suddenly seemed to sense something, and he turned to stare off in the distance. The Flamewing God's mouth was open, and it was literally drooling onto the floor.

"T-this wine..." The Flamewing God swallowed, then immediately said: "Can I have some of it?" It was born with a love of food and wine, but it had been ages since it had enjoyed such fine wine. It was completely unable to resist the urge.

"No way! We only have just one gourd. There's not even enough for the two of us," Hegemon Azurefiend said hurriedly.

"You aren't going to share?" The Flamewing God was growing rather angry.

"Stop trying to scare me. You are bound inside that cage, and your flames can't harm us at all." Hegemon Azurefiend was a glutton as well. There was no way he was going to share the little wine they had.

"Y-you...!" The Flamewing God's eyes turned round with indignation. It wasn't very intelligent, and it usually just took whatever it wanted! Now that it was trapped, however, taking by force was no longer an option... but it really did want to drink some of that fine wine!!! When it smelled that wine, it no longer had any appetite for the basins of food that lay in front of it."

"Azurefiend, this is our first time seeing a Chaos Primordial. To be able to eat and drink with one of them is a lucky event. Let's not be stingy," Ning said with a laugh.

"Right, right!" The Flamewing God instantly grew excited.

"What's the point of feeding it? It's pointless! Better to feed me instead," Azurefiend argued.

"YOU...!" The Flamewing God glared furiously at Azurefiend, feeling an increasing level of distaste towards that skinny old man. It said furiously, "I'll EAT you!"

"Come and try," Azurefiend snickered.

"Enough, enough. Let's not fight. Flamewing was captured by the Sithe, while we cultivators fought a bloody war against them. If you view it from that perspective, we're actually all on the same side," Ning said.

"Right, right! Your name is Darknorth, right? I agree with what you say, one hundred percent. You are spot on! The two of us are on the same side," the Flamewing God said.

In his heart, Ning felt rather ashamed. He was swindling something with the intelligence of a child! Still, he would eventually be saving the creature by releasing it from its prison. It could be said that he was helping it out as well.

“I’m very happy to be able to feast alongside a Chaos Primordial. Here, have another gourd.” Ning tossed out a gourd towards the Flamewing God’s direction, causing it to fly straight towards the creature. The Flamewing God was instantly excited upon seeing it, and it sent out an invisible hand of energy which caught the gourd, pulled out the stopper, and then poured out the wine.

The Flamewing God opened its mouth wide and immediately began to guzzle the wine down.

“You are seriously...” Hegemon Azurefiend felt rather speechless about all of this.

“Ah, it’s fine. I have plenty of things to eat and drink. Those Hegemons brought me quite a bit of spirit-fruit and other treasures.” Ning waved his hand, causing a large amount of spirit-fruit and other special foodstuffs to appear on the tables. Spirit-fruits were unique fruits which by some mechanism were able to take in some of the essences of the Chaosverse. Some were even used in alchemy to refine pills. Others were used to make wine, while still others could be eaten raw!

The ones Ning had just brought out were all delicious when eaten. They were unfathomably more delicious than the legendary ‘Peaches of Immortality’ of the Three Realms had been.

“Haha...” Azurefiend began to laugh loudly when he saw this. He immediately reached out with his large but scrawny hand to grab some fruit, then began to munch down on it. Juice from the fruit splattered across his mouth, and a look of contentment was in his eyes.

“Can I have some of the fruit as well?” The distant Flamewing God looked at Ning in a pitiable manner. It had already finished the wine; Ning had only given it a single gourd, after all. Azurefiend had only taken tiny sips of the wine, while the Flamewing God had guzzled it down like water. Yes, the feeling had been great, but it was over in the blink of an eye.

The Flamewing God felt as though every single one of the fruits on the table was absolutely enticing to it, and the fragrance was driving it mad. Normally, it would’ve seized all the fruit for itself, but it currently was only able to beg for alms.

“Haha, I have plenty of fruit as well.” Ning waved his hand, causing a large basin of fruits to fly over. This basin had a hundred different types of fruit within it, and they all emanated different yet charming auras. One of them was a large egg-shaped item... the ‘verdant azuresoul’ which Ning had acquired.

The large basin of fruit flew over towards the Flamewing God. Ning laughed: “You have to eat a bit more slowly this time. If you swallow it all in one gulp, I’m not going to be able to afford giving you much more.”

The Flamewing God drooled as it stared at the basin of fruit in front of it. It wanted to eat all of it, with the verdant azuresoul being of especial interest. Its eyes reddened with excitement and gratitude as it turned to look at Ning. It felt as though this cultivator was the best person in the entire Chaosverse, and it immediately said: “You are absolutely the best! If I can escape this place, I’ll definitely help you out.” After speaking, it lowered its head and began to eat the fruit.

Ning seemed quite relaxed, but in truth he was watching intently. *It has to eat it. It has to eat the verdant azuresoul!*

“Wow, this is delicious! Its been a long, long time since I’ve had so much good food.” The Flamewing God was incomparably excited. Even before the Sithe had captured it, it would only very rarely have a chance to encounter such delicious food. After being captured, its life became even duller; the Sithe hadn’t given it anything to eat at all. It could only rely on its own food and drink the ordinary wine which the living beings in its estate-world created for it.

“I’m going to eat this one first. It smells so good!” The Flamewing God opened its mouth and chomped down at the verdant azuresoul, which was the most alluring.

Crunch! Crunch! The Flamewing God devoured the verdant soul at one go, its mouth filled with absolute bliss as it slowly chewed away at the fruit before finally swallowing it down.

Ning, seated off in the distance, quickly sensed a ripple emanate from the beast. The invisible ripple had completely merged into the Flamewing God’s body and permeated through its soul and truesoul.

“Success.” Ning let out a sigh of relief. It had all seemed so very simple, but he had been more nervous than during any battle in recent memory.

The Flamewing God lowered its head to eat some more fruit, but it couldn’t help but look up towards Ning every so often. It felt increasingly well-disposed towards Ning; the man was simply too good to it. It suddenly felt a strong sense of attachment towards Ning, as though Ning was the person it trusted and liked the most in all the Chaosverse. It didn’t even realize that its truesoul had been dominated; all it knew was that it felt a sense of bone-deep love and veneration towards Ning.

As for Ning, he picked up a glass of wine and began to walk straight towards the Flamewing God.

“Master!” Whitethaw was shocked.

“Don’t move too close to it.” Azurefiend was shocked as well.

“Don’t worry. It’ll be fine,” Ning said. He moved towards the six chains and began to inspect them. He had to come up with a way to break the formations securing these chains. Only then would he be able to rescue the Flamewing God. If he wasn’t able to do that, then taming it would’ve been a pointless act.

[The Desolate Era](#)

Book 37: Flamewing God Chapter 30: Friends For Life

“Darknorth.” Azurefiend had been seated in the lotus position, but he hurriedly jumped to his feet to pull Ji Ning back. The Flamewing God was capable of killing even Hegemons with ease; a puny Daolord would be nothing to it. How could Azurefiend not be worried?

Unfortunately, Ning moved far too fast. With a single step, he appeared right next to the Flamewing God, who turned to look at the tiny little speck that had just appeared next to it.

“Be careful!” Azurefiend and Whitethaw both held their breaths. Ning was now so close that they wouldn’t be able to intervene in time!

“You want some too?” The Flamewing God looked at the tiny human before it, a happy look in its eyes.

“From this day forth, why don’t you stick by my side?” Ning raised his head to stare at the titanic beast before him.

“Hm. Alright. But you have to give me food,” the Flamewing God said.

“No one would be able to give you this much spirit-fruit every day. However, I promise that you’ll have much more and much better food than you have in your estate-treasure,” Ning said.

The Flamewing God felt delighted for a moment, but it then turned to look helplessly at the black chains behind it. “But I’m trapped here. I want to leave with you, but I’m unable to.”

“Let me take a close look.” Ning flew over as he spoke, landing on the Flamewing God’s giant body and moving towards one of the black chains attached to its wings.

Azurefiend and Whitethaw both stared blankly at this sight. “B-but...” Azurefiend was dazed.

“Flamewing is a Chaos Primordial. Why is it being so obedient? Aren’t Chaos Primordials supposed to be easily angered and moved to eat anything that approaches them?”

Taming a Chaos Primordial was an incredibly difficult task. It had a child’s intelligence and a child’s temper. It was entirely possible that it would be happily jesting with a cultivator one moment, then devour that cultivator in the next. Not even the Sithe were able to tame it; the only thing they could do was send three Exalts to capture it with overwhelming power.

“I don’t know. All I know is that it seems to be very obedient towards my master.” Whitethaw felt puzzled as well. He transformed into a streak of light, wishing to move closer to Ning and protect him.

“Eh?” Flamewing had been squatting there while eating fruit, but now he raised his head to glare at the approaching Whitethaw in a baleful manner.

“Be good, Flamewing. He’s my Protector while the other guy is my retainer. Don’t hurt them,” Ning said from his position atop Flamewing’s back.

“Eh, alright.” Flamewing immediately calmed down and ignored Whitethaw. The terrified Whitethaw finally landed on Flamewing’s back as well.

“Master, you have to be careful. This Flamewing God might be playing nice now, but it might very well turn on you in the next moment,” Whitethaw said hurriedly.

“That won’t happen.” Ning was very calm, and his gaze continued to be focused on the black chains.

“But this is a Chaos Primordial!” Whitethaw still didn’t feel safe.

Ning shook his head. He turned to sweep Whitethaw and the distant Azurefiend with his gaze, then said: “Starting today, Flamewing shall be one of my followers as well.”

“Master, you...?” Whitethaw instantly understood.

“Darknorth, are you saying that the Flamewing God has already submitted...” the distant Azurefiend sent a stunned mental message to Ning.

Ning nodded. No longer paying any further attention to their astonishment, he focused completely on analyzing the black chains.

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Protector Whitethaw and Hegemon Azurefiend truly were stunned by this. Ning had tamed a Chaos Primordial? This was absolutely inconceivable. Chaos Primordials were incredibly rare, and not even Hegemons knew how to tame them. The Sithe weren't capable of it either. Most likely, only the supremely exalted Autarchs were capable of such a thing!

To tame a Chaos Primordial, one had to both be lucky enough to encounter one while also having a method of taming it. Clearly, their master 'Ji Ning' had one such method which had allowed him to tame it without anyone being the wiser.

"He's tamed the Flamewing God... absolutely incredible. Simply incredible! A pity that the Flamewing God is trapped here. If he could come up with a way to release it... haha, the Flamewing God would ensure that Darknorth's reputation would skyrocket to incredible heights. Who would dare cause trouble for him? He could simply order Flamewing to attack and wipe that person out." Hegemon Azurefiend sighed in awe.

Not even Realmslord Windgrace would be able to withstand Flamewing's retribution. No one would ever dare to antagonize a major power who commanded a Chaos Primordial.

