

Desolate 1301

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Book 38: Daomerge Chapter 18: Two Competing Sides

Ji Ning nodded. The entire Icepeak Army had a total of four Golden Emperors, with the most powerful being the Lonely King due to his possession of multiple Sithe war machines. He had destroyed even otherverses with those machines! The Flamewing God was all by itself, after all; it would be very hard for it to fight that many people at once. If it had to protect others as well, the only way for it to do so would be for them to hide within its estate-world as it fought.

Of course, Ning could've ordered for the Flamewing God to charge straight into the Lonely King's base. In other words, if this battle truly got out of hand it wouldn't be good for anyone involved.

Whoosh. Flamewing transformed back into a ruddy-faced fatty and re-entered the realmship. "That was a good fight! Its been ages since I've had the chance to fight like that. Whew!" Flamewing was quite delighted with itself. "That Lord Wolf or Wolfe or whatever, he sure can take a beating! I can't even count the number of times I whacked him, but I just couldn't put him down."

Hegemon Brightshore, Hegemon Netherlily, Hegemon Windrain, and Azurefiend all stared at the fatty with a look of some dread. This harmless-looking man was capable of butchering Hegemons with ease when he fought. Even Otherverse Lords would be completely dominated, albeit still capable of staying alive.

"And who are these three?" Flamewing glanced at Hegemon Brightshore and the other two, then licked its lips. "Master, should I eat them?"

"Don't!" Hegemon Brightshore and the others were badly frightened by that offhand comment.

"They are my friends, Flamewing. Stop causing trouble," Ning immediately said.

"Oh." Flamewing nodded, then casually slouched over a nearby chair. It then waved its hand, causing some food to appear which it began to munch down on.

"Chaos Primordials truly are exceptional!" Hegemon Brightshore let out a relieved breath. All of them unconsciously moved closer towards Ning, wanting to keep a safe distance away from the Flamewing God.

"My horizons have been expanded after seeing that battle," Hegemon Windrain said with a sigh. "I've often heard of how terrifying the battles between Otherverse Lords can be, but I've never witnessed one myself. Experts on that level rarely fight, after all! This was the very first time, and it truly was an incredible sight. They really do completely surpass us in power."

Ning nodded. He had also been stunned by this recent fight. The Flamewing God's flames alone would've been enough to roast him to death, while the Golden Emperors lived up to their reputation; Flamewing had unleashed everything it had but remained unable to harm Lord Wulf.

Ning was slowly beginning to understand that Flamewing had slightly more attack power than Otherverse Lords, but wasn't capable of actually killing them! In terms of defensive strength, however, Flamewing was completely indestructible, and its strength was nearly limitless as well.

The Lonely King's Sithe war machines allowed him to actually slay Otherverse Lords! And yet, he still wouldn't be able to harm Flamewing in the slightest, and his defensive strength was merely on par with other Golden Emperors. Most importantly of all, he was unable to fight an extended battle. Much like how Realmslord Windgrace would expend an enormous amount of energy with each activation of the Blacksun, the Lonely King's Sithe war machines also consumed a terrifying amount of energy.

Thus... even though some major powers clearly had greater attack power than a Chaos Primordial, they still remained completely unable to harm those creatures. Flamewing could slaughter all of the Lonely King's subordinates with impunity, and the Lonely King would be able to do nothing but watch.

This battle truly had been quite stunning for everyone involved. Ji Ning, Azurefiend, Brightshore, Windrain, Netherlily... they were all Hegemonic figures, and today they realized how terrifying the higher-level Otherverse Lords were. The others were also envious of the fact that Ning had actually managed to tame a Chaos Primordial.

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"Damnit."

Multiple figures were scattered throughout the realmship. All of them were silent, and the golden humanoid was the first to speak and disrupt the deathly silence.

Lord Wulf stood there, his eyes cold and filled with murder. The air around him seemed to have frozen solid. He had never suffered a humiliating defeat like today's.

"General?" The other four looked at Lord Wulf.

"We definitely cannot just let things end here." Lord Wulf gritted his teeth. "We have to invite his Majesty to help out."

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Whoooooosh. An endless aura of cold emanated out to cover the surrounding void.

A giant iceberg was hanging in the middle of the void, and the iceberg was filled with frozen mountain peaks. A figure was levitating in the air above the peak of one of those mountains.

This figure was seated on a giant levitating silver throne and dressed in beautiful silver robes. His hands, his neck, his face, and the other exposed parts of his body were all golden! The silver-robed golden humanoid sat there atop his throne, his arms resting against the throne's armrest. A blood-red gemstone was affixed to the middle of his forehead like a third eye, and it brimmed with might.

This man was staring into the distant void silently.

Everyone in the Icepeak Army knew that the Lonely King would often sit there by himself and stare off into the void. The Lonely King always had a cold look on his face, a look that inspired terror in those who saw him. With but a thought, he could rescind the Golden Emperor and Black Emperor bodies of his subordinates, then give them over to others. Thus, all of the soldiers of the Icepeak Army were filled with dread towards him. They were terrified of incurring his displeasure.

The only time he ever revealed the hint of a smile was when he was engaged in battle and slaughter.

“Majesty.” A gray-robed figure flew over, then bowed respectfully.

The Lonely King turned his golden gaze across the gray figure. “You are Lord Wulf’s retainer?”

“I am,” the gray-robed figure said respectfully. “My true body has accompanied the general for many years now. Just now, I received orders from Lord Wulf to report some news of grave import to you, your Majesty.”

“Speak,” the Lonely King commanded calmly, his gaze focused upon the infinite void once more.

“This matter involves a Daolord known as Darknorth.” The gray-robed figure began to respectfully narrate the entire affair in detail, not exaggerating anything at all. He described things exactly as they had occurred.

The Lonely King listened to the entire story without interrupting a single time. When he heard that Ji Ning had the power of a Hegemon, his only response was a blink. It wasn’t until he heard the words ‘Chaos Primordial’ that he turned to look at the gray-robed figure.

“A Chaos Primordial?” The Lonely King murmured softly, “And who does it serve? Waveshift?”

“No. Lord Wulf said that he saw Daolord Darknorth issue an order to the Chaos Primordial. He said, ‘Flamewing, kill them all’,” the gray-robed figure replied. “This Chaos Primordial should therefore be named ‘Flamewing’, and its master should be Daolord Darknorth.”

“This Chaos Primordial’s master is Daolord Darknorth?” The Lonely King’s lips curved upwards slightly.

He was smiling.

This scene inspired terror in the gray-robed Emperor. Whenever he saw the Lonely King smile, he felt a sense of terror.

“Good. It is good that he serves a Daolord.” The Lonely King nodded slowly, seeming to be quite pleased.

“Lord Wulf said that he lost five Black Emperors,” the gray-robed figure said hurriedly. “What should we do? We’re waiting for your orders, Majesty.”

“Let bygones be bygones. Let this matter come to an end,” the Lonely King said calmly.

“Then what of our five slain Black Emperors?” the gray-robed figure asked.

“If they died, they died.” The Lonely King remained quite calm and indifferent. “Let this matter come to an end. This ‘Daolord Darknorth’ deserves his reputation as an unbelievable genius. He now has a Chaos Primordial at his beck and call... and most Daolords are madmen! Best not to fight against this Daolord Darknorth. If we fight against him and he orders his Chaos Primordial to attack our base, who can withstand it?”

The gray-robed figure continued to listen obediently.

“Send my response to Lord Wulf. He and his subordinates are to be stationed permanently in the Flamedragon Realmverse!” A hint of anticipation was in the Lonely King’s eyes. “Let him wait and collect every bit of information he can find about Daolord Darknorth. Once he receives word that Daolord Darknorth has failed his Daomerge, have him notify me.”

“Understood,” the gray-robed figure said respectfully.

“Remember! From this day forth, you are not to antagonize Daolord Darknorth. Do not speak to me of him until he fails his Daomerge,” the Lonely King commanded. “Now go.”

The gray-robed figure bowed respectfully, then immediately departed.

The Lonely King continued to sit there atop his levitating silver throne, staring quietly into the void. A hint of anticipation was within his eyes. “So its master is a Daolord? Daolords have such short lives. Once the Daolord dies, it’ll be time for the creature to accept a new master.”

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The Hiddenfiend Realmverse. The Blacksun.

Realmslord Windgrace had received the reports from Hegemon Brightshore, Hegemon Windrain, and Hegemon Netherlily.

“A Chaos Primordial? And its master is Daolord Darknorth?” The disheveled-looking old man walked out of his little courtyard, his eyes brighter than ever.

“So one of the legendary Chaos Primordials has appeared.” Realmslord Windgrace immediately barked, “On my orders, ensure that no news regarding the Chaos Primordial is divulged to outsiders. All Hegemons within the Sixteen Realmverses Alliance, as well as the visiting Hegemons and Emperors, are all under strict orders to not spread this information to anyone.”

“Yes, Master,” the two nearby disciples both said respectfully.

Realmslord Windgrace mused softly, “Once word spreads, even more of those old fellows will be drawn over here. Daolords have such short lives. Once this Daolord dies... if he issued an order for the Chaos Primordial to follow another, it would quickly come to accept its new master.”

“Master, the Lonely King should be aware of this matter as well,” Hegemon Wuye said.

“I know the Lonely King. He would never divulge this information to others.” Realmslord Windgrace shook his head. “As for what happens when Darknorth fails his Daomerge... if the Lonely King tries to fight with me over it, he’ll learn that he cannot beat me. Hmph!”

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Book 38: Daomerge Chapter 19: All Grows Calm Again

“Master, what should we do next?” Hegemon Wuye said softly. He had once been one of Realmslord Windgrace’s least remarkable students, but in the end he had become the most successful. Hegemon Wuye looked rather foolish, but how could a Hegemon who devoted to his life to analyzing Sithe golems possibly be foolish? At critical times like this, he was able to maintain a level of incredible calm. Wuye knew that the question of who the Chaos Primordial belonged to was a question which would impact his own master’s status.

Unlike Daolord Darknorth, his master was going to be around for an extremely long period of time. Daolord Darknorth had a limited lifespan, while his master had won eternity for himself. If he could also tame a Chaos Primordial, then his status in the vast Chaosverse would rise up once more to new heights. The Lonely King would no longer be on the same level as him.

“Do nothing at all.” Realmslord Windgrace shook his head. “There’s no need for us to try and force things. Daolord Darknorth is an intelligent man. He has his own plans.”

“Alright.” Wuye nodded.

“The more you try to force something, the less likely it will work out as you hoped. The only result would be that Daolord Darknorth might feel a sense of enmity towards us. The Lonely King’s subordinates have already caused the seeds of enmity to be sown between him and Darknorth. Based on my understanding of his personality, he’s definitely going to try and force things...” Realmslord Windgrace smiled. “We cannot try to rush this matter. We must be patient. Daolord Darknorth has to willingly hand over control. Once he fails his Daomerge, he’s eventually going to have to come to a decision about what he will do.”

The nearby Emperor Skylight asked, “Master, what if Daolord Darknorth succeeds in his Daomerge?”

“Succeeds?” Realmslord Windgrace laughed. “He trains in an Omega Dao. I once heard from an Autarch that there has never been a Daolord who has successfully completed the Daomerge for an Omega Dao! If he does succeed, he’ll reach such a terrifyingly high level of power that he’ll probably be far stronger than even the Chaos Primordial. By then, the Chaos Primordial won’t matter; what would matter would be Darknorth himself.”

Hegemon Wuye and Hegemon Skylight couldn’t help but begin to silently speculate as to how powerful an Omega Dao Emperor would be!

“Stop thinking about it. The cultivator civilizations of the vast Chaosverse have given birth to a number of Autarchs, but it has never given birth to so much as a single Omega Dao Emperor.” Realmslord Windgrace shook his head. “His chances of success are very, very low.”

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Since Realmslord Windgrace had issued orders, everyone in the Sixteen Realmverses Alliance immediately moved to obey.

In truth, realmverses were all extremely distant from each other. It was quite difficult for news to spread across multiple realmverses, and the only ones within the Sixteen Realmverses Alliance who were capable of contacting the outside world were the Hegemon-class Emperors. So long as they kept their mouths shut, there was no way word would spread.

But as for within the Sixteen Realmverses Alliance? Word had already spread! Hegemon Brightshore, Hegemon Windrain, and Hegemon Netherlily had only managed to contact Realmslord Windgrace by going through several other Hegemons and Emperors! They didn’t have Primaltwins or avatars in the Blacksun, and so they had to convey their messages through others, who then conveyed the message to Emperor Skylight to give to Realmslord Windgrace.

Given how many had been informed, word naturally began to spread within the Sixteen Realmverses Alliance.

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A realmship suddenly appeared at the borders between the Flamedragon Realmverse and the Great Dark. This was the realmship which Hegemon Thunderstar commanded. Within it were a total of six figures. One was a golden humanoid, four were onyx humanoids, and the final figure was a violet-robed, violet-haired man.

They were Lord Wulf of the Icepeak Army, four Black Emperors, and Hegemon Thunderstar, respectively.

“Swear the oath right away.” Lord Wulf cast the violet-robed, violet-haired man a cold look.

“Sure, sure.” Hegemon Thunderstar immediately smiled. “I would never dare to go against the Lonely King’s orders. I, Thunderstar, swear on my very life itself...” Hegemon Thunderstar had been forced to swear an oath not to divulge any information regarding the Chaos Primordial known as the Flamewing God.

“You can leave now.” Lord Wulf tossed out a storage-type magic treasure, then left alongside his four Black Emperors.

Whoosh. The realmship quickly departed, leaving Lord Wulf and his four Black Emperors at the borders of the Great Dark.

“General?”

“Are we really supposed to just swallow this crap?” The four Black Emperors remained unwilling to accept this. They had just suffered a huge loss; were they to take this lying down? The Icepeak Army would generally launch frenzied reprisals against any who dared to challenge them! This was why the Lonely King had gone so far as to kill three Otherverse Lords.

“You already know what his Majesty has commanded,” Lord Wulf said coldly. “What his Majesty commands, we shall carry out! Right now, his Majesty doesn’t care about this ‘Daolord Darknorth’; the only thing he cares about is that Chaos Primordial. If he can take control of it in the future, then our Icepeak Army shall become far more powerful than it is right now.”

When the four Black Emperors thought back to how terrifying the Flamewing God had been, they couldn’t help but shudder.

“In the coming days, we shall remain hidden within the Flamedragon Realmverse and keep a close watch on Daolord Darknorth. We shall wait for him to fail his Daomerge.”

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The news that a Chaos Primordial had appeared was like a bomb exploding within the Sixteen Realmverses Alliance! It shocked all of the Hegemons and Emperors. As for the Lonely King and Realmslord Windgrace, they just waited quietly. Both of them were waiting for Ning to fail his Daomerge.

“Let’s go.” A vile, blood-robed elder who radiated a reeking aura of blood stood there in the air. He let out a sigh. Behind him was an entire host of evil Emperors.

“Are we... are we really going to just leave like this?” The Emperors were rather unwilling to go.

“We lost.” The blood-robed Emperor shook his head. “Daolord Darknorth has survived many attempts against his life, and he now has both a Hegemon retainer and a Chaos Primordial. There’s no way we can possibly be a match for him. If we stay in the Flamedragon Realmverse... given his influence and power, we’ll probably be wiped out soon.”

“Now... our only chance for survival lies in departing from the Flamedragon Realmverse,” the blood-robed elder said.

“Let us go our separate ways and begin to wander through the Great Dark. Only by leaving can we survive.” The blood-robed elder let out a sigh. “I, Bloodcloud, simply am not strong enough. I feel ashamed.”

Whoosh. The legendary Emperor Bloodcloud, a man who had reached the Archon level of power, tore through spacetime and departed on his own.

The other Emperors traded glances with each other. All of them were truly unwilling to accept this. It would take them at least a million chaos cycles to travel another realmverse, after all. This would take an incredibly long period of time!

“In the end, there shall be other places in the chaosverse where we can live and thrive. Let us go.” The Emperors quickly came to the decision to depart. Singly and in small groups, they began to depart from the Flamedragon Realmverse and begin to wander through the Great Dark. Ji Ning had once sworn to slay every single one of the demons of Silksnow Palace. How could they possibly dare to remain here any longer?

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Vastheaven Palace.

By now, Hegemon Brightshore and the others had departed. Now, Emperor Waveshift had come to bid Ning farewell as well.

“Big brother Waveshift, you are leaving as well?” Ning was rather surprised and unwilling to part from him.

“The main reason I came back was to see just what new power has arisen within my homeland. Now that I know it is the Flamewing God and have met with you, Darknorth, I’m satisfied.” Emperor Waveshift smiled. “I have other business to attend to in the outside world.”

Ning nodded.

“Now that you have Flamewing under your control, the only ones you need to keep an eye out for are two people. One is the Lonely King of the Icepeak Army, and the other is Realmslord Windgrace.” Emperor Waveshift smiled. “The Lonely King’s temperament is a bit too bloodthirsty, and in comparison he isn’t quite as experienced as the Realmslord. He was simply someone who was lucky enough to find a Sithe armory and thus rose to power! Realmslord Windgrace is different. He rendered great merits

during the Dawn War and has been guided by multiple Autarchs. He has seen far more things, and as a result he has chosen to be low-key.”

“It’s hard to predict what Realmslord Windgrace will do. If you do fail the Daomerge, you can entrust your final wishes to Realmslord Windgrace. That old man is quite trustworthy,” Emperor Waveshift said.

Ning was slightly startled by this.

“Of course, I hope you succeed in the Daomerge.” Emperor Waveshift let out a long sigh. “You’ve only seen a tiny fraction of what the Chaosverse holds; you haven’t even left the Flamedragon Realmverse! Countless marvels are waiting for you, and there are countless secrets waiting for you to uncover them. Darknorth, I truly do hope that you succeed in the Daomerge. When you do, I’ll ride your coat-tails and have you take me to some places I would never dare to visit on my own.”

Ning said with some surprise, “Countless marvels are waiting me?”

“You’ve barely visited any places.” Emperor Waveshift shook his head.

“I’ve visited an alternate universe before!” Ning said. “And also many places here in the Flamedragon Realmverse.”

“As I said, you’ve barely visited any places. Otherverses are created by Autarchs for amusement, and they hold nothing special within them,” Emperor Waveshift said. “The Chaosverse... now THAT is truly something. Even the Sithe were nothing more than part of the Chaosverse. Only those who truly understand how marvelous the Chaosverse is will know how tiny they themselves are!