Whoosh. Azurefiend flew over as well. Now that he knew that Flamewing had been tamed, he no longer felt as worried as he had previously. "How does it look, Darknorth? Are you able to break these chains?" Azurefiend asked. If Ning was unable to breach the chains, then this would all be for naught, and the tamed Chaos Primordial would not be able to overawe the outside world.

Ning frowned as he stared intently at the black chains. The chains were actually formed from countless black threads that were woven together, each of which was covered with countless tiny formations. The formations weren't that complicated; given Ning's current level of mastery in the Dao of Formations, he would be able to resolve them with ease. The problem was that the seeming-ordinary formations engraved upon the chains were all wrapped together and merged into a larger and even more complicated formation.

Every single chain had a suppressive effect as well as an energy absorption effect. The suppressive effect caused the Flamewing God to be completely tied down, preventing it from even changing in size.

"What marvelous formations." Ning suddenly moved. Swish! Swish! Swish! He flew to one black chain after another, this time moving quite quickly as he carried out his inspections.

"Mmm. As I thought, all six of the black chains are virtually identical, and they also work together." Countless thoughts flitted through Ning's mind as he sought to come up with a way to resolve this formation.

In truth, he already had certain ideas when he saw the chains from afar. Now that he was able to inspect them closely, he completely understood how all of the formations operated. However, understanding was one thing; resolving the formations was another.

"How does it look?" Azurefiend asked again. "Can you solve it?"

“Azurefiend, you are even more impatient than I am,” Ning teased with a laugh.

“How can I not be? That’s a Chaos Primordial! If you came bring this Chaos Primordial into the outside world, you can literally do whatever you want.” Azurefiend was quite excited. “It’ll belong to you, but as your retainer...ahaha! Hurry up and tell me if you can solve it or not!”

Ning nodded. “I can!”

Azurefiend was delighted. “Incredible! Impressive indeed. My head hurts just looking at those black chains and their formations... but you think you can solve them? There probably are very few Hegemons who are a match for you in the Dao of Formations.”

Ning laughed. Of course! His mastery of the Dao of Formations had already reached the Archon level. Only someone who had relied on the Dao of Formations to complete the Daomerge and become a Hegemon would be able to surpass him in this regard! But to do that was no easy task. No one in the Sixteen Realmverses Alliance had ever been able to do such a thing!

“How long would it take, approximately?” Azurefiend asked.

“Hard to say. A few chaos cycles, probably,” Ning said.

“That’s fast! You can complete it in just a few chaos cycles?” Azurefiend praised.

Ning secretly muttered to himself. It might be just a ‘few’ chaos cycles, but that was because his Primaltwin was under the affects of accelerated time. It would be equivalent to a few hundred ‘accelerated’ chaos cycles!

These chains and their formations were extremely complex. The only reason why he stood a chance at breaking them was because he had access to many other similar Sithe formations and a very high level of insight into the art of formations, as well as the assistance of the Autarch’s stone dais. Despite that, it would still take him a few hundred chaos cycles!

Still, Ning didn’t really mind. By now, he was finding it extremely difficult to make any breakthroughs in his Omega Sword Dao. The only step waiting for him was the Daomerge! Thus, his goal right now was to focus more on other Daos, including formations, water, fire, time, space, etc. The more insight he gained into these Daos, the more assistance they would be to him in the Daomerge. All Daos shared certain commonalities, after all.

“Flamewing, I’m going to leave for a short while. I’ll be back soon,” Ning said as he flew off its body.

“Oh?” The Flamewing God suddenly raised its head to stare at Ning’s departing figure. “You aren’t going to abandon me, are you?” For some strange reason, it truly wanted to stay by Ning’s side.

“Don’t worry, I’ll be back soon,” Ning said. In his heart, he couldn’t help but sigh. Flamewing was a Chaos Primordial, born with incredible strength but no true understanding of how to use it. It had never ‘trained’ before, and it didn’t even notice that Autarch Bolin had used a technique to invisibly infiltrate its soul and truesoul. Still... to live a life of ignorant bliss was a form of joy as well.

Whoosh. The giant red copper gate appeared once more, with Ning, Whitethaw, and Azurefiend both flying through it.

“Why are we leaving?” Azurefiend asked while flying out.

“It’ll take quite some time for me to breach those chains. Before beginning, I need to go release Ninedust,” Ning said.

“Ninedust? Oh, that friend who you risked your life for in jumping into the Jedefire Realm?” Azurefiend laughed.

“Yes. We’re friends for life.” Ning nodded.

[The Desolate Era](#)

Book 37: Flamewing God Chapter 31: Soon

Ji Ning sent the realmship flying towards Ninedust’s location at high speeds. The silver-robed Ninedust was seated in the lotus position, surrounded by those whirling flames.

“Eh?” Ninedust noticed a streak of light moving towards him from afar. It quickly flew near him, resolving itself into the form of a rather tattered-looking realmship. Three figures emerged from the realmship, with the leader being a white-robed youth who bore a black sheath on his back. It was his good friend, Daolord Darknorth – Ji Ning.

“Darknorth.” Ninedust was happy to see him, but felt mixed emotions as well. As the original instigator of all the events which had occurred in the Jedefire Realm, the Ancient cultivators had kept him up to date on everything which had happened since. Ji Ning had successfully slain Archon Silksnow in order to rescue him! Alas, he had fallen for Archon Silksnow’s last act of revenge. Hegemons and Emperors from many other realmverses had come here, seeking to take his realmship.

Thankfully, the results weren’t so bad; Ning had managed to take on Hegemon Azurefiend as his retainer and force everyone to retreat! In his heart, Ninedust felt tremendous gratitude towards Ning. He knew how much risk Ning had undertaken on his behalf. A single misplaced step would’ve resulted in Ning’s death.

“Ninedust.” Ning smiled as he walked over towards the man.

“Why have you suddenly come to see me? Have you gotten bored working away on that formation?” Ninedust laughed. Ning had told him many years ago that he would have to first completely disrupt the formation-diagram in order to take control over the prisons.

“I’m here out of success, not boredom,” Ning said. “You can come out now.”

“Come out?” Ninedust was stunned. Was he really going to be able to escape this nightmarish prison cell?

Ning gently waved a finger. Whoosh! The flames around the flaming cage instantly parted, revealing an exit. “Hurry up and come out... or are you planning to complete your Daomerge inside?” Ning smirked.

The stunned Ninedust immediately transformed into a streak of light and scurried out.

“I’m actually out.” Ninedust stood within the empty space outside the cage. He stared at himself, then at the flaming cage by his side in disbelief. “It was actually as simple as that. I came out with no fuss at all.”

“Yeah, it was simple for YOU. Breaking the formation wasn’t simple at all for me,” Ning immediately said. He had needed both the Autarch’s stone dais as well as the many records regarding Sithe formation techniques. Both were absolutely critical to his success!

“I know you worked hard. Hey, your realmship is still missing some parts, right? Take it! Consider it your wages for the past few years. Don’t even think about asking me for more.” As he spoke, he tossed a realmship part over to Ning.

Seeing this, Ning didn’t move to decline. They were good friends; he naturally understood how Ninedust felt right now.

Clack clack clack! The realmship immediately swallowed the entire part, and some of the superficial damage began to be repaired once more. Soon, the realmship was in a state where only a few small parts of it remained damaged.

“Master, I’m almost completely repaired now. My internals are in good shape, with just a few missing parts preventing me from fully repairing my exterior,” the realmship-spirit sent mentally. “However, I should be able to teleport and blink just as effectively as if I was in 100% shape.”

Ning nodded. He was planning to give the realmship to the Autarch. Ning had been worried that the Autarch would be unhappy if the damage to the realmship was too great.

“This gentleman here must be Hegemon Azurefiend.” Ninedust turned to look at the skinny old man standing next to Ning. Not daring to be disrespectful, he said with a touch of respect, “Ninedust greets you, Hegemon Azurefiend.”

“Mm. It seems Darknorth and you truly are very good friends. To be able to find a few true lifelong friends on the path of cultivation is worth any price.” Hegemon Azurefiend had a rather complicated look on his face, but when he realized it he hurriedly smiled: “Darknorth kicked up quite a storm when he came here to rescue you. Quite a few Hegemons and Emperors came.”

Ninedust felt rather moved by all this. He truly had been the cause of this great affair.

“Darknorth, now that I’m out, shall we leave the Jadedfire Realm?” Ninedust asked.

“I still have some business here in the Jadedfire Realm. I can’t leave just yet,” Ning said.

“Oh, then I’ll leave on my own.” Ninedust laughed. “My greatest goal right now is to complete my Daomerge. I need to go out and experience more things. If I stay here with you in the Jadedfire Realm, it’ll be detrimental to me with regards to the Daomerge.”

Ning nodded. “Alright. Be careful out there.”

“Don’t worry, I won’t be so unlucky as to need rescuing again.” Ninedust suddenly walked forward and gave Ning a tight hug, then turned and left. “Train hard. I’m planning to start my Daomerge soon. We brothers must both succeed in our Daomerges!”

Ninedust’s voice still echoed in the air, but he himself had already vanished. Ning could sense the determination in Ninedust’s voice when the latter spoke of the Daomerge.

“Succeed in the Daomerge together, eh?” Ning turned and went back the way he came. Friends for life didn’t need to actually be together for their entire lives; it was enough for them to keep each other in their hearts.

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Time flowed on like water. Ninedust continued his adventures through the outside world, encountering quite a few strokes of karmic fortune. As for Ning, he remained within the Jadefire Realm and focused on analyzing those black chains and their formations. But of course, he had also swept the prison regions clean of all the treasures it held... and this time, he truly made a killing!

Although he had acquired a few treasures from threatening the Hegemons and Emperors of the Sixteen Realmverses Alliance, the combined value of those treasures was perhaps at best comparable to a single Hegemon’s networth. The treasures within the prison regions, however, were far more numerous... and Ning had swept through all of them.

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In the blink of an eye, another five chaos cycles went past.

Within a dark region in the Great Dark which was incomparably distant from the Flamedragon Realmverse. This was a dark void which held an enormous triangular region within it that was filled with dazzlingly beautiful palaces, each of which emanated blinding golden light. This was the residence of one of the truly supreme leaders of the cultivator civilizations... the home of Autarch Titanos.

Autarchs were extremely difficult to track down. Autarch Titanos was one of the easier ones to find, because he almost always resided within his estate.

Whoosh. Whoosh. Whoosh. A howling sound could be heard coming from within a private room inside the largest, most towering palace in the region.

A skull-sized gray globe which was covered with countless runes was levitating up and down in the air, emitting a strange whooshing sound as its internals continuously changed.

“How beautiful. How lovely.” The bald, black-robed old man next to the globe was staring at it greedily, his golden eyes filled with joy and the two fleshy antennae on his head quivering in excitement.

“It truly is perfect. Just a small amount of power is needed. Once the insides of the globe continuously guide the power and transform it, its able to unleash absolutely terrifying levels of destructive power. Sithe fabrication techniques were simply incredible. Although we had an overwhelming advantage in individual power during the Dawn War, we still nearly ended up being defeated by the Sithe. The Sithe truly were and are incredible. To this very day, I still don’t fully understand their technologies.” The bald old man stared greedily at the orb, as though he was staring at the person he loved the most.

“Heh heh... last time, I wasn’t careful and put in too much power, wrecking this treasure. Thank goodness that I, Titanos, am awesome. Although I still don’t fully understand this thing, I was still able to repair it! Ahahaha...” The bald old man stared at the continuously changing runes on the surface of the globe, feeling increasingly delighted as he did so. His gaze was able to see through everything, allowing him to observe the intricate transformations occurring within the gray globe.

These transformations were absolutely beautiful to him. Suddenly, the gray globe lifted up into the air and floated in front of him. The fleshy antennae on top of the bald old man's head reached out to gently stroke the globe.

"Although I managed to successfully repair one, I'm still not able to create them from scratch." The bald old man shook his head. "The Sith's underlying foundation of knowledge remains far superior to that of our cultivator civilizations. I can't even imagine how long it would take for us to fully repair all of their shattered treasures."

The bald old man waved his hand, causing the gray orb to vanish into thin air. Whoosh. He pushed open the door to the private room, then strolled out with his long black robes dragging behind him.

"Master." When he reached the palace gates, an azure-robed youth immediately came to greet him. The youth said joyfully, "Master, you repaired it?"

"Of course! When have I ever failed? Don't you know who I am? I'm an Autarch!" the bald old man said smugly.

"Right, right," the azure-robed youth said hastily.

"Xian, my boy... that Daolord Darknorth from the Flamedragon Realmverse asked me to help out just a few dozen chaos cycles ago, yes? I told you I'd be done soon!" the bald old man said smugly.

"It was pretty quick, this time." The azure-robed youth nodded. This was one of the faster response times for Autarch Titanos.

"Well, I'm off to the Flamedragon Realmverse," the bald old man said, then waved his sleeves. Whoosh. Space rippled before him like water. The bald old man stepped into the rippling space, then disappeared without a trace.

The Desolate Era

Book 38: Daomerge Chapter 1: First Autarch Meeting

Vastheaven Palace.

Ever since the Jadedfire Realm affair had concluded, the disciples of Vastheaven Palace had returned to their headquarters. Vastheaven Palace was now even more bustling than it had been in the past.

"Ji Ning." Emperor Solesky called out as he hurried towards Ning's residence. Emperor Solesky's true body was now within the Dao Alliance's Palace of Immortals as one of their members, and he was on quite good terms with Emperor Goldisle and Emperor Blackcloud.

"Big brother Solesky, what has you in such a rush?" The golden-robed Ning was fishing relaxedly by himself.

"Something big just happened!" Emperor Solesky's eyes were huge and round as he whispered, "The Dao Alliance just received word and told me to inform you about this right away. Autarch Titanos has already left his estate and is heading towards the Flamedragon Realmverse. He could be arriving any moment now!"

“WHAT?!” Ning’s entire body trembled for a moment before he came back to his senses. He tossed down the fishing rod, jumped to his feet, then said frantically: “When is Autarch Titanos arriving and where?”

“We can’t be sure. His estate is extremely far away from us, but as an Autarch he moves incredibly fast. No one knows how long it would take him to get here!” Emperor Solesky continued, “He might appear in the next instant, but if he takes a few detours on the way it might take him a few chaos cycles.”

Ning felt his entire body tense up. Even though his Dao-heart was tremendously resilient, he still felt extremely nervous. “He’s finally coming.” Ning let out a long breath, his eyes filled with excitement. “I’ve waited so long and fought so hard. Finally, this day has come.”

Not even the Daomerge would’ve inspired such excitement in Ning. He truly was eager to be able to bring Yu Wei back to life and reunite with her. With his wife by his side, he would be more than satisfied with living a life of a hundred thousand chaos cycles. This would be far better than an endless life of loneliness.

“Right, right! The realmship.” Ning suddenly came back to his senses. “I need to go bring the realmship back and be ready for him at any moment.” Autarch Titanos needed Ning to give him the realmship in exchange for his help. It would be extremely awkward if Ning didn’t have the realmship on him!

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The Terror Starsea. The Jedefire Realm. The Flamewing God remained trapped within the second hidden room, while Ning, Azurefiend, and Whitethaw were by its side.

“Flamewing,” Ning called out.

“Master,” Flamewing responded obediently. After spending five chaos cycles with Ning, it had grown accustomed to addressing Ning as ‘master’.

“I need to go out and handle some business. It shouldn’t take too long,” Ning said.

“You are going to come back, right?” Flamewing felt a strong sense of attachment towards Ning.

Ning couldn’t help but feel a bit of a headache. The legendary Chaos Primordial was like a child! All Ning could do was to say, “Don’t worry, I’ll definitely come back. Just take a quick nap. I’ll be back by the time you wake up. The next time I see you, it’ll be time for me to deal with those chains of yours.”

“Alright.” Flamewing nodded repeatedly.

“We’re off.” Ning immediately turned and left through the giant, ancient copper gate, with Azurefiend and Whitethaw flying out by his side.

Flamewing watched as Ning left. Once the great gate swung shut, it finally sat back down once again. However, it had long ago grown accustomed to loneliness, and so it quickly shut its eyes and entered a state of slumber once more.

A short while later, Ning, Azurefiend, and Whitethaw reached the other hidden room within the Jedefire Realm.

“So this is the Jadedfire Realm’s formation-diagram?” Hegemon Azurefiend stared at the enormous flower-like formation-diagram on the altar.

“Yes. What, are you capable of understanding and mastering it?” Ning laughed.

“I don’t understand it at all. This formation seems very odd; it’s completely different from the other formations I’ve analyzed.” Hegemon Azurefiend shook his head.

Ning smiled. The Sithe had indeed embarked upon a unique path with regards to the art of formations, a path that was very different from the ones which cultivators walked. Without knowing the proper techniques, it truly would be extremely difficult to even understand how these formations worked.

Whoosh. Ning waved his hand, causing a stream of fire to instantly descend from him and form into the body of an Emperor-class golem. This was one of the many golems which Ning had acquired from the Sithe ruins in the Stone Hellephant Wall.

“This is the control technique which governs the flaming passageways and the outermost areas in the Jadedfire Realm.” Ning tossed a jade slip over. “Hurry up and master it. Once you do, take control over the Jadedfire Realm for me.”

“Yes,” the flaming Emperor-class golem said respectfully. Ning had only given it the most basic of control techniques. Now that Ning fully understood how the technique worked, it was easy for him to develop a new control techniques of his own. However, this technique could only be used to control the outer perimeter and the flaming passageways. The techniques governing the prison regions were all quite complex. For now, not even Ning was able to tell them apart.

“Remember, there is a Hegemon within the flaming passageways.” Ning pointed at a tiny little dot located in one of the countless passageways. “Keep a close watch on him! Once he starts to run around, immediately activate some of the most powerful mechanisms and kill him, or at least trap him and send him into the prison regions.”

“Understood,” the Emperor-class golem responded.

“But of course, he’s so terrified of dying that I expect he won’t move around.” After making the necessary arrangements, Ning relaxed slightly. “This place is now in your hands. Azurefiend, Whitethaw, let’s go.”

Ning didn’t feel the need to hold things back from Azurefiend, as the lifeblood oaths binding a retainer were quite strong. He had to go back to the Flamedragon Realmverse, which meant he couldn’t continue to use a divine power clone to maintain the formation-diagram. As a result, his only option was to rely on his golems. Emperor-class golems were extremely intelligent, and it wouldn’t be hard for them to control some basic formations. It must be remembered that when major powers died, they’d often use formation-spirits, treasure-spirits, or powerful golems to control their legacy sites and await their successors.

Golems had infinite lifespans and would never betray their master unless they were forcibly bound. Thus, both the Sithe and the cultivators delighted in using golems.

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After having finished with his other arrangements, Ning led the two in flying in the realmship and departing from the flaming passageways. The Jadedfire Realm simply had far too many of those flaming passageways, and they were all extremely long. Even though the realmship had been repaired and was able to fly quite quickly, it still took them two days to pass through the flaming passageways.

“There’s the exit.” Ning was quite familiar with the formation-diagram and thus knew where the breaches in the Jadedfire Realm were. It had been thoroughly wrecked, after all. Ning was able to easily exit while following the breaches.

Swoosh. The realmship charged through the flames, quickly discovering a giant, cavernous gap which it was able to exit through. After flying for roughly an hour and repeatedly changing directions, they managed to leave the Jadedfire Realm.

“We need to get back to the Flamedragon Realmverse as soon as possible. Autarch Titanos could come at any moment.” Ning was so excited that his eyes were slightly bloodshot. This was the most important goal in his path of cultivation, after all.

“Hey kid! Calm down, there’s no rush.” A voice suddenly rang out by his ears.

Ning had just flown out of the Jadedfire Realm. He couldn’t help but turn his head, startled, only to see a bald black-robed elder standing in the void in front of him. This bald old man had a pair of golden eyes and two fleshy antennae growing out of his head. The antennae waved at him in an amused fashion, while the old man had a smile on his face as well. Anyone who saw him would feel the urge to laugh.

Whoosh. The bald old man suddenly vanished into thin air.

“Eh?” Ning was startled. “Where did he go?”

“I’m right here,” the bald old man said merrily.

Ning turned his head, only to realize that the bald old man was standing right next to him. Ning couldn’t help but feel speechless. The old man had been able to enter the realmship without him even realizing it... this was a level of ability that vastly outstripped Ning’s imagination. It must be remembered that he was the master of the realmship, and that he was in complete control of it... and yet, this person had suddenly appeared right before him inside of it.

“Darknorth greets you, Autarch.” Ning hurriedly bowed respectfully.

“Azurefiend greets you, Autarch,” Hegemon Azurefiend said respectfully as well.

Whitethaw stood right next to Ning. He bowed respectfully as well, but he didn’t say a word.

Both Ning and Azurefiend were major powers of extraordinary power ability. They had seen far more than most, and they naturally saw right away how terrifying this bald old man was. For example... they couldn’t see any lines of karma binding this bald old man at all. It must be remembered that any cultivator who was alive would be linked to others by karma, but they weren’t able to sense any karma lines at all on the old man. This was absolutely inconceivable.

“Quite clever.” The bald old man chortled as he turned his gaze towards the Jadedfire Realm. “The Seven Flaming Hells. Truly impressive. The Sithe truly were formidable, to be able to capture a Chaos Primordial and use it as their energy source for this facility and then absorb its power with such ease.

Judging from that Chaos Primordial's truesoul... it should already have a master. Is it you, kid?" The bald old man looked at Ning.