“This is why Realmslord Windgrace, who has served and followed Autarchs in the past, is such a low-key figure, while the short-sighted and ignorant Lonely King is so arrogant and brash. His only claim to fame stems from those Sithe war machines. In terms of real power, those Otherverse Lords who managed to merge their heartforce, divine power, and Immortal energy together are the truly terrifying figures of the Chaosverse. They truly do stand at the very peak of power, save for the Autarchs.”

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Book 38: Daomerge Chapter 20: Regret

Ji Ning nodded as well. If an Otherverse Lord managed to merge all of his types of energy together, he would truly become a force to reckoned with.

Ning had received legacies from over three hundred Hegemons, with God Emperor Helong being one of them. God Emperor Helong had been an Otherverse Lord who had created the [God Emperor’s Apocalypse] technique, a technique akin to the [Heartsword] art. As a result, he had been far more powerful than most Otherverse Lords, and was strong enough to fight Chaos Primordials head-on with his own power.

“However... on the other hand, Sithe war machines come in varying levels of power as well. The Lonely King has multiple war machines and is capable of slaying ordinary Otherverse Lords and destroy entire otherverses.” Emperor Waveshift nodded. “Although he is rather short-sighted, he’s still not someone to trifle with. Sithe war machines are simply terrifying to behold. You need to be wary of him.”

“I understand.” Ning nodded.

“Train hard and succeed in the Daomerge.” Emperor Waveshift looked at Ning. “The Chaosverse holds far too many marvels which you have yet to see. For example, the most stunning sight I’ve ever seen is a Sithe Exalt who is kept in perpetual imprisonment. That terrifying presence he had... even though I only saw his blurred outlines from afar, I still felt completely shaken. Well, that’s enough of that. Here’s a treasure for you.”

Emperor Waveshift suddenly waved his hand, causing a cube-shaped treasure to appear within it. He gently flicked this crystalline cube over towards Ning. “All you have to do is shatter it, and I’ll be able to sense it.” Emperor Waveshift looked at Ning. “I’ll then head back to the Flamedragon Realmverse at top speed.”

“Thank you.” Ning felt rather moved.

“I feel like we are old friends, even though we have just met.” Emperor Waveshift let out a sigh. He scanned the area with his gaze, then used his Immortal energy to block the sound of their voices from the outside world. “Before I leave, there’s one more thing I need to tell you.”

When Ning saw how cautious Emperor Waveshift was, to the point of not even wanting Flamewing or Azurefiend to overheard the conversation, Ning couldn’t help but feel rather surprised.

“In recent days, I secretly used all the power and skill I had to engage in Numerancy divination on your behalf,” Emperor Waveshift said.

Ning’s heart lurched.

“Your Daomerge... it will have a tremendous impact on the world. Even though I did everything I could, I was still only able to see a tiny amount.” Emperor Waveshift looked at Ning. He elected not to mention the fact that he had used up an incredibly important treasure to carry out this divination; otherwise, he wouldn’t have been able to see anything at all.

“You saw a tiny amount?” Ning listened carefully.

“A tiny, blurry amount.” Emperor Waveshift nodded. “All I can say is... I saw nothing but darkness!”

“What do you mean?” Ning’s face paled slightly.

“It means that there was no life at all!” Emperor Waveshift shook his head. “Based on what I saw just now... you will definitely fail your Daomerge!”

“Are you absolutely certain?” Ning found it hard to accept this.

“Don’t be hasty or disheartened. Remember... the Dao of Numerancy involves divination and probability, not ironclad prophecy; nothing is fixed! The future is always filled with infinite possibilities,” Emperor Waveshift said. “Thus... you need to seize every single possibility, every single bit of karmic luck. You have to fight for every scrap of every chance, for every treasure and every legacy you can find. Do everything you can to improve your chances... because if you do not, you will fail.”

“If you do your utmost, perhaps you may stand a chance.” Emperor Waveshift looked at Ning. “That’s all I have to say. I’m going to leave now.” After speaking, Emperor Waveshift turned and departed into the skies.

Waves of emotion were rocking through Ning's heart. He had felt certain that he had reached a sufficiently high level of insight into the Dao. He never would've imagined that Emperor Waveshift's divinations would suggest that he had no chance whatsoever at succeeding.

"He's right. If I want to succeed in the Daomerge for an Omega Dao, I truly do have to do everything I can. I can't let myself relax in the slightest." Ning nodded slowly.

"Master, has Waveshift departed?" Flamewing sauntered over lazily.

"He left." Ning nodded. "Life shall become rather peaceful and uneventful for a time. No one will come to disturb us."

Ning was planning to continue his training. He had multiple other Daos he needed to train to the Archon level, so as to fulfill the requirements Autarch Awakener had laid down. That would allow him to gain a treasure which the Autarch had left behind, a treasure which the Autarch had believed to be supremely useful for the Daomerge. He absolutely had to acquire that treasure.

"So there's nothing else to do for now?" Azurefiend asked. "Darknorth, are you planning to remain in secluded meditation here at Vastheaven Palace?"

"Yes." Ning nodded. "However, before I go into secluded meditation, I'm planning to pay a visit to the Jedefire Realm. There's still a Hegemon imprisoned there."

"Winterflame!" Azurefiend's eyes lit up.

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By now, the only person remaining in the flaming passageways of the Jedefire Realm was Hegemon Winterflame.

The silver-robed and devilishly handsome Hegemon Winterflame was seated in the lotus position within a flaming passageway. He was quite patient, and ever since he had ended negotiations with Daolord Darknorth he had begun to wait. He was waiting for Daolord Darknorth to fail his Daomerge, at which time he would stand a chance at surviving and escaping.

"What?! A Chaos Primordial?!" Hegemon Winterflame's face turned completely pale. "Impossible! That's absolutely impossible." A look of terror was in his eyes. He finally began to panic, and it was impossible for him to remain calm any further.

By now, the entire Sixteen Realmverses Alliance was frothing after receive word that Daolord Darknorth had tamed a Chaos Primordial. Hegemon Winterflame's avatar was in the outside world and he thus received word of it as well. To the other Hegemons and Daolords, this was nothing more than a bit of entertaining news... but to Hegemon Winterflame, it was a sudden pronouncement of doom!

He had always been a vicious and unscrupulous man, which was why he had planned on kidnapping everyone in Vastheaven Palace to threaten Ning. He had even battled against Ning's avatar, and Hegemon Brightshore had to intervene to stop him.

In the end, he had been unwilling to completely accede to Ning's demands within the flaming passageway. He wanted to await for the day that Daolord Darknorth failed his Daomerge and perished,

and so he had been waiting... but who would've imagined that this terrifying news of a Chaos Primordial would suddenly descend upon him?

"Is this real? The Chaos Primordial is named the 'Flamewing God', and he easily butchered five Black Emperors of the Icepeak Army? Lord Wulf of the Icepeak Army was beaten so badly he had to flee in terror?" The more Hegemon Winterflame heard, the more terrified he became. If even Black Emperors had been slain, how could he, Winterflame, pose any threat to the creature at all?

"How could this have happened? He's just a Daolord! H-how is this possible? I-I... I've always been so careful." Hegemon Winterflame was rather dazed. He had never been so foolish as to make an enemy out of any truly formidable figures. Although he was unscrupulous and capable of anything, causing many to hate him, he had still been able to remain alive.

Alas... if one always walks by the riverside, sooner or later one's shoes would get wet! Daolords were usually nothing more than bugs to be crushed... but this time, one of them had just given him a huge 'surprise'.

"N-no... I can't accept this..." Hegemon Winterflame's face turned completely red as countless thoughts flitted through his mind. He asked for more and more information from those in the outside world before, finally, he gave up.

"Flee!" Hegemon Winterflame's eyes were bloodshot. "I have to flee! Since Daolord Darknorth is now fighting against the Icepeak Army, his true body isn't present. Perhaps the Jedefire Realm is unguarded for now." Hegemon Winterflame felt a thin tendril of hope.

Swoosh! He immediately transformed into a streak of white fire and began to flee.

"It really is safe now." Hegemon Winterflame flew for several seconds without activating any traps. He immediately felt a sense of delight. "Daolord Darknorth must have left. There's no one in control of the Jedefire Realm."

BOOM! Right at this moment, a wave of terrifying power swept towards him with terrifying destructive power. Hegemon Winterflame immediately retreated in a blind panic, but the flame still split his body in half.

Slash! After putting up a struggle, half of his flaming body was completely destroyed by that wave of power. The other half quickly reformed into Hegemon Winterflame's appearance. His face was ashen, and a look of horror was in his eyes. He had very nearly died just now.

"Hegemon Winterflame. On Master's commands, I've been watching over you." A voice boomed out, echoing within every part of the surrounding area.

Hegemon Winterflame lifted up his head to scan the surrounding area, a feeling of dread in his heart.

"You were pretty lucky this time, but next time you are dead meat. The flaming passageways are quite long. You'll have to fly for very, very long before you can escape them. You survived the first time, but I refuse to believe you'll survive a second and third time," the cold voice said. This was the Emperor-class golem which Ning had ordered to remain here and watch over this place.

“Y-you...” Hegemon Winterflame was panicking. He called out loudly, “Is your master Daolord Darknorth? Hurry up and help me send word to him. Let him know that I’ll accept his terms. I’ll give him all of my treasures, including my armor and my Universe weapon. I’m willing to offer all of them to Daolord Darknorth, so long as he is willing to let me go and spare my life.”

“Hmph. So NOW you choose to beg for your life?” the cold voice boomed out.

“Just hurry up and tell your master!” Hegemon Winterflame said frantically. “I don’t want to be enemies with him!”

“Just wait. He will be arriving soon,” the cold voice replied.

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Book 38: Daomerge Chapter 21: Of Little Use

A realmship appeared within a spatial tear outside the Jadedfire Realm.

“And here we are.” Ji Ning stared at the vast blazing whirlpool of blazing flames and smiled: “Hegemon Winterflame has probably heard the news by now.”

“He definitely has.” A look of excitement was on Azurefiend’s old face, and his eyes were gleaming.

“Based on my understanding of him... he’s probably scared out of his mind. He might immediately beg for mercy once you arrive, Darknorth.”

“Let’s go and take a look.” Ning was looking forward to seeing that panicked look on Hegemon Winterflame’s face. In the past, Winterflame had always behaved in an arrogant and domineering manner.

Whoosh. The realmship flew into the Jadedfire Realm at high speeds, descending into the flaming passageways.

“Master.” A voice rang out from the surrounding area. This was the voice of the Emperor-class golem in control of the flaming passageways.

“Is Winterflame still in the same old position?” Ning asked.

“Master,” the voice rang out, “Hegemon Winterflame attempted to flee, but I took control over the mechanisms in accordance with your orders and nearly killed him. This frightened Hegemon Winterflame so badly that he no longer dared to flee again, and he’s very close to where he originally started.”

“He actually tried to flee?” Azurefiend grinned and said, “He finally knows the meaning of fear. He has an invulnerable form, which means that even though I am a bit stronger than him I cannot kill him... but now that we have Flamewing, killing him will be simplicity itself. If he tries to run, the mechanisms in the flaming passageways are also capable of claiming his life! Both fleeing and not-fleeing will both spell doom. Haha, I’m looking forward to seeing that look on his stupid face!”

Ning laughed as well. He also felt delighted! After they flew for a period of time, they finally saw Hegemon Winterflame. Hegemon Winterflame was seated in the lotus position in the void. He still looked as devilishly handsome as ever, but his aura was rather chaotic.

“Eh?” Hegemon Winterflame turned his head as the distant realmship approached him. He hurriedly rose to his feet.

Four figures flew out of the realmship, with the leader being the white-robed youth with a black sheath on his back. Next to him was the chubby Flamewing and Hegemon Azurefiend, with Protector Whitethaw standing behind them all.

“I greet you, Daolord Darknorth,” Hegemon Winterflame said. His attitude was very humble, and he cast Flamewing a glance as he spoke. Flamewing was chomping through some food he was holding as he glanced sideways at Winterflame as well. Winterflame couldn’t help but feel as though he himself was being devoured bit-by-bit, and his mental state grew even more chaotic.

“Hah! Look at how respectful our dear Hegemon Winterflame is being.” Azurefiend roared with laughter as he clutched his sides: “He’s being as humble as a servant! Last time we saw him, he was quite arrogant and proud, no? Winterflame, do you remember the final words you said to us when we last met?”

Hegemon Winterflame’s face was ashen as Azurefiend continued to speak: “I think you’ve forgotten, but I haven’t. I recall it all quite clearly. Watch, Winterflame!” Azurefiend waved his hand, causing an illusory image to appear next to them. This was the scene of their previous meeting, and in the illusory images Winterflame was snarling with hatred as he roared, “Let’s see if you die first or if I die first!”

Winterflame gritted his teeth.

“Enough, Azurefiend,” Ning said.

“Fine.” Azurefiend fell silent as instructed.

Winterflame relaxed slightly. Although he was completely unscrupulous, as a Hegemon he still cared about face. He felt miserable suffering such mockery from Azurefiend. Upon hearing Ning order Azurefiend to halt, he was suddenly filled with hope. Perhaps Daolord Darknorth wasn’t going to hold a grudge and would release him?

“He’s about to die soon. There’s no need to go too far.” Ning’s voice rang out once more, and Winterflame’s face instantly turned bone-white.

“DAOLORD DARKNORTH!!!” Hegemon Winterflame let out a throat-rending howl. Even Ning was badly startled by the grief and rage in Hegemon Winterflame’s voice.

“Daolord Darknorth, I was wrong! It was all my fault! I was being too arrogant and ruthless.” Hegemon Winterflame stared at Ning, then said in a begging manner, “I know I made a huge mistake. I beg you to give me a chance, Daolord Darknorth. Everyone should be given a chance. Give me one!”

“In your dreams,” Azurefiend muttered.

Hegemon Winterflame gritted his teeth. “I’m willing to be your retainer. So long as you spare my life, I’ll serve you.”

Ning just watched quietly, while Azurefiend chuckled: "Didn't you look down at me for becoming his retainer?"

"I'd be honored to be given the chance to serve Daolord Darknorth as his retainer," Hegemon Winterflame said hurriedly. Upon seeing that Ning appeared completely unmoved, he began to panic even further. "I'm willing to be an eternal retainer. Even if you fail your Daomerge and die, Daolord Darknorth, I'd be willing to swear an oath to follow your orders to the end of my days. Uh, I don't mean to suggest that I hope you will fail the Daomerge, Daolord Darknorth. I obviously hope that you will suc-

Halfway through his babbling, Ning suddenly shook his head. "Flamewing, get rid of him."

"Haha, I was waiting for you to say that!" Flamewing let out a strange howl, transforming into his normal form of a giant blazing winged bear as he charged straight towards Hegemon Winterflame.

Hegemon Winterflame had a terrified look on his face, but moments later it was replaced by a look of savagery. He glared at the distant Ning with a hate-filled look in his eyes, then howled, "Daolord Darknorth, you'll die too! You'll die too!"

Riiiiip. Flamewing destroyed everything in its path with its overwhelming power. Even though Hegemon Winterflame was able to transform into a sea of fire, he was still extinguished by the Chaos Primordial's might. Nothing was left save a few scattered treasures.

Azurefiend shook his head when he saw this. "Darknorth, Winterflame was still a Hegemon. Taking him on as a retainer wasn't a bad idea. I thought you'd choose to accept him in the end."

Ning stared at the scattered treasures floating in the air. "I did briefly consider taking him on as a retainer, but... for some reason, he just disgusted me far too much. I already have the three of you; an extra Hegemon retainer really wouldn't make much of a difference. Better to keep my surroundings clear of such filth."

Azurefiend was speechless. He never would've imagined that Ning would have declined a Hegemonic retainer for a reason like this.

"Let's go." Ning had already made certain plans for the Three Realms. By now, Hegemon Winterflame truly was of little use to him, as Ning simply wouldn't trust a Hegemon like Winterflame to watch over the Three Realms.

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Hegemon Winterflame died, and his avatar perished alongside him. This news quickly spread throughout the Sixteen Realmverses Alliance.

The Hegemons and Emperors of the alliance all knew long ago that Hegemon Winterflame had been trapped within the flaming passageways. They all suspected that the killer was Daolord Darknorth, the controller of the Jadenfire Realm! All of them couldn't help but feel a lingering sense of dread towards him. They knew that Daolord Darknorth was not the benevolent, merciful type... and they secretly celebrated the fact that they handed over their treasures and had been able to leave the Jadenfire Realm safely.

And so, the Hegemons and Emperors of the Sixteen Realmverses Alliance now feared a total of two people. The first was Realmlord Windgrace, while the second was the monstrously talented Daolord who had tamed the Flamewing God – Daolord Darknorth. These two people were mighty enough to cause even Hegemons to fear the approach of death.

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Ning didn't really care about what was happening in the outside world. His focus was on cultivation. He had to come up with those ten Archon-class techniques as soon as possible, so that he could earn the precious reward which Autarch Awakener had left behind. Even the Autarch viewed that treasure as valuable and not to be casually handed over to others.

According to the estate-spirit, this treasure was the number one most helpful cultivation treasure in all the Chaosverse, and it was number one in assisting during Daomerges as well!

Ning absolutely had to acquire such a supreme treasure. The Daomerge for the Omega Dao would be incredibly difficult; even Emperor Waveshift said that he saw no hope at all for Ning in attempting it. In addition, the path of the Omega Dao was the only path available for Ning if he wished to revive Yu Wei. Only through this path would he have a chance to surpass the Autarchs and take back Yu Wei's truesoul fragments from the prime essences of the Chaosverse.

Of course, it was highly likely that he would fail and perish... but he still had to do his absolute utmost!

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Time flowed on.

Vastheaven Palace. Within Darknorth's estate. Ning was seated by himself in quiet meditation atop a mountain. Next to him was a hot stove that had a flagon of wine atop it, while there was some snow on the boulder nearby.

Ning's Primaltwin remained in secluded meditation atop the Autarch's stone dais, while Ning's true body lived a fairly relaxed life. This dichotomy of harsh training and relaxedness actually caused many insights to flicker through Ning's mind. He broke through a number of bottlenecks in this way.

"I've finally reached the Archon level in the final Dao, the Dao of Earth." The white-robed Ning's eyebrows were covered in snow. He suddenly opened his eyes to stare at the nearby flagon of wine. This wine had been kept warm for an extremely long period of time, because Ning only permitted himself a single drink of wine when he finished completing a Dao. Thus, it had been countless years since he had last drank from the wine.