Ning was stunned. He had always heard of how incredible Autarchs were, but he never would've imagined that an Autarch would be able to simply glance at the Jadedfire Realm and immediately know that there was a Chaos Primordial there, AND know that Ning was its master. No wonder even the mighty Sithe had ended up falling before the Autarchs and the cultivator civilizations. The Autarchs were simply incredible. They had all reached utterly inconceivable levels of power.

To Autarchs, even Chaos Primordials were nothing. They were capable of slaying the creatures with ease.

"Yes, I am its master," Ning said.

[The Desolate Era](#)

Book 38: Daomerge Chapter 2: Ning's Nervousness

"Chaos Primordials are born from within the prime essences of the vast Chaosverse. They are blessed by the prime essences and born with tremendous karmic luck. The vast majority of cultivators will never have a chance to even encounter one of these creatures." The bald old man looked at Ning, a smile on his face as he offered his congratulations: "Although you also have tremendous karmic luck, you still can't compare to that Chaos Primordial. I imagine it wasn't easy for you to run into it."

Ji Ning was briefly startled, but he quickly understood. It was indeed true that running into Chaos Primordials was incredibly rare, due to how much the prime essences of the Chaosverse doted upon them. Indeed, Ning himself had entered the Jadedfire Realm many chaos cycles ago, but he had to undergo countless hardships before managing to solve the formation-diagram and thus have the chance to meet the Chaos Primordial.

However, from another perspective, this was also proof that in the long run, being 'blessed with karmic luck' and 'beloved by the prime essences' didn't count for THAT much. The Chaos Primordial had still been trapped by the Sithe for countless years, right?

"I had to solve the Jadedfire Realm's formation-diagram before I was able to meet the Chaos Primordial," Ning said.

"Treat it well. It will be of great help to you. Come, let us go to your homeland," the bald old man said.

Whoosh. As soon as these words came out, spacetime twisted around them and everything became illusory and dreamlike. By the time spacetime went back to normal, Ning immediately saw a chaosworld off in the distance.

"We've already left the Terror Starsea?" Ning was immediately able to sense the location of his avatar and Primaltwin and thus knew where he was. He couldn't help but feel a sense of awe, but he was able to keep his expression calm.

"I'll take you to my homeland right away, senior," Ning said.

“Wait, wait. Not just yet. I teleported your realmship here because there’s a young fellow that needs rescuing,” the bald old man immediately called out. With a swoosh, he flew out of the realmship and towards that distant chaosworld.

“Needs rescuing? Needs rescuing by an exalted AUTARCH?!” Ning and Azurefiend shared a glance, both feeling rather puzzled.

Swoosh. Swoosh. Ning put away the realmship for now, then flew towards that chaosworld as well. Azurefiend and Whitethaw followed close behind. Once they flew into the chaosworld...

“Haha, Daolord Cleardust, you’ve been trapped with my formation and have nowhere to run. In a mere thirty thousand years, the power of my formation will have ground you into dust and wiped out your truesoul. Did you think, young fellow, that you would be able to defeat me just because you broke through to become a Samsara Daolord? This chaosworld shall remain mine. No one can violate my will!” A red-haired old man was seated at the peak of a mountain, staring downwards into a valley.

The valley was filled with rolling black clouds and billowing flames. Every so often, one could see a fragile-looking youth seated in the air in the lotus position. He was suffering all sorts of torment. The youth sat there in the lotus position, murmuring a chant while completely ignoring the red-haired elder.

“I established this chaosworld as my estate, and thus all the living creatures within it are subject to my will. All shall be as I will it! I never would’ve imagined that this chaosworld would actually give birth to a freakishly talented genius like yourself. You actually managed to reach the Samsara Daolord level because of a few so-called legacies I left behind out of boredom.” The red-haired elder was in a good mood, as victory was clearly at hand. “You, a Daolord of the First Step, actually managed to fight me to a standstill even though I am a Daolord of the Third Step. I truly admire you very much. In the outside world, someone as talented as you would probably be recruited by one of the major organizations. Unfortunately, you shall die here.”

“Yes, you shall die here!” A voice suddenly rang out, followed by a giant foot descending from the heavens. Sploosh! The giant foot stomped down upon the red-haired old man, smushing him into the ground. The red-haired man instantly stopped moving.

The owner of the foot descended from the heavens. It was a merry-looking bald old man. Moments later, Ning, Azurefiend, and Whitethaw all descended as well.

“No wonder this chaosworld was protected by so many barriers. I imagine most Daolords of the Second Step and even Daolords of the Third Step would be unable to pass through them,” Ning sent mentally. “So this was the estate of that deceased Daolord over there.”

“Autarch Titanos intervened for the sake of that kid?” Azurefiend glanced downwards at the valley.

The bald old man had already walked down into the valley, easily tearing apart and destroying the formations. He was chatting with that fragile-looking youth, whose gaze was calm and distant. It was as though the youth had long ago seen and suffered countless torments and had endured everything one could endure.

“Hahaha. That Daolord over there... just judging from his gaze, I can sense that he has experienced much pain,” Azurefiend said.

“This chaosworld is an absolute hell.” Ning swept the area with his gaze, seeing everything there was to see within this chaosworld. That demonic Daolord had clearly delighted in tormenting and abusing all the living creatures of this chaosworld, treating them as his playthings.

A short while later... “Time to go.” The bald old man returned to Ning’s side.

“Alright.” Ning and Azurefiend cast a final glance to ‘Daolord Cleardust’, who remained within the gorge. Daolord Cleardust looked back at these foreign cultivators, a slightly confused look in his eyes. He had no idea who was before him. One was a terrifyingly powerful golem, one was a supremely talented Daolord, the third was a Hegemon, and the old man was an Autarch, supreme amongst the cultivator civilizations.

“Autarch.” While flying away from the chaosworld, Azurefiend couldn’t help but ask, “Why did you intervene to save a Daolord of the First Step?”

“Couldn’t you sense how much karmic luck swirled around him? Of course I had to aid him,” the bald old man said with a merry grin.

“You have to help him because of his karmic luck?” Ning was puzzled. Karmic luck was just a side benefit; personal power was what truly mattered. No amount of karmic luck would protect you in the face of overwhelming power!

“Of course!” The bald old man said hurriedly, “You clearly don’t understand. Each time I help someone like him out, my own karmic luck increases as well. When I act in accordance with the will of the prime essences of the Chaosverse, my own karmic luck will continuously increase. Do you know what will happen once your karmic luck reaches an incredibly high level?”

“What will happen?” Ning was curious.

“All sorts of rare and incredible treasures will appear out of nowhere, almost as though they are throwing themselves at me. I could choose a random boulder to sit on, and then I’d find out that it was part of an incredibly rare ore vein. Any random tree I chose to take shade under could possibly be a spirit-fruit tree of great value.” The bald old man sighed. “All sorts of treasures will throw themselves at me. It is quite the pleasant experience.”

“Buuut... I’ve come here to help you reverse spacetime to revive a Celestial Immortal. That goes against the will of the Chaosverse.” The bald old man sighed again. “Looks like my karmic luck is going to drop by quite a bit.”

An awkward look appeared on Ning’s face.

“Haha, I’m just teasing you. Honestly, karmic luck doesn’t matter all that much. Once you’ve trained to my level, it really makes no difference at all. It’s just a little game we play to keep score.” The bald old man swept the area with his gaze. Boom! Suddenly, the space around them seemed to retreat as karma, spacetime, and luck all withdrew from them. A field of absolute void was formed around them, a region of complete stillness.

Ning and Azurefiend could both sense that they were completely unable to move. This invisible pressure had forced away even the prime essences of the Chaosverse, to say nothing of them.

“See this? This area is now devoid of the prime essences of the Chaosverse. This is now my absolute domain.” The bald old man laughed.

Ning suddenly remembered how the area around the Azureflower Estate was similarly devoid of all outside types of energy. But of course, the effect wasn’t as strong as it was right now, where Autarch Titanos was personally and actively maintaining the effect.

“In the end, personal power is what matters the most. Kid, as a practitioner of an Omega Dao, if you somehow manage to succeed in your Daomerge you’ll probably understand.” The bald old man continued, “Alright, hurry up and bring out your realmship. Lead me to your homeland.”

“Alright.” Ning, Azurefiend, and Whitethaw could sense that they were able to move again. They immediately entered the realmship. Whoosh! After just a short spacetime blink, the realmship appeared within the void outside the new Three Realms.

The bald old man stared at the distant Three Realms, then let out a surprised breath: “What an impressive chaosworld! Just by looking at it, I can tell that it is extraordinary. No wonder it was able to produce a freak of a Daolord like yourself, someone who trains in an Omega Dao!”

“It has already been destroyed once.” Ning pointed at the void next to the new Three Realms. “That place over there used to be my homeland, a world within the Three Realms which was known as the ‘Grand Xia world’. My Dao-companion used to live by my side there.”

The original Three Realms took up much more space than the new one, as it had been shattered and splintered into countless pieces. There had been a Celestial Realm, a Netherworld Kingdom, and three thousand major worlds that had been scattered across an enormous amount of space. The new Three Realms was a single complete entity which took up much less space. The location the Grand Xia had been in was now just an empty patch of space.

“Oh. Over here, right?” The bald old man walked over and chuckled while spacetime churned around him and began to reverse at increasingly high speeds.

Whoooooosh. Spacetime continued to reverse, and they quickly reached the scene of the old Three Realms.

“Slow down a bit,” Ning urged.

“Don’t worry. I’ll find the old you first,” the bald old man said. “Oh. There you are.” A projection of the Grand Xia had appeared, centered around the old Black-White College. The scene was that of Ning, who had just entered the Black-White College. He was about to begin his duel against Yu Wei.

“The Black-White College?” The bald old man pointed towards Yu Wei’s image. “That should be your wife, yes?”

“Yes.” Ning felt as though his blood was boiling from nervousness. It had been a long, long time since he had been this nervous.

“It seems she really did have a big impact on you.” The bald old man laughed. “Wait for me to reverse the flows of spacetime and bring her back to life!”

The Desolate Era

Book 38: Daomerge Chapter 3: Origins

“Oh, right. Where’s the realmship? I conduct business fairly. I have to take your realmship in payment for reviving your Dao-companion.” The old man looked at Ning.

“Here it is.” At a time like this, the realmship meant absolutely nothing to Ji Ning. He immediately waved his hand, sending the palm-sized realmship flying over. Hegemon Azurefiend watched with a rather agonized look in his eyes, but all he could do was sigh to himself: “Darknorth truly is willing to sacrifice anything in order to revive his Dao-companion. A realmship has been lost, just like that.”

The bald old man cared as little about the realmship as Ning did. He waved his hand to accept it, then said solemnly: “None of you are to disturb me. Stay far away from me as well.”

“Alright.” Ning, Azurefiend, and White that all immediately retreated off into the distance.

“Chaosverse, I’ve come to steal yet another truesoul fragment from you.” A hint of a smile appeared on the bald old man’s lips. He then reached out with both hands, the fleshy antennae on his head wriggling as a terrifying amount of power began to spread out from him. He became the absolute master of this area of space.