"Now, all ten techniques have been developed." An eager look was in Ning's eyes. "I wonder what sort of precious treasure Autarch Awakener has left behind for me?"

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Book 38: Daomerge Chapter 22: Stonefire Pearl

Within the Azureflower Estate.

The black-robed Ji Ning was seated in the lotus position atop the stone dais. He had already been in this position for more than ten chaos cycles without moving at all.

“Success.” The black-robed Ning suddenly opened his eyes and smiled. He waved his hand, causing a series of jade slips to appear next to him. Ning had filled every single one of the jade slips with all sorts of techniques which he had devised over the course of many years. Although only ten chaos cycles had gone past in the real world, he had spent that entire period of time under 100x temporal acceleration. In other words, for him over a thousand chaos cycles had already gone by.

Ning had come up with a total of ten Archon-class techniques. These techniques were based on his Omega Sword Dao, his heartforce illusions, the Dao of Fire, the Dao of Water, the Dao of Thunder, the Dao of Space, the Dao of Formations, the Dao of Metal, the Dao of Wood, and the Dao of Earth. There were ten Daos in total.

After slaughtering Hegemon Winterflame, Ning had chosen to work in simpler Daos such as that of Metal, Wood, and Earth, so that he would more quickly acquire the treasure reward. He personally wanted to study the Dao of Time, but judging from how he had spent more than two hundred chaos cycles working on the Dao of Space, he felt likely that he would need to spend even more time on Time.

In the end, he was a sword cultivator. As a result, he was quite quick with the Dao of Metal, making his breakthrough in just twenty or so chaos cycles. He wasn't very talented in the Dao of Wood, and so he spent more than fifty chaos cycles on it. As for the final member of the Five Elements, 'Earth'? Thanks to the fact that he had already mastered the first four, he had actually managed to complete his mastery of it in just ten or so chaos cycles.

In just ninety 'real' chaos cycles (900 chaos cycles for him), he had actually managed to create three Archon-class techniques.

“Senior,” the black-robed Ning called out. The distant white-haired elder, also seated in the lotus position, slowly opened his eyes.

“Senior, you already know about my Omega Sword Dao and my illusions. Here are the other eight techniques.” Ning pointed at the eight slips levitating in the air behind him. “Please take a look at them.” The eight jade slips all floated over to the white-haired man.

“That fast?” The white-haired old man's eyes lit up as he immediately stared at the eight slips. After analyzing them, he nodded: “Not bad. You've mastered all five of the Five Elements, and you actually made tremendous progress in even the Dao of Formations. You truly do have an incredibly high level of comprehension of the Dao. In truth, just judging from how quickly you were able to create your Omega Sword Dao and then reach the Fourth Step as a Daolord, I felt certain that your comprehension skills were exceptional. However, I still had to obey my master's orders.”

“Of course.” Ning nodded. In truth, one's comprehension skills could change. For example, even the most 'talented' of newborns wouldn't be able to comprehend much. The many experiences you went through in life would mold you like metal in a forge, either breaking you or making you stronger, harder, and more dazzling. Ning's heart had been completely focused on the Dao of the Sword, and he had experienced many exceptional things before reaching his current heights. Now that he had reached the fourteenth stance of the [Heartsword], his heart and his will were both incredibly pure, allowing him to train even more quickly than before.

“You’ve created ten techniques, which means I can give that treasure which Master left behind.” The white-haired old man waved his hand. Whoosh. The hall suddenly seemed to ripple as rays of light appeared, causing a tiny fist-sized space to appear at the very center of the room. After this tiny space appeared, one could vaguely make out two objects levitating within it.

The first object was a completely round and slick pearl. It looked to be roughly the size of an egg, and it emanated incorporeal ripples that could be seen with the naked eye. Ning could sense the waves of power sweeping across him, causing him to feel more relaxed and comfortable than he ever had before. He felt almost like a child in his mother’s embrace; that was how incredibly warm and soothing this felt.

The second object was also round, but it was covered with countless lines and runes.

“Come here.” The white-haired man waved his hand, causing both objects to float over towards him. “Darknorth.” The white-haired elder looked at Ning. “This first treasure was named by my master and the Autarchs as the ‘Stonefire Pearl’. All of them concur that it had to be a naturally-occurring treasure manifested by the Chaosverse, and that it is the number one most helpful cultivation treasure. Master focused all of his efforts on completing the Nine Chaos Seals, and so he found these types of treasures to be invaluable. As a result, he paid a fairly significant price to convince the other Autarchs to let him have it.”

Ning was shocked. So Autarch Awakener had personally used this treasure in the past?

“Let me tell you about its history.” The white-haired elder laughed. “Our story begins when the Sithe were at the prime of their power. They had yet to launch the great war against the cultivator civilizations, but my master and the others were already secretly on guard against them, keeping a vigilant eye on them at all times. One time, Master and the others suddenly sensed a hint of danger appear and so they hurriedly joined forces to go to that location. They discovered that the Sithe had captured and were escorting a strange stone lifeform who was completely covered in flames. My Master and the others did not hesitate at all; they immediately attacked! The Sithe either fled or died. As for the ‘stonefire’ lifeform? It was actually on par with my Master and the other Autarchs in might!”

“On par with Autarchs?!” Ning was amazed. “The Sithe are actually in control of creatures with such power?”

“That creature probably wasn’t a Sithe. None of us know where the Sithe found the thing and how they took control over it,” the white-haired elder said. “Master and his peers spent tens of thousands of years battling it before it finally ran out of energy and died. As soon as the strange stonefire creature died, its body crumbled apart and revealed this pearl within it.”

“This pearl has marvelous properties and is of tremendous use to cultivators when training,” the white-haired elder said. “We found a total of just two creatures which had reached this level of power. One was this stonefire creature, the other was an iceberg creature that was also controlled by the Sithe and fought for them during the Dawn War. The Autarchs killed both of these creatures. I imagine they should know more about where these creatures came from, but they’ve never discussed it with me.”

Ning sighed in amazement. Living creatures who were on par with Autarchs in power? “Can the Sithe have created them?” Ning asked.

“Impossible. They were actual living beings,” the white-haired elder.

“Autarch Awakener didn’t provide any additional information about them?” Ning asked.

“No. He did once say that with the Sithe having been annihilated, these creatures will no longer be seen ever again,” the white-haired elder said.

Ning nodded, but he was still completely puzzled. Why was it that these terrifying creatures would no longer appear now that the Sithe were gone? Ning couldn’t help but sigh to himself. In the end, he simply hadn’t visited enough places. He hadn’t even seen a fraction of what Emperor Waveshift had seen, to say nothing of the Autarchs. He knew far too little about the vast Chaosverse.

“This Stonefire Pearl is now yours.” The white-haired elder handed it over to Ning while saying, “But of course, you are not allowed to give it to others. If you die in the future, it’ll fly back to the estate and await its next destined owner.”

“Fly back?” After accepting the pearl, Ning at first felt as though it was rather cool. Soon, however, the warmth of his hand began to heat it up.

Ning sent his divine power into the pearl to investigate it. “Eh, it’s not a magic treasure?” Ning was surprised. This was just an ordinary item, not a magic treasure; how was he supposed to bind and use it?

“This is a natural treasure. All you need to do is to send a strand of your godsense into it and you’ll be able to activate it,” the white-haired elder said. “This estate also holds the stonefire creature’s corpse within it. If no one is in control of the pearl, it’ll pass through spacetime and then come back.”

“How incredible.” Ning was shocked.

“The Autarchs destroyed the stonefire creature and shattered its bodies into tiny bits, but the Stonefire Pearl would fly back towards the shattered bits of its body and quickly bring it back to life.” The white-haired elder laughed. “In the end, Master and the others had to destroy its soul and truesoul before it stopped trying to revive itself. By now, the corpse has been ensorcered by Master and remains suppressed in here, and so once you die, Darknorth, the Stonefire Pearl will come back to this place.”

Ning nodded. As soon as he had sent a strand of his godsense into the pearl, he was able to sense that it seemed to have become part of himself and had become completely one with him.

“Come in.” Ning willed the Stonefire Pearl to enter his body. A faint warmth spread throughout every part of him, and his soul and truesoul both felt incredibly at ease. When Ning attempted to meditate on the Dao of Time in this state, he immediately felt as though a wellspring of insights began to flow through his mind.

“This is incredibly useful for cultivation.” The white-haired elder smiled. “It is the number one cultivation treasure, which means it is naturally also the number one Daomerge treasure.”

Ning felt a sense of excitement in his heart. Hegemon Brightshore and the others had actively contested over Crimsonwave Temple’s fruits. Why? Because those fruits could be used to forge spirit-pills which when eaten would be of tremendous use for cultivation.

The Stonefire Pearl was the supreme cultivation treasure which had been used by Autarch Awakener himself, and the same was true for the stone dais. Now... both had been inherited by Ning.

“I’m sure you know what Master was hoping for when he left these things to you.” The white-haired elder looked at Ning.

“I understand. Autarch Awakener’s greatest wish was for the Nine Chaos Seals to be perfected,” Ning said.

“Yes. This was his greatest regret in life.”

The white-haired elder nodded, then gently waved a finger and caused the second floating sphere to fly over towards Ning as well.