“Condense.” The bald old man waved a finger, causing the illusory phantom of the black-robed Yu Wei to begin to light up.

Boom. Boom. Boom. Countless specks of light began to appear deep within the incredibly distant prime essences of the Chaosverse. They flew into the illusory phantom of the black-robed Yu Wei, pulling at her.

“It has begun.” Ning watched nervously. The illusory Yu Wei was nothing more than a phantom of the past. In order to make the phantom real, it had to have a truesoul within it! However, when the living beings of the Three Realms lost their truesouls, those truesouls would return to the where they came from – the prime essences of the Chaosverse.

“To reverse spacetime and revive someone who perished... this is my first time seeing an Autarch do such a thing,” Hegemon Azurefiend sent mentally. “Look at how nervous your master is!”

Whitethaw looked at Ning, then nodded and sent back, “This is my master’s deepest desire. Of course he is nervous.”

“For an ordinary mortal to train to such heights and then be able to ask an Autarch to help him out... I truly do feel a great deal of admiration for him.” Azurefiend sighed.

Both Azurefiend and Whitethaw were fairly calm. They watched this rare sight with interest and appreciation, but the only thing Ning felt was nervousness.

In that empty region of space, the bald old Autarch Titanos had already completely unleashed his power. The black-robed Yu Wei was glimmering with countless specks of light, and she was becoming increasingly ‘real’. However... gradually, the gathering of the light seemed to slow down. Some of the light actually started to disappear.

“Eh?!” The bald old man’s face tightened, while Ning’s heart shuddered.

“Get over here!” A hint of anger flashed past the bald old man’s face, and more light instantly began to gather around Yu Wei’s phantom once more. The bald old man’s face became increasingly ugly to behold, but Yu Wei’s body began to become more and more real. Slowly, the light that gathered over her eyes caused a look of sentience to appear within her eyes.

“Senior apprentice-sister.” Ning looked at Yu Wei.

The light-bathed Yu Wei looked back at Ning. A hint of life flashed through her eyes. She was no longer a phantom of the past; it was as though a real person was looking back at Ning. Their gazes met... and in that instant, Ning suddenly felt as though it was all worth it. Anything was worth it, so long as she could come back to life.

“Ugh!” The bald old man suddenly spat out a mouthful of blood. His face was ashen, and Yu Wei’s phantom immediately began to crumble apart as the countless specks of light began to dissipate.

“No...!” Ning frantically reached out, wanting to claw back the dissipating light. Alas, the power of the prime essences of the Chaosverse caused all the specks of light to disappear into nothingness.

“DAMNIT!” The bald old man’s face was ashen. He was so angry that even the two fleshy antennae on his head were quivering with rage. He howled furiously, “Prime essences of the Chaosverse, the truesoul fragments of countless living beings have returned to you upon death. All I want is to bring a single one of them back! A single truesoul is nothing to you! Why must you fight me to the death like this? Why must you seize it back!”

The binding power of the prime essences of the Chaosverse was simply too great. Normally, Hegemons and even Otherverse Lords did not have the power to try and resist it. Only Autarchs were qualified to make the attempt.

“Is it worth it?! Is it worth it for you to spend so much effort in fighting me?!” The old man’s entire body was trembling from rage. The area around him, however, remained completely silent. The prime essences of the Chaosverse made no response at all.

The bald old man forced down his rage, then turned to look at Ning.

“Autarch.” Ning looked at Autarch Titanos.

“Where did your Dao-companion come from? I should be able to revive even a World God with ease, to say nothing of a Celestial Immortal like her.” The bald old man stared at Ning. “Just now, when I tried to reverse spacetime and revive your wife, the prime essences of the Chaosverse fought me so hard, I felt as though I was trying to revive a Hegemon! Even if I killed myself trying to bring her back, I still wouldn’t stand much of a chance.”

Ning’s face turned ashen as well. What?! An Autarch could kill himself trying to revive Yu Wei? Ning knew that there was no need for Autarch Titanos to lie to someone like him. In fact, Autarch Titanos had tried so hard that he had suffered an injury because of it, vomiting blood as a result.

“How is this possible? She’s nothing more than an ordinary Celestial Immortal of the Three Realms. There was nothing special about her.” Ning couldn’t understand either. “Why can’t you revive her? This makes no sense.”

“Let me take a closer look at things.” The bald old man turned to stare at the surrounding void. Rumble... countless images began to flicker through the void. These images included what had happened in the new Three Realms, the events of the old Three Realms, the collision between the Pangu Chaosworld and the Seamless Chaosworld, and even the images of what had happened prior to the Pangu Chaosworld being born.

Countless images flashed through the void around him...

“So that’s how it is.” The bald old man nodded slowly.

“Autarch?” Ning looked at the bald old man.

“During the Dawn War, when we fought against the Sithe... we had a number of Autarchs on our side,” the bald old man said. “One of them was named Autarch Awakener.”

“Autarch Awakener?” Hegemon Azurefiend had a puzzled look on his face.

Ning, however, turned pale. He naturally knew that Autarch Awakener had been the master of the Azureflower Estate. He immediately said, “This has something to do with Autarch Awakener?”

“You seem to have heard of Awakener before.” The bald old man laughed. “The number of people in the vast Chaosverse who were able to become Autarchs can be counted on just two hands! Autarch Awakener died long ago. It could be considered a form of suicide.”

“He died? Suicided?” Azurefiend became increasingly confused. Ning, however, had heard this long ago and thus simply continued to listen attentively.

“Darknorth, kid... Worldhearts can be naturally birthed from the primordial chaos, but there is also a second way a chaosworld’s Worldheart can be formed. Do you know what that way is?” The bald old man looked at Ning.

“An Eternal Emperor’s godgems,” Ning said. This was a secret, but Ning had studied the countless techniques Autarch Awakener had acquired from the Sithe and the cultivator civilizations. Thus, he knew these secrets long ago.

A Samsara Daolord could have at most a total of 108,000 godgems in his divine body. Once he completed his Daomerge, those godgems would become Eternal godgems and be filled with miraculous powers.

If an Eternal Emperor perished, each of his godgems could give birth to a new chaosworld. The living beings in this chaosworld would generally be fairly special, and it would give birth to experts at a slightly higher rate. However, the difference between these chaosworlds and ordinary chaosworlds wasn’t all that great. However, the godgems left behind by a deceased Hegemon could give birth to extremely special chaosworlds.

“Correct.” The bald old man nodded. “As you may know, your Three Realms was born from a collision between the Pangu Chaosworld and the Seamless Chaosworld... but what you didn’t know was that each was formed from a godgem.”

“A godgem?” Ning immediately thought back to the fused and dazzlingly beautiful Worldheart he had seen when the old Three Realms had been destroyed.

“Yes. Godgems from Autarch Awakener!” the bald old man said.

“What?!” Azurefiend called out in shock.

“An Autarch’s godgems?!” Ning was stunned as well.

“Autarch Awakener died, but he made preparations prior to his death. He made arrangements for all 108,000 of his godgems,” the bald old man said. “Two of them were sent into the void and ended up becoming a chaosworld.”

“The living beings in these two chaosworlds were all blessed with incredible talent. These two chaosworlds vastly outstripped all other chaosworlds, and each of them gave birth to as many geniuses as an entire territory might,” the bald old man said.

Ning was starting to understand. No wonder the Pangu Chaosworld and Seamless Chaosworld had so many freakishly talented people! They didn’t have any good techniques or legacies, but they were still so talented that they were able to fight at a higher level of power than they were at. Once they were given good techniques, they skyrocketed in power.

“Later on, these two chaosworlds collided against each other. Their Worldhearts smashed together as well, and parts of their Worldhearts were actually broken off and splintered,” the bald old man said. “The shattered Worldheart bits were completely melted away and their power was dispersed upon the countless living beings of the new world.”

[The Desolate Era](#)

Book 38: Daomerge Chapter 4: A Graceful Departure

Ji Ning immediately remembered that the Worldheart of the Three Realms was indeed composed of two damaged crystals that had somehow managed to fuse together. Both were indeed incomplete, but they had managed to come together and form a perfect whole.

“In other words... small parts of an Autarch’s godgems were completely dispersed into energy which was bestowed upon the living beings of that era. That was why all of the living beings in that first era underwent certain changes,” the bald old man said. “This was why the woman known as ‘Nuwa’ was able to suddenly break through to become a World God during that war. She had no techniques and no teachers, but she was still able to break through! The one known as Windfiend was also dramatically strengthened during the course of that battle!”

“All living creatures below the World-level in that chaosworld were blessed by the Autarch’s energies,” the bald old man said. “This was why your master Subhuti, as well as many of those other major powers, continued to slowly grow more and more powerful. Their potential continued to deepen as well.”

“As for the countless ordinary mortals of the Three Realms, all of them possess tremendous talent. You used to be nothing more than an ordinary mortal. Back then, the amount of karmic luck you had was vastly inferior to the amount your master Subhuti and the others had.”

“Eventually, you rose to sudden prominence! As your power skyrocketed, you gained more karmic luck and thus many of the blessings of the Three Realms became focused upon you. During that battle against the Seamless Alliance, you finally broke through to a new level of power, draining away a large

amount of karmic luck from the Three Realms.” The bald old man looked at Ning. “You were blessed with tremendous potential, becoming the most powerful figure of the Three Realms Era.”

“However... in the end, karmic luck is secondary. It was primarily your own hard work which brought you to this point,” the bald old man said.

Ning was beginning to slowly understand. He had indeed been blessed by luck, which was why he was able to make it this far... but every single powerful cultivator had his own lucky encounters! Take Archon Silksnow as an example. Although he was a fiendish figure, he had also experienced many lucky encounters in his life... but in the end, he had still been forced by Ning to commit suicide.

The more powerful you became, the less of an impact the prime essences of the Chaosverse would have upon you. There were evil figures who had butchered entire territories, but they were still living happy lives, yes? The prime essences of the Chaosverse weren't able to do anything to them.

“The Three Realms Era ended, and the new Three Realms began. By now, the Worldheart is in good shape. There are no longer any godgem fragments, and so it is impossible for the generations to come in the new Three Realms to be quite as monstrously talented as the generation of the Three Realms Era.” The bald old man laughed. “Your era was a special one which gave birth to special figures. If you missed it, you missed it.”

Ning nodded. That era was an era where two Autarch's godgems had collided and given birth to a brand new world. It had indeed given birth to many major powers, including over ten thousand World-level cultivators and numerous Samsara Daolords, with Ning himself being the strongest of them. But of course, the vast majority of the living beings continued to live and die in an unending cycle of life and death.

“Every single living being born from a chaosworld formed by an Autarch's godgem is unique,” the bald old man said. “This is because they all have a tiny amount of the Autarch's own essence within them. Once their souls and truesouls are destroyed, their truesoul fragments will be immediately taken away by the prime essences of the Chaosverse and hidden within its depths.”

“You must understand, long long ago the vast Chaosverse didn't have that many living beings within it. It was the prime essences themselves who gave birth to all things. However... after doing so, as the living creatures grew stronger the prime essences themselves grew weaker.”

“This is because, when we cultivate and grow stronger, what we do is draw upon the energy of the prime essences of the Chaosverse,” the old man explained. “And when an Autarch rises to power? This is an incredible event. The rise of every single Autarch is a momentous occasion for the prime essences of the Chaosverse. Once an Autarch dies, the prime essences will immediately do their best to absorb as much of the Autarch's power as possible.

“Thus, although it is very easy to revive a living being from an ordinary chaosworld, to revive a living being from a chaosworld formed by an Autarch's godgem is far more difficult. The problem facing us is that the Three Realms Era was an era where the living beings were blessed with the energies of TWO fragmented godgems. Every single living being of that era is incredibly special.

“Your Dao-companion was a Celestial Immortal of that era. To revive her truly will be even more difficult than reviving a Hegemon!” the bald old man said. “The prime essences have already swallowed her

truesoul fragments; there's no way they will spit it back out again. They will never agree to release your Dao-companion's truesoul fragments. They'll use their full power to oppose anyone who tries."

Ning now completely understood. He was a major power himself, and he had seen the countless techniques of two mighty civilizations. He knew far more than the vast majority of Hegemons.

When living beings were born, they would draw upon the energy of the primordial chaos to grow more powerful. If this process continued unabated, giving birth to more and more powerful experts... where would all of that energy come from? From the Chaosverse itself! Thus, the Chaosverse needed to reclaim its energies as well, and one of the most basic ways to do that was to draw upon truesoul fragments. The so-called destruction of the truesoul was nothing more than completely shattering a truesoul into fragments which would then be swallowed up by the Chaosverse.

It was akin to the cycle of reincarnation. New experts would rise to power, while dead ones would see their truesouls swallowed up by the Chaosverse. It formed a complete cycle.

Everworlds had their own basic essences, which was why when living beings died in an everworld their truesoul fragments would remain within the everworld. Reviving them would be quite easy.

Individuals who lived in otherverses would see their truesouls remain within the otherverse when they died. For example, the 'Sword Hegemon' who was the big brother of the Paragon of Pills – when he died, his truesoul was taken away by the prime essences of that alternate universe. To revive him would be comparatively easier, but he was still a Hegemon; the prime essences of that otherverse would fight tooth-and-claw to keep his truesoul fragments. Only an Autarch would be able to bring him back, but an Autarch would not casually revive a Hegemon. The price for such a thing would be far more than a mere realmship.

Chaosworlds were the most problematic! Alas, Yu Wei was a Celestial Immortal who had been born and died within a chaosworld birthed by one of Autarch Awakener's godgems.

"There's nothing I can do." The bald old man looked at Ning, then waved his hand and tossed the realmship back to Ning. "I wasn't able to carry out your request. Here's your realmship."

"If not even an Autarch can accomplish this, who can?" Ning was rather frantic.

"Hmph! If an Autarch can't do it, no one can. Duh!" The bald old man let out a laugh, but then he suddenly noticed the look on Ning's face. He instantly understood that reviving this woman had been this talented Daolord's strongest desire, and he couldn't help but let out a sigh. "It is just too difficult. If even I would risk my life in the attempt but still probably fail... who else could possibly succeed?"

Ning was rather dazed.

"Ehhh..." the bald old man looked at Ning, then suddenly laughed. "There IS one possibility."

Ning's eyes lit up as he immediately stared at Autarch Titanos.

"All of us Autarchs were originally Hegemons who broke through to the next step and became Autarchs." The bald old man looked at Ning. "You, however, train in an Omega Dao. If you can succeed in the Daomerge, you'll become a completely unprecedented Eternal Emperor who will vastly outstrip

other Hegemons in power! Not even I would dare claim to understand the level of power you would reach.”

“If you can succeed in the Daomerge to gain eternity, then make another breakthrough to reach Autarchy...! An Omega Dao Autarch would probably be far more powerful than the rest of us. I suspect that such a person would be capable of reviving your Dao-companion without any difficulties,” the bald old man said.

Ning was speechless. He now felt a tremendous desire to succeed in the Daomerge and then advance from Eternity to Autarchy.

“Haha, but that’s just a hypothetical possibility. There’s never been anyone to succeed in the Daomerge in an Omega Dao, to say nothing of reaching Autarchy.” The bald old man began to walk away into the void as he spoke. “Foolish child... sometimes, you have to learn when to let go. On the path of cultivation, excessive obsession can sometimes result in self-destruction.” As he spoke, he disappeared into the distance.

Just like that... Autarch Titanos was gone.

Ning stood there, completely unmoving.

“What should we do?” Whitethaw sent mentally to Azurefiend.

“How should I know? Reversing spacetime to revive his Dao-companion was his most ardent desire. Now that he’s lost all hope... who knows what will happen?” Hegemon Azurefiend shook his head. “Autarch Titanos was worried that his Dao-heart would collapse, which was why he gave Darknorth one final glimmer of hope... but Omega Daos are incredibly difficult! Even the Autarch himself stated that there has never been anyone to succeed in the Daomerge for an Omega Dao, much less reach Autarchy with it!”

“He has to first become an Emperor, then become an Autarch. Every step is so difficult as to be completely impossible.” Azurefiend shook his head. The Hegemons of the various territories and realmverses all dreamed of becoming Autarchs, but it was all for naught.

Ning wished to use his Omega Dao to become an Autarch? Did he think all the other Hegemons were fools who didn’t just ‘want it enough’? Becoming an Autarch was no easy feat!

“Actually, there’s no need for him to waste too much time thinking about this stuff. Right now, the greatest problem facing him is still the Daomerge!” Azurefiend said, “Only if he succeeds in the Daomerge shall he have a future! Tell me, do you think your master will succeed in it?”

[The Desolate Era](#)

Book 38: Daomerge Chapter 5: Remorseless Unto Death

“He can,” Whitethaw said solemnly. “I have faith in my master.” He knew that Ji Ning had been blessed with tremendous good fortune within the Azureflower Estate, and also that his master had only been training for an extremely short period of time. Ning had a chance to succeed at the Daomerge.

“Bah, I don’t even know why I’m wasting time talking to a golem like you.” Azurefiend shook his head and turned to stare at the distant Ning. “But of course, I personally hope that he succeeds as well. An Emperor who completed the Daomerge with an Omega Dao... how powerful would he become? I can’t even imagine it. He’d probably be far more powerful than even Otherverse Lords. He might even approach the Autarchs themselves in power!”

The distant Ning suddenly sent a hoarse mental message to them: “Whitethaw, Azurefiend, I wish to be alone for a time. Do not disturb me.”

“Yes, Master,” Whitethaw said.

“Some alone time would do you good. Think things over. Cultivation is a way of life; if your Dao-heart is not resolute enough, you won’t be able to make it far along this path, much less master the Omega Dao,” Azurefiend said.

Ning didn’t respond. He simply strode away into the skies. Rumble... the void around him suddenly began to change. The primordial chaos flexed and trembled as a new world began to be born. Mountains rose, rivers appeared, and an indescribably vast sea took shape as well. Earth appeared, forming continents which were then covered with grasslands and marshes. Even cities and forests began to appear, causing the world to becoming increasingly beautiful.

Soon, a completely new world had been created around Ning... the world of the Grand Xia.

All it took was a single thought from Ning and the Grand Xia world was quickly remade.

“Stillwater City.” Ning strode through the skies, surrounded by clouds. He stared off into the distance, where a great city had appeared. This was Stillwater City, a place of many memories for Ning. This Stillwater City even had a Black-White College within it.

“The Dao Debate Palace of the Black-White College.” Ning walked into the Black-White College. It was just as it had been in his memories, except there were no living creatures within it at all. He soon reached the Dao Debate Palace. Ning sat down at the entranceway to the Dao Debate Palace, then picked up a gourd of wine and began to drink, his gaze distant as he stared into the palace.

He still remembered what had happened that year. He had been very young and had joined the Black-White College alongside Mu Northson. He had been a dazzling figure, and had defeated many senior apprentice-brothers during the Dao Debates. In the end, it had been Yu Wei who had intervened and defeated him effortlessly. He still remembered what the wager for their fight had been – a hundred black-white pellets and five kilograms of liquid essence.

“A hundred black-white pellets and five kilograms of liquid essence. Senior apprentice-sister, why is it that the path to our reunion is such a difficult one?!” Ning murmured to himself, then raised his head and drank some more wine. He drank too quickly, causing himself to cough. The wine splattered all over him, but he didn’t care. He wanted to give vent to his pain.

He felt a sense of rage and resentment in his heart, a sense of pain which he had suppressed for too long. Why? He had clearly succeeded and had even seen her coming back to life. When they had shared gazes, he had known that everything was going to be perfect. He was about to embrace her again at long last... but in the end, it had been a failure!

Why!?

"I'll keep walking down this path for as long as I must." Ning stared into the Dao Debate Palace as he murmured to himself. He felt as though he could see those duels he had fought against Yu Wei and the others.

He had never hesitated, never given up. If the Autarch said that this would only be possible if he completed his Daomerge with his Omega Dao and then became an Autarch... then that would be what Ning's goal would become!

This would be an extremely difficult path to take. Ning wouldn't shirk back from it, but he did understand how low his chances of success were.

"Perhaps I shall one day collapse on this path." Ning smiled. "When I collapse, my truesoul will scatter and then return to the prime essences of the Chaosverse. There, the two of us shall be together once more."

There was still wine left in the gourd, but Ning was already drunk. Not from the wine; from his hopes. Ning rose to his feet and began to walk outside.

Whoosh. Suddenly, large plumes of snow began to fly through the air. Ning walked through the snow, carrying the wine gourd in one hand while using a Northbow sword to train in sword-arts with the other. It wasn't an intentional display of sword-arts, it was just a way for his spirit to give vent.

All he wanted to do was to remain drunk. He continued to drink while executing his sword-arts. Ning felt himself growing drunker and drunker.

The vague outline of a person appeared before his eyes. It was Yu Wei. She was as beautiful as ever. It felt as though they were meeting again for the first time.

"Overwhelming sorrow from farewells... but it is naught but one parting of many." Ning smiled.

Whoosh. Ning's sword suddenly manifested a blood-colored light that shot out through the skies. He had just unconsciously and naturally executed the thirteenth stance of the [Heartsword], 'Snowland Blood'.

This sense of overwhelming sorrow, of the heart transcending all mortal concerns... when Ning struck out with his sword, he felt as though his sword was his lover. It was different from the eleventh stance, 'Teardrop', or the twelfth stance, 'Swordtide'. Those were frenzied attacks of overwhelming power. This attack had a sense of melancholy to it, a sense of pain stemming from heartache.

The melancholy had caused him to pour all of his heart into the sword, and thus the thirteenth stance had been mastered.