Ning saw that this sphere was covered with countless runes and patterned lines which flowed across its surface. He immediately had the feeling that it was connected to the Nine Chaos Seals somehow. The white-haired elder explained, “This is the Heart of Eternity. It is covered with layers of runes, all of which must be deciphered and resolved. Darknorth, you should continuously work at solving these layers of runes. Once you’ve completely mastered all ninety-nine layers of runes which cover the Heart of Eternity, you will have reached Master’s level of insight into the Nine Chaos Seals.”

“But solving and comprehending the Heart of Eternity merely means you have reached his level in just a single aspect!” The white-haired elder looked at Ning. “My master’s hope is that someone can improve this technique to the Eternal Emperor level, which was why he named this sphere the Heart of Eternity. Learning to solve it will be of some assistance to you in the Daomerge. Although the assistance will be fairly minimal, Master left behind a final treasure within the core of the Heart of Eternity. If you can fully solve it then the treasure inside it will be yours, and I can promise you that it is just as valuable as the Stonefire Pearl.”

Ning felt both joy and sorrow. Autarch Awakener truly had spared no expense in trying to ensure that his ‘heirs’ would complete the Nine Chaos Seals. He had even gone so far as to seal away a treasure inside the Heart of Eternity! If someone wanted to acquire it, they would have to first completely deconstruct the Heart of Eternity and reach Autarch Awakener’s level of insight in the Nine Chaos Seals. This would truly require an enormous amount of effort.

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Book 38: Daomerge Chapter 23: Difference

“Senior,” Ji Ning asked, “Might I ask what other external treasures exist in the Chaosverse which are of major benefit to someone attempting the Daomerge?”

Success in the Daomerge was a combination of two factors; internal and external. Internal referred to one’s self and one’s insights! Only if one reached a sufficiently high level of comprehension would one’s chances increase.

External factors referred to special treasures which would improve one’s chances, such as the Autarch’s stone dais or the Stonefire Pearl.

What Ning was attempting was something which had never been successfully carried out... a Daomerge in an Omega Dao! No one in the history of the entire Chaosverse had ever successfully done such a thing, and so he naturally had to both perfect himself as well as acquire all external sources of help he could find. That way, his chances at the Daomerge would improve slightly.

“External treasures?” The white-haired elder glanced at Ning in surprise, then pointed at the Autarch’s stone dais beneath Ning. “This serves as the core for the estate, and Master spent countless amounts of effort in forging it. You’ve already acquired a Stonefire Pearl as well, which is the essence core of a creature which was comparable to an Autarch in might. These were treasures which my master himself used to assist him in cultivation. With them, what other external treasures could you possibly want?!”

“I understand,” Ning said hurriedly. “The Autarch’s stone dais and the Stonefire Pearl are both tremendously helpful in cultivation. They will provide me with sustained, long-term benefits while I am training. What I was referring to just now is another type of external treasure, something akin to the ‘Voidsea Jadeseal’ or the ‘Nine Orifices Void Pill’, treasures which can generate an astonishing effect for a brief period of time.”

“Ahh.” The white-haired elder nodded. Many talented Daolords would create magic altars and seek out special spirit-pills in preparation for their Daomerge. Those spirit-pills, when eaten, would cause the truesoul to be tremendously stimulated. As for the Voidsea Jadeseal, it actually allowed for a complete Daomerge simulation.

“You walk the path of the Omega Dao, and so there is no way to simulate your Daomerge,” the white-haired elder said. “As for special spirit-pills... they probably wouldn’t even be as useful as the state you are normally in when using the Autarch’s stone dais and the Stonefire Pearl.”

Ning immediately asked, “Isn’t there something particularly special which I could use?” Ning would go for anything and everything which was of use to him.

The white-haired old man pondered for a while, then said, “If you absolutely HAVE to have something... I do remember an incredible single-use Daomerge treasure which can instantly unleash a tremendous amount of power for an extremely brief period of time. Master once mentioned it briefly to me and described it as one of the top three treasures in its class!”

Ning’s eyes lit up upon hearing this.

“The number one treasure is known as the ‘Daomerge Firecloud Flower’. The second-ranked treasure is known as the ‘Incense Spirit-Fruit’. The third is known as the ‘Cloudworld Jade’.” The white-haired elder said resignedly, “But I’ve only heard of them because my master once chatted casually about them with other Autarchs. They didn’t speak in detail and so I know very little about them.”

“But Darknorth, these are all limited-time objects. Once you use them up, they are gone. They aren’t even close to being comparable to the stone dais or the Stonefire Pearl in value.” The white-haired elder shook his head. “And, I recall my master once saying that the Cloudworld Jade’s effect only lasts for roughly three months or so, but the effect is merely as strong as the Stonefire Pearl’s constant effect.”

“It can only be used for three months, while the Stonefire Pearl is constant and can be used long-term.” The white-haired elder looked at Ning. “Finding the Cloudworld Jade would be enormously difficult. Why bother?”

Ning just silently memorized all of this information. There clearly was no reason to seek out the third-ranked treasure, the ‘Cloudworld Jade’. The other two, however, were worth searching for. Anything that might increase his chances at the Daomerge by even a smidgeon was worth hunting for.

“Senior, where should I go to find these things?” Ning asked.

“No idea.” The white-haired elder shook his head. “I never asked Master about them.”

“Oh.” Ning pondered for a moment. In the past, he had never even heard of ‘Incense Spirit-Fruit’ or ‘Daomerge Firecloud Flower’. It seemed as though only truly experienced and worldly figures would know of them. A pity that he hadn’t asked his big brother Waveshift about them! In all the Sixteen Realmverses Alliance, perhaps the most worldly figure outside of Emperor Waveshift was Realmslord Windgrace.

Realmslord Windgrace had served and been taught by more than one Autarch!

“Darknorth. I have to warn you,” the white-haired elder said solemnly, “Treasures of such rarity are all extremely hard to find. Not even the Autarchs know everything there is to know about the vast Chaosverse! The technology of the Sithe, the two slain Autarch-level creatures... they are all testament to the fact that the Chaosverse holds many terrifying secrets within it. You are still just a Daolord; so what if you are strong? There are some truly dangerous places which would cause even Hegemons to fall, to say nothing of you.”

“I understand.” Ning nodded. However, since he had the Flamewing God he felt that he was still able to give it a good shot. Chaos Primordials were famous for its virtually indestructible body, after all.

“The Flamedragon Realmverse is nothing more than a tiny part of the Chaosverse. It is best for you to harbor a healthy fear of the universe,” the white-haired elder said with a sigh. “I hope that you won’t overestimate yourself prior to completing your Daomerge. If you succeed in it, you’ll probably become far more powerful than even an Otherverse Lord. You can go and wander the Chaosverse them; only then will you be assured of staying alive.”

“Thank you, senior.” Ning could sense that the estate-spirit remained worried, and so he quickly explained, “Actually, I’ve already tamed a Chaos Primordial.”

The white-haired elder instantly turned speechless. “You... wha...? Ahem. Well, enough of that.” The white-haired elder didn’t seem to know what to say, and so he immediately began to vanish into thin air. His voice echoed for one final time within the second hall: “Remember, for you to solve the Heart of Eternity is the one final wish my Master had. It will be of tremendous benefit to all cultivator civilizations as well.”

“I understand.” Ning nodded.

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The black-robed Ning was seated atop the Autarch’s stone dais, toying with the runed Heart of Eternity with his hands.

“Oh, Autarch Awakener...” Ning looked at the Heart of Eternity. “So this is your final wish, eh? But... my only wish is to complete the Daomerge and then become an Autarch in the future.” Ning’s heart was filled with mixed emotions.

His wish and Autarch Awakener’s wish... they involved heading down two different paths. Ever since they had gained victory in the Dawn War, the Autarchs had stood at the very apex of the universe and

were without equal. As a result they were quite lonely, and they often searched for things to do. Autarch Bolin had created the Aeonians, while Autarch Awakener had spent his efforts on analyzing the Nine Chaos Seals and creating a type of cultivation technique similar to what the Sithe used.

The cultivation technique the Sithe used created something similar to the azureflower mist energy, but it was clearly even more profound. Alas, they were completely different types of living creatures than cultivators, and thus there was no way for cultivators to use their cultivation techniques.

Autarch Awakener put all of his efforts in creating something similar. If he truly succeeded, it would've benefited all cultivator civilizations. Alas, he was only able to at most create something which allowed for Daolords of the Fourth Step to convert their divine power and Immortal energy. There was no way to transform Emperor-class energy.

"Autarch Awakener, I'll give it a try. If I turn out to have incredible talent for this, I might be able to help you." Ning remained quite clear-minded. As a Daolord, his time was limited. There was no way he could spend all of it on researching the Nine Chaos Seals. But if it looked like he might somehow managed to succeed in a short period of time due to having an incredible affinity for it, he didn't mind spending that time.

"Break." Ning looked at the runes covering the sphere. Ning was able to break through the first layer of runes with ease.

"Break again." Ning was at an incredibly high level of insight and had trained in the Nine Chaos Seals before. Thus, he found it quite simple to break the second layer of runes.

He broke through one layer after another, but the difficulty level began to gradually increase. Ning began to need more and more time for each layer. In the blink of an eye, over a hundred million years went by.