"Emperor Heartsword... I wonder what sort of mental state you were in when you first created this thirteenth stance of the Heartsword, 'Snowland Blood'." Ning smiled as he waved his sword about. "The fourteenth stance of the Heartsword is 'Remorseless Unto Death'." Ning raised his head to take another gulp of wine, then let out a loud cry as he struck out with a new, changed streak of sword-light.

When his sword struck out, it became ephemeral and transcendent. It was hard to even see his sword; it was as though the sword itself had vanished. However, a few vague traces could be seen. Those hard-to-

see traces were indistinct but completely unblockable. It would continue to advance, and if anyone tried to stand in its path then that person would be slaughtered. The traces of this sword were enough to inspire utter terror in any who saw it.

This was the fourteenth stance of the Heartsword – Remorseless Unto Death.

In the Flamedragon Realmverse, there had only ever been a total of two cultivators who had mastered the fourteenth stance of the [Hear sword] art, including Emperor Heart sword himself. Now, Ning had become the third!

The thirteenth stance of the Heart sword, ‘Snowland Blood’. The fourteenth stance of the Heart sword, ‘Remorseless Unto Death’. These two were on the same general ‘level’. So long as one could learn the thirteenth stance, it wouldn’t take too long for the fourteenth stance to be mastered as well.

Emperor Heart sword’s experiences truly had been remarkable. Although he had different experiences than Ning, they had reached a very similar mental state. Ning felt a similar sense of sorrow and melancholy; he knew that the chances of reversing spacetime and reviving his wife were impossibly low. And yet... he would have no regrets at all for pursuing this path, even in the face of death! No matter how low the chances were, he would still continue on this path.

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Ning danced with the sword as snow flew around him. Slowly, the skies turned dark. Ning lay down on the snowy ground and went to sleep. It had been a long, long time since he had slumbered.

The ‘snow’ and the ‘darkness’... these were nothing more than reflections of his mental state. He had created this world, and so its weather was invisibly influenced by his state of mind.

He slept for a long period of time before finally reopening his eyes. By now, a morning sun was rising from the horizon, bathing the world with its warm rays of light. There was some fog, but it was unable to block out the sunlight which pierced through everything as it illuminated the world.

Ning glanced at the gourd and the Northbow sword, both of which lay fallen next to him. He smiled, then picked them up.

“I’ve woken up. The Daomerge, eh?” Ning stared at the distant dawn sun, then murmured to himself: “Then I’ll deal with the Daomerge first! I’ll take things one step at a time. After the Daomerge, I’ll then become an Autarch.”

“Senior apprentice-sister... don’t blame me if I fail.” Ning chuckled, then soared into the skies. Rumble... the Black-White College and the city of Stillwater both began to break apart. The entire Grand Xia began to break apart, quickly dissipating into nothingness.

Ning stared the two figures waiting for him in the distant void.

“Master,” Whitethaw called out respectfully.

“Darknorth.” Hegemon Azurefiend was slightly startled. He could sense that Daolord Darknorth seemed to have undergone a tremendous transformation. His very aura had changed. In the past, Ning had a certain radiant dynamism to him. He had been a dazzling figure who was filled with hope... but now, his

gaze was much calmer and more distant. It was like an endlessly deep sea. There was nothing which could shake his heart.

Reversing spacetime to revive Yu Wei had been a failure. All of that was over now, and he only had one thought in his mind... to continue walking his path of cultivation with no remorse and no regrets, unto death itself.

Either he would succeed in reuniting with Yu Wei, or he would fail and die, reuniting with her in the prime essences of the Chaosverse.

“Azurefiend, do you think I’ll succeed in the Daomerge?” Ning laughed.

Azurefiend was startled upon seeing Ning’s smile. He immediately said, “It’ll be extremely hard... but then again, the number of people who became Daolords of the Fourth Step via an Omega Dao is miniscule. The fact that they failed doesn’t mean you will fail as well, Darknorth.”

“Just so.” Ning laughed.

“But you are too stubborn and attached. Remember what Autarch Titanos said; excessive obsession can result in self-destruction,” Azurefiend said.

Ning nodded and smiled. “But you know, he left out part of the saying. The full saying is, excessive obsession can result in great accomplishments, but it can also result in self-destruction. I have the feeling... that I’m the type who will have great accomplishments.”

The Desolate Era

Book 38: Daomerge Chapter 6: Icepeak Army

“Haha, I also believe that you’ll accomplish great things!” Azurefiend looked at Ji Ning approvingly. He knew that some cultivators with deep obsessions who suffered setbacks would be so damaged by them that their Dao-hearts could crumble. This wasn’t rare! Even Autarch Titanos had been worried that this dazzlingly talented Daolord would perish out of despair, which was why he voiced that final possibility of using an Omega Dao to become an Autarch. However, everyone knew how remote those chances were.

“I wish to remain in the Three Realms for a period of time,” Ning said. “After I have fully mastered those formations, I’ll return to the Jadenfire Realm.” The Flamewing God was in a state of slumber; to such a creature, a nap lasting one or two chaos cycles was nothing special at all. In the end, Ning would have to rely on his Primaltwin in the Azureflower Estate to unlock those formations.

“As you desire,” Azurefiend smiled. “I’m going to spend some time wandering your homeland as well. It has been quite some time since I’ve experienced the mortal life.”

Ning nodded. “Remember, you are not permitted to kill.”

“Then what if someone tries to bully me?” Azurefiend stared.

“Capture them first. You can kill them if I give the nod,” Ning said. He refused to allow a Hegemon to run wild within his homeland.

“Fine. As you insist.” Azurefiend felt quite helpless. As a retainer, he had to obey orders.

Ning chuckled, then began to walk towards the 'Three Realms Domain' with Whitethaw behind him. The Three Realms Domain referred to the region of 3900 chaosworlds which had been established by Ning, Subhuti, Windfiend, and the other major powers.

"How beautiful." Ning stared at the thousands of chaosworlds that were organized into that enormous triangular formation. They were like a host of flickering stars in the sky, glowing with dazzling light. Ning nodded slowly. "Later, it'll be time to further perfect this formation." Stabilizing the Three Realms Domain was a long-term endeavor.

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A territory that was extremely far away from the Flamedragon Realmverse.

Whoosh. Whoosh. Whoosh. An endless black fog had spread out to cover a deep chasm, and at the bottom of the chasm was the residence of a famed Otherverse Lord known as 'Lord Skyjade'.

Swoosh. Swoosh. An enormous tear in space appeared above the abyss, with three towering figures exiting the tear.

They were all onyx humanoids with icy expressions on their faces. Unlike 'ordinary' humanoids, their bodies were covered with strange silver-white diagrams. Just standing in the air above the abyss, they emanated an endless aura of cold that swept out and caused even the endless black mist below them to freeze over.

"We finally arrived." The three onyx humanoids all smiled slightly.

"Lord Skyjade, come out and meet with us," one of the onyx humanoids called out loudly. His voice boomed out, echoing into the abyss deep within them.

Swoosh. A man dressed in dark golden robes walked out from the abyss, emanating an aura of endless might which suppressed the freezing cold. Lord Skyjade had handsome features and an extraordinary aura. He was the master of this realmverse and a nearby otherverse, making him far superior to ordinary Otherverse Lords.

"Hmph. Why have you sought me out?" Lord Skyjade's voice held a tinge of distaste, but he managed to suppress much of his anger as he spoke.

"What's wrong, Lord Skyjade? Do you detest the Icepeak Army?" one of the onyx humanoids mocked.

"If you don't wish to speak with us and wish to put on airs in front of us, we can have our general, 'Lord Wulf', come and speak to you instead," another onyx humanoid said.

Lord Skyjade frowned. He did feel a great deal of trepidation when dealing with the legendary Icepeak Army. "Cut the crap. What do you want, exactly?"

"While the three of us were out adventuring, we suddenly heard word of a distance place known as the Flamedragon Realmverse. Supposedly, an incredibly talented Daolord has managed to procure a realmship. Alas... as you might know, our Icepeak Army is extremely powerful and has multiple realmships, but our general Lord Wulf doesn't have one despite his incredible power. Now, a Daolord does. Isn't this quite irritating? Thus, we are planning to head to the Flamedragon Realmverse and force that Daolord to hand the realmship over," a skinny onyx humanoid said.

"I heard that the Icepeak Army has a total of five realmships, while your general Lord Wulf is incredibly strong. Why doesn't he have a realmship to call his own?" Lord Skyjade feigned surprise.

"Hmph." The three onyx humanoid snorted, not wanting to explain. Clearly, even the mighty Icepeak Army had its own internal squabbles.

"Lord Skyjade, we've come here to ask you to help send us to the Flamedragon Realmverse," a muscular onyx humanoid said. "The Flamedragon Realmverse is too far away. It would take us far longer than tens of millions of chaos cycles to reach it if we were to fly towards it. Daolords have short lives; we don't have the time to waste."

"The Flamedragon Realmverse? I don't have a realmship." Lord Skyjade shook his head. "Are you actually expecting me to use up the energy of my otherverse to send you there?"

"We'll compensate you appropriately, Lord Skyjade," the cyclopean onyx humanoid said. Although they were extraordinary figures of great power, they still had to show a basic level of courtesy to an Otherverse Lord.

"You wish for me to take you all the way to the distant Flamedragon Realmverse? That's far too exhausting." Lord Skyjade shook his head. "How about this? I'll ask one of my friends who has a realmship to help you out and take you to the Flamedragon Realmverse, but of course you'll have to compensate him as well."

"Naturally."

"Understood," the three onyx humanoids said.

Lord Skyjade remained quite displeased. He was an exalted Otherverse Lord; normal Hegemons had to treat him with great respect. These three were nothing more than minor soldiers in the Icepeak Army, yet they dared to behave so insolently towards him!

Alas, when he thought of the supreme leader of the Icepeak Army, that towering figure seated upon that mighty throne, Lord Skyjade couldn't help but shudder. He couldn't help but let out a sigh for Daolord Darknorth, who he had never met. "A minor Daolord was able to convince a Hegemon to become his retainer. News has spread throughout the Chaosverse. Even the Icepeak Army has heard of him."

"Remember, that place is under the sway of the Sixteen Realmverses Alliance. That is Realmslord Windgrace's territory," Lord Skyjade said. "Realmslord Windgrace's 'Blacksun' is not easy to deal with."

There were differences in status amongst Otherverse Lords as well. Realmslord Windgrace, as the master of the Blacksun, was definitely a terrifying figure even amongst Otherverse Lords.

"We know. We're only there for Daolord Darknorth, not to cause a war. I don't think Realmslord Windgrace would choose to make an enemy out of the Icepeak Army for such a matter," the three onyx humanoids said.

"Fine. Wait a while. Roughly a hundred thousand years from now, my friend shall arrive and take you towards the Flamedragon Realmverse." Lord Skyjade turned and flew back into the deep abyss.