"Time to give it a rest." Ning suddenly came to a halt. The Heart of Eternity had a total of ninety-nine layers, and solving all of them would represent having reached the same level of insight into the Nine Chaos Seals as Autarch Awakener had reached.

"I've only solved nineteen layers." Ning felt a sense of misery in his heart; the difference between the two of them was simply too great. Things would only grow more difficult as he progressed, and for now nineteen layers was his limit. If he spent an extremely long period of time, he would at most be able to just barely solve the twentieth and twenty-first levels. Ninety-nine? Far too hard!

"Autarch Awakener, you created your stone dais and procured the Stonefire Pearl, yet still spent countless years to reach your final level of insight into the Nine Chaos Seals. How can I possibly compare?" Ning shook his head. "Even if I spent another hundred thousand chaos cycles on this, my chances of successfully breaking through all ninety-nine levels are still very low."

"I need to complete the Daomerge. Even if I did manage to somehow create this technique, it would be of no use to me in the Daomerge." Ning secretly sighed to himself. "I'm sorry, Autarch Awakener."

He had no choice but to put aside this mission of solving the Heart of Eternity for now. To occasionally spend some time on solving the Heart of Eternity to balance out the time spent on other things, but if he

focused all of his efforts on it it would make the already-difficult Daomerge completely impossible. The end result would most likely be what big brother Waveshift had divined... certain doom.

“Ninety-nine levels... nineteen levels...” Ning could only laugh at the difference between the two. He then waved his hand, putting the Heart of Eternity away.

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Book 38: Daomerge Chapter 24: Life Training

Ji Ning didn't hesitate at all. He was completely focused on his own path... the path of the Daomerge! With regards to the Daomerge, all external sources of help were still of secondary use. In the end, his own insights were what counted for the most!

Ning was unable to make further strides with his Omega Sword Dao. Even though he occasionally gained a few insights, they were scattered rather than systemized. This was why he had decided to emulate Autarch Bolin. Back when Autarch Bolin had been a Hegemon, he had gone out of his way to train in many other Daos. As he had raised nine different Daos to the Hegemonic level, he had gained so many scattered insights into the Dao of the Claw that in the end, they had allowed him to suddenly burst through his bottleneck and reach Autarchy, becoming one of the paramount leaders of the cultivator civilizations.

“I am quite similar to how Autarch Bolin was. I'm unable to make any further advancements in my Omega Sword Dao, and it's also quite difficult to gain even scattered insights. However, all Daos are linked together. The more I train in other Daos, the better my chances of succeeding in the Daomerge for my Omega Sword Dao.” Ning calmed his mind and began to train in other Daos.

Metal, Wood, Water, Fire, Earth, Formations, Space, Thunder, Illusions... he was quite accomplished in all of them already. Ning's next target was the Dao of Wind.

Amongst Daos, there were certain groupings. For example, the Five Elements were viewed as one group, while 'Wind Earth Fire Water' was yet another grouping. Ning found it quite simple to train in Wind, especially after having acquired the Stonefire Pearl. He needed merely a single Chaos Cycle to train the Dao of Wind to the Archon level. Time, however, was even more difficult than Space.

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Time flowed on like water. Ning's black-robed Primaltwin constantly trained, while Ning's true body began to rove the universe alongside Azurefiend, Whitethaw, and Flamewing. He had visited fairly few places within even just the Flamedragon Realmverse, after all. There were many dangerous places he had yet to visit. By visiting more places and seeing more things, he would be stimulated and have a better chance at an epiphany.

Ning had a realmship, was at the Hegemonic level of power, and also had Flamewing for protection. He only needed to spend around eighteen chaos cycles to completely go through all of the special 'danger zones' of the Flamedragon Realmverse. However, he had yet to truly traverse the Terror Starsea, which was filled with far too many dangers. That had been a battlefield of the Dawn War, after all. Even Flamewing would find itself easily caught by some of the dire traps located there.

After finishing his wanderings through the danger zones of the Flamedragon Realmverse, Ning began to wander through some ordinary chaosworlds and everworlds, living amongst ordinary mortals and countless aliens. Ning viewed them all from afar and up close.

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Within an ordinary chaosworld. Thirty thousand years ago, a tremendous calamity had descended upon this world, causing its denizens to suffer countless casualties. This world had lost virtually all of its experts and many of its clans, and it was now thousands of times more difficult for mortals to cultivate to become Immortals.

“Old man, what do you think you can do? You are merely at the Houtian level, while I am as well. I’m just twenty years old but still couldn’t make the cutoff. Look at how old you are! What makes you think you can succeed?” A young man dressed in brocade who was within a teahouse was laughing and teasing an older man.

“The age cutoff this time is just fifty years, and one has to have reached the Xiantian level. You don’t fit either of the two criteria,” some of the longtime customers teased the teahouse owner.

“I heard that countless unaffiliated cultivators have been gathering within Pureplume City, located at the base of the mountain which houses the Pureplume Sect. By now, there are hundreds of thousands of them present. Just a few months remain before the great ceremony... most likely, by then nearly a million cultivators will have arrived to fight over the slots.”

“A million Xiantian experts fighting over a thousand honorary disciple slots? Uh... I can count the number of Xiantian experts in our little city on two hands. It is truly unfathomable that the Pureplume Sect can attract nearly a million cultivators when it openly recruits for new disciples.”

They all shook their heads and discussed this topic eagerly.

Several figures were seated in the corner of this teahouse. One was a white-robed youth, one was a chubby man, one was a skinny old man, and another was a muscular, honest-looking man who was clearly the bodyguard. The skinny old man looked like a steward, while the chubby man had to be a retainer. As for the white-robed youth, he had to be a young master of a clan. However, judging from how they dressed they had to be quite ordinary. It seemed unlikely that they were from a major clan or family.

The four were Ning and his three followers. Ning continued to eat while listening attentively.

“Don’t go, big brother.” A young man and woman were seated at a nearby table. The maiden was lively and dressed in green robes, and she was begging the man: “Big brother, you just broke through to the Xiantian level a short while ago and are merely at the early stage of it. Didn’t you hear? Nearly a million Xiantian experts have gathered there and all of them want to enter the Pureplume Sect! Peak-level Xiantian experts might stand a chance, while late-stage Xiantian experts can at least give it a try, but you are just an early-stage Xiantian cultivator! Going will be suicide!”

“Even if I risk my life, I have to go.” The youth gritted his teeth. “If I go, at least I have a chance at one day clearing the names of our parents and clan. If I don’t go, I’ll probably never be strong enough to gain

revenge, and our clan shall forever bear the infamy of those lies. Father... mother... all the seniors of the clan... none of them will be able to rest in ease.”

“Big brother...” the green-robed maiden begged, “Let’s just find a quiet little place and live a peaceful life. What’s wrong with that?”

“You want me to swallow this feud and live a peaceful life? I can’t endure it.” The youth shook his head. “Give it up, little sister. We’re already quite close to Pureplume City. We’ve already spent three years on the road, and we’re finally about to reach our destination. You know you won’t change my mind.”

The green-robed maiden gnawed at her lips. “I... I only have you left, big brother.” The youth’s eyes reddened in response.

The two of them were also in a corner, and they spoke in hushed whispers. The people next to them were unable to hear what they were saying.

“Live a good life. If I can enter the Pureplume Sect, I’ll come find you one day.” The youth rose to his feet, then walked over to Ning’s table and said, “Brother Ning, we’ve travelled together for half a month. Today, we must part ways. Today’s drinks are on me! If fate wills it, we will meet again.”

“If fate wills it, we will meet again.” Ning smiled as he lifted up his own cup. “Brother Qu, I hope you will succeed in joining the Pureplume Sect.”

“I definitely will.” The youth’s eyes shone with great determination.

“Come, let me offer you a final toast prior to our parting.” As Ning spoke, he picked up two cups of wine and offered one to the youth.

The youth was slightly startled, but he still accepted it. “Cheers.” The youth immediately raised his head and drank the wine. As he did, a faint stream of light within the wine flowed into his body, invisibly and naturally coming to nest within his sea of consciousness.

“Time to go.” The youth put down the cup of wine, then turned and left.

Ning revealed a hint of a smile as ‘brother Qu’ left. He had spent nearly twenty chaos cycles wandering through various ordinary chaosworlds, and he rarely revealed his power. He chose to act just like an ordinary mortal. Ning had met this youth previously while riding a ship alongside him. The two had shared a spirited conversation while drinking one night on the ship, and thus they had travelled together until today.

“Little sister Qu.” Ning walked over to the young maiden’s table. The young maiden’s eyes were rather red and wet.

“Big brother Ning,” the green-robed maiden said.

“Your big brother will definitely join the Pureplume Sect, and he might become one of the most incredible cultivators in their history. He’ll definitely come back and find you,” Ning said. “I want to offer you a toast as well.”

“Alright.” The green-robed maiden shared a cup with Ning as well, and once more that invisible essence of light slipped into her body via the wine.

A short while later, the green-robed maiden bade Ning farewell as she departed from the teahouse. She was going to Pureplume City as well to watch what happened. She was worried about her big brother.

“Darknorth.” Azurefiend watched as the green-robed maiden departed, then walked over to Ning. Puzzled, he asked, “You’ve spent nearly twenty chaos cycles wandering through various ordinary worlds. You rarely show your power, and even when you do choose to help someone you merely provide them with a tiny bit of guidance. Why did you go out of your way to help these two so much? Not only did you begin an invisible process of completely transforming their bodies, you even bequeathed each of them them with a legacy.”

Ning laughed. In the past, he had merely provided a bit of guidance through karmic magic, using it to change a few mortal destinies. This time, however, he had indeed provided the two with an enormous amount of help. The help he had just provided was enough to allow these two to reach the absolute apex of this chaosworld with ease, and they would even have a chance to reach the World level.

“Haha, this is because today is the final day of my twenty chaos cycles of voyaging,” Ning said with a laugh. “Why can’t I have a bit of fun on my last day?”

“Last day?” Azurefiend, Whitethaw, and Flamewing all stared at Ning in surprise. They had spent nearly twenty chaos cycles wandering through mortal worlds. Why was today suddenly the final day?

“Yes. I’ve more or less finished my training.” Ning nodded.

[The Desolate Era](#)

Book 38: Daomerge Chapter 25: The Dao of Karma

“Let’s go.” Ji Ning rose to his feet, departing the teahouse with Azurefiend, Whitethaw, and Flamewing by his side. As they walked, their forms gradually dissipated into nothingness. None of the ordinary mortals in the teahouse noticed a thing at all. They continued to live their ordinary lives.

Whoosh. Ning and the other three appeared out of nowhere in the void outside this chaosworld.

“So it’s all over? You don’t need to train any further?” Azurefiend asked.

“Yes.” Ning nodded. “I’ve already succeeded in training in the Dao of Karma. Everything has been completed, and at my current level of mastery of the Dao of Karma I can subconsciously sense that even if I trained in other Daos, it would be of no use in attempting the Daomerge for my Omega Dao.”

Ning had trained for nearly 38 chaos cycles after acquiring the Stonefire Pearl. Given that his Primaltwin had constantly been under 100x temporal acceleration, he had actually spent over 3000 chaos cycles training.

The Dao of Wind had been completed incredibly fast, while the Dao of Time had cost him over 300 chaos cycles. The rest of the 3000-plus chaos cycles had all been spent on the Dao of Karma.

The Dao of Karma was legendary for its complexity. Generally speaking, Eternal Emperors would at most learn how to follow karma lines to slay all of an enemy’s clones and avatars. Their mastery of karma would be limited to simply that. Of all the Hegemons and Emperors which Ning had met, Emperor Waveshift had reached the highest level of insight into ‘karma’. Emperor Waveshift had organized all of

the karma lines surrounding him in a very neat and orderly way, ensuring that he was no longer bound by it and instead was in control of it and able to make use of it. However, Emperor Waveshift had actually merely reached the Archon level of mastery in the Dao of Karma.

Ning had the Autarch's stone dais and the Stonefire Pearl, as well as incredible powers of comprehension, but it had still taken him nearly 3000 chaos cycles in order to reach the Archon level. This was a testament to how difficult this Dao was.

Once one mastered the Dao of Karma, one would surpass even Hegemons in understanding how all living things were connected to each other.

"Metal, Wood, Water, Fire, Earth... the Five Elements. They are supported by the Storm of wind and thunder, while Spacetime envelopes them all. Formations and Illusions merge them into one whole, while Karma serves as the heart." Ning nodded. Nine represented the apex of numbers, while ten represented perfection. After mastering the Dao of Karma, Ning understood this concept. Now that he had reached the apex in these ten paths, he had already reached the level of full perfection.

He could train more in other Daos, such as the Dao of the Saber, Dao of Snow, or the Dao of Ice, but it would be of no use. They wouldn't allow Ning to gain any more fragmentary insights into the Omega Sword Dao at all.

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"Karma." Ning stood there in the void outside the chaosworld, gazing at everything around him. He had just mastered the Dao of Karma, and he was attuning to the many new insights into the universe it was bringing him. He was gaining many new ideas into the Omega Sword Dao. Although they weren't systemized, they would be of use to him when the Daomerge came.

Ning turned to scan the surrounding area. Spacetime could no longer bar his gaze, and he saw countless distant chaosworlds, planets, and even everworlds. He was able to see through over a hundred territories around them.

He saw the grass emerge from the dirt of a distant world...

He saw how a mortal lived for a hundred years, then returned to the embrace of the earth...

He saw a mortal embark upon the path of cultivation, completely focused on becoming an Immortal...

He saw monsters struggling in terror, fearing that they would be found and slain by cultivators...

He saw Diremonsters claim hegemony over a region, devouring and massacring countless humans within it...

He saw aliens propagate to become legion in number, becoming the rulers of a land...

These were all things which Ning had personally experienced and witnessed at close range during the past twenty chaos cycles.

He had seen many powerful Fiendgods and Immortals wander the lands unimpeded. He had seen 'mighty' World-level cultivators who rose to dominate their respective chaosworlds and become the

undisputed overlords of them. He also saw them battle against other World-level cultivators for supremacy, with some dying in those battles.

He saw World-level cultivators focus on their cultivation. He saw Samsara Daolords experience all sorts of tempering experiences. Some fearlessly went out adventuring and finally attempted the Daomerge. Even though they all perished, they continued to charge towards the Daomerge like moths towards the flame. Every so often, a few would succeed and gain Eternity for themselves, but perhaps 99,999 out of every 100,000 would fail the Daomerge and perish.

“Everyone from ordinary mortals to Samsara Daolords have their own paths,” Ning murmured softly. “This is the nature of the cultivator civilizations.”

“How wonderful.” This was how Ning summarized it all. He liked how the cultivator civilizations worked. Thank goodness they had won the Dawn War! Otherwise, all living beings would’ve been enslaved by the Sithe.

“All living beings within the cultivator civilizations should feel gratitude towards the Autarchs.” When Ning thought of this, he could immediately but subconsciously sense that all living beings were connected to the Autarchs by karma. They all owed the Autarchs. However, the Autarchs were so overwhelmingly powerful that karma had no power over them any longer.

“I hope the cultivator civilizations will be able to survive and thrive unto eternity. I hope we won’t be destroyed by the Sithe or other similarly terrifying groups.” Ning then smiled. “Not really for me to worry about, though. I’m not even as strong as Flamewing right now.”

Ning put this out of his mind and began to make the karma lines around him more orderly. He hadn’t been alive for too long, and so although the karma lines around him seemed complicated he was able to realign them and smooth them out in short order.

“Eh? Two knots?” Ning frowned upon realizing that there were two ‘knots’ in his karma. If he didn’t solve these knots, he would definitely fail his Daomerge!

The first knot was the lifeblood oath he had once sworn. Prior to attempting his Daomerge, he had to accept ten honorary disciples on behalf of Emperor Mirrorsnow. This was something he was bound to do by his lifeblood oath, and Ning knew of it.

The second knot was what truly surprised Ning. It was his promise to slay Emperor Melobo.

When Ning had first left the Three Realms and was merely an Elder God, he had visited the Allgod Estate. He had been bestowed with the [Novessence Thunder] technique by the formation-spirit, which was one of the nine novessence arts. As the formation-spirit had put it, it was ‘sowing the seeds of good karma’ with Ning. It had said to Ning: “I won’t force you to do it; I merely hope that you can help,” and had also said that “I’m just planting seeds to sprout in the future. I don’t expect all of them to blossom.”

Back then, the formation-spirit would never have dared to imagine that one of its many seeds would blossom in such a manner. It only hoped that if Ning did become powerful in the future, that he would slay Emperor Melobo.

Ning had felt this to be an impossible and impossibly distant task, but he had still been rewarded the [Novessence Thunder] technique.

“I’ve now reached the Hegemonic level of power; killing Emperor Melobo would be extremely simple,” Ning mused. “Indeed, now that I think back to it, I do owe both the formation-spirit and Daolord Allgod! During my Daomerge, even the slightest of karmic debts can cause me to be negatively impacted. An Omega Daomerge cannot accept even the slightest of such impacts. It would definitely cause me to fail.”

“Right. I absolutely must complete these two tasks before the Daomerge.” Ning nodded. “It’ll take time for me to track down Emperor Melobo, and it’ll also take time for me to accept ten honorary disciples,” Ning mused. “I’ll go visit Realmslord Windgrace first, then take care of these two matters.”

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“Sorry for the trouble, Hegemon Brightshore.” Ning had come to ask Hegemon Brightshore to assist him in tracking down Emperor Melobo. Hegemon Brightshore was the number one Hegemon of the Flamedragon Realmverse, after all, and he was skilled in the Dao of Spacetime. He also had a strong web of relationships. It would be easy for him to locate Melobo.

“A minor matter,” Hegemon Brightshore replied casually.

“Please keep this secret. Don’t let Melobo find out and then flee the realmverse,” Ning said.

“Don’t worry. I’ll handle this matter personally and will ensure that no mistakes happen. If you don’t mind, I can help you kill him,” Hegemon Brightshore said.

“It would be best if I did it personally,” Ning said.

“Mm, very well. Go ahead and visit Realmslord Windgrace. By the time you are back, I’ll have handled everything.” Hegemon Brightshore was quite confident. He knew that Emperor Melobo was definitely within the Flamedragon Realmverse. Where, exactly? He didn’t know, as it was difficult to find where an Emperor was hiding... but if Hegemon Brightshore personally investigated this matter, he would definitely be able to find Melobo within a hundred thousand years.

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After having asked Hegemon Brightshore for help, Ning, Flamewing, Azurefiend, and Whitethaw