The three watched him leave. "Hmph. Lord Skyjade is quite a prideful figure."

“The three of us are Black Emperors. If we worked together, he wouldn’t be able to do anything to us even though he is an Otherverse Lord. The only reason he dares to behave so arrogantly before the Icepeak Army is because he can hide within his otherverse whenever he pleases.” All three of them were rather disdainful towards him.

“Oh, right. Reamlord Windgrace of the Sixteen Realmverses Alliance is not a man to be trifled with. This won’t be a problem, will it?” the muscular onyx humanoid frowned as he spoke.

“Don’t worry! Old man Windgrace is a clever fellow. He wouldn’t dare launch an actual war against the Icepeak Army. He’s all by himself, while we have an entire host of Hegemons on our side, as well as his Majesty! Hmph. So long as we don’t go too far and merely act against that Daolord, this won’t cause too much of a stir. Reamlord Windgrace knows his limits.”

“Agreed.”

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Time flowed on. In the blink of an eye, ten million years had gone by, and a realmship finally reached the Flamedragon Realmverse.

“Thank you, Hegemon Thunderstar. Wait for us here, just in case... but we don’t think a mere Daolord would dare to go against our will. He’ll probably hand the realmship over to us, and so we’ll probably just fly back in the realmship without needing to trouble you again.” The three onyx humanoids flew towards the Flamedragon Realmverse.

Hegemon Thunderstar had become a Hegemon via the Dao of Lightning. He was terrifyingly fast and an extremely famous figure.

“Emperors will bide their time, but Daolords are different. They have such short lives that they are usually quite temperamental,” Hegemon Thunderstar said with a laugh. “Given that he has Hegemon Azurefiend as a retainer... if he really does fight back and chooses to hide within Hegemon Azurefiend’s estate-world, you won’t necessarily be able to win the realmship from him.”

“We trust he wouldn’t dare to make enemies out of us.” The three onyx humanoids were quite confident in their chances. As for Hegemon Thunderstar, he secretly smirked.

The vast majority of the supreme powers of the Chaosverse all disliked the Icepeak Army! It was, however, an extremely formidable force, and so even Otherverse Lords were forced to give way before them.

[The Desolate Era](#)

Book 38: Daomerge Chapter 7: The Lonely King

The Flamedragon Realmverse. Vastheaven Territory. Within the Vastheaven Everworld.

Whooooosh. An enormous tear in space appeared, with three towering onyx humanoids emerging from within it. Each of them radiated auras of tremendous power that showed them to be at the Hegemon level.

“That is Vastheaven Palace,” one of the onyx humanoids said.

“Thankfully, Hegemon Winterflame has long ago spread word regarding Daolord Darknorth. Otherwise, we wouldn’t have been able to acquire such detailed information regarding him with such ease,” the skinny onyx humanoid said with a laugh.

“I hear that Hegemon Winterflame remains trapped within the Jedefire Realm.”

“That’s why he hates Daolord Darknorth so much. However... the Jedefire Realm truly is a terrifying place. Not even the three of us would dare to barge into it; only the general himself would dare to do such a thing! However, I trust Daolord Darknorth will be wise enough not to fight us head-on.” The three onyx humanoids flew through the skies towards Vastheaven Palace.

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Within Vastheaven Palace.

Daolord Pillsaint was working on his alchemy, while Su Youji, Ji Ning, and Solesky were both watching.

“I can smell the fragrance of the pill,” Su Youji said eagerly.

Crack. Sizzle. Pop. The flames continued to sizzle away at the alchemy pot as Pillsaint focused all of his efforts on controlling the fire.

“Not bad.” The nearby Ning nodded. “Pillsaint is getting to be increasingly impressive in the Dao of Alchemy. He can now be considered a legendary grandmaster in alchemy in the Endless Territories. I have to admit, I’m far from being a match for him.”

“Master, that’s because you didn’t put any effort into alchemy,” Su Youji immediately rebutted. In her mind, Ning was the most talented in every aspect.

In truth, Ning was at such a high level of enlightenment with regards to the Dao that he had reached incredible heights in both the Dao of Formations and the Dao of Fire. In truth, he was better at controlling the alchemical flame than Pillsaint, but he lacked experience with regards to understanding how the medicinal properties of the various materials were mixed together. This required countless trials and experience.

Boom! Suddenly, a terrifying wave of power swept across the area. Bang! Startled by this, Pillsaint lost control over the fire, causing the alchemy pot to explode and the pill within to be destroyed.

“What’s going on?” Su Youji and Emperor Solesky both stared towards the outside, stunned.

“Such power... a Hegemon’s aura? Since when did Hegemons become this commonplace?” Ning frowned. Hegemons were extremely rare; they were supreme within their realmverses. For Hegemon Winterflame to attack was one thing; it had only been a few dozen chaos cycles, but yet another Hegemon had come. Judging from the way the Hegemon had flared his aura, he clearly had come with bad intentions.

“Let’s go take a look.” Ning remained quite calm. With a swoosh, he flew into the skies with Emperor Solesky flying right behind him.

The two flew into the air of Vastheaven Palace and stared outside. Ning's face immediately turned solemn. There were three towering figures standing in the air... and their bodies were not of cultivators but the onyx humanoids he had encountered in the past. There were three of them! However, they were different from the Sithe onyx humanoids which Ning had encountered in the past. These three onyx humanoids were all covered with silver diagrams and emanated an aura of endless cold.

"Black Emperors of the Sithe?" Ning was shocked. "Three of them?" Black Emperors were terrifyingly strong. Their bodies were much tougher than the bodies of most Hegemons, which was why they had an advantage in combat. In the cave which Ning and Ninedust had visited all those years ago, they had found a Black Emperor who had perished in battle while taking two Hegemons with it.

"You are Darknorth?" the skinny onyx humanoid said.

"Yes I am," Ning said. "Dare I ask why the three of you have come to Vastheaven Palace?"

"Haha, we've come to visit you on business, of course. Why else would we come all the way here to the Flamedragon Realmverse?" the muscular onyx humanoid said with a snicker.

"Darknorth, I hear you have a realmship," the skinny onyx humanoid said.

Ning's heart trembled. As he had suspected, this was about his realmship. Realmships were simply of tremendous interest to Hegemons, but he never would've expected them to attract three Black Emperors. Still... he hadn't feared even an entire host of Hegemons from the Sixteen Realmverses Alliance. Why would he fear these three onyx humanoids?

"So what if I do? So what if I don't?" Ning asked.

"You dare act with such arrogance to our face? Quite bold." A cold light flashed through the skinny onyx humanoid's eyes. "Hmph. If you do have it, hand it over and we'll spare your life. If you don't have it... then you are useless to us and shall die right now."

"Hand over the realmship," the cyclopean onyx humanoid commanded coldly.

"If you don't hand it over, everyone connected to you will perish."

Riiiiip. A tear in space appeared off in the distance. The three onyx humanoids all turned to look, only to see an ancient realmship fly out of the tear.

"The realmship." They immediately revealed looks of delight.

"Haha, the kid's pretty straightforward."

"Not bad, not bad. You are a smart boy. Hand over the realmship and you can all survive."

"Give us the realmship." The three onyx humanoids nodded approvingly at this. They had acquired quite a bit of intelligence regarding Ning and knew that he wasn't easy to deal with. If Daolord Darknorth had chosen to remain hidden within the Jedefire Realm, there would've been nothing they could do; their only option would've been to ask their general, Lord Wulf, to intervene. But if they did that, they wouldn't have rendered any real merits to the organization.

Given that this Daolord had Hegemon Azurefiend by his side, if he wanted to flee and hide there really wouldn't have been much they could do to him. If Ning was willing to hand it over, though, they would be so magnanimous as to spare his life.

Whoosh. A white-robed youth, an honest-looking white-furred golem, and a shriveled-up old man emerged from the realmship.

Ning's avatar and Emperor Solesky's avatar both retreated for now.

"And who are the three of you?" Ning asked. "Why have you immediately demanded my realmship?"

"The three of us are soldiers from the Icepeak Army," the skinnier black humanoid said calmly. "While wandering through the various realmverses, we heard word of you and so came here as quickly as possible. We wish to take your realmship and offer it to our general, 'Lord Wulf'. Kid, as a Daolord you will only live a short period of time. You probably haven't even finished exploring the Flamedragon Realmverse. This realmship will be of little use to you. Hand it over to us, and you'll have avoided calamity."

"The Icepeak Army?" Ning frowned.

"It really is the Icepeak Army." Hegemon Azurefiend's face tightened slightly.

"Azurefiend, you've heard of the Icepeak Army before?" Ning sent mentally.

"Darknorth, as you might know, when we defeated the Sithe during the Dawn War the Sithe left behind many treasures which ended up falling into our hands," Hegemon Azurefiend sent mentally. Ning just continued to listen.

"Some of the most powerful Sithe weapons of war, such as the 'Blacksun', ended up in the hands of people like Realmslord Windgrace. That is why Realmslord Windgrace is so famous and has such a higher status than other Otherverse Lords. Not even the Icepeak Army would go cause problems for him."

"The leader of the Icepeak Army is generally referred to respectfully as the 'Lonely King'. He was born an Ancient cultivator and has an eccentric personality. He always has a cold look on his face, and he delights in slaughter! It is said that he only ever smiles when he kills. The Lonely King once acquired a Sithe treasury which was filled with Sithe war machines and weapons. He is personally in control of the most powerful war machines, but he also acquired four 'Golden Emperors' and sixty-nine 'Black Emperors'. He used one of them to undergo the Ritual Sacrificium to become a Golden Emperor, while allowing three Hegemons who joined him to do the same! Over the course of countless years, he allowed some of his Eternal Emperors to be transformed into Black Emperors. As a result, he now has a terrifyingly powerful army under his control, with him at the lead. This army is named the Icepeak Army."

"Although the name sounds rather ordinary, it is legendary for its savagery. It will battle to the death anyone who offends the Lonely King! They've caused many great wars and have even destroyed an otherverse, causing three Otherverse Lords to die by their hands. But of course, they suffered certain losses during those wars as well. Supposedly, they now only have sixty-one Black Emperors left."

Ning was stunned upon hearing this. Even three Otherverse Lords had died by their hands? "Aren't Otherverse Lords able to hide within their alternate universes?" Ning couldn't help but ask, "Doesn't that mean they had to destroy the entire alternate universe?"

"There are two supremely powerful war machines publicly acknowledged to be under the Lonely King's control. One of them can be instantly activated, which was why two of the Otherverse Lords were slain before they even had a chance to run," Azurefiend sent mentally. "The third managed to hide within his otherverse, but the enraged Lonely King continued his pursuit into the otherverse. No one knows what exactly happened inside it, but the end result was that the otherverse was completely destroyed and the Otherverse Lord died. It was that battle which truly allowed the Lonely King to rise to fame and for the Icepeak Army to become known as one of the most terrifyingly powerful organizations in the Chaosverse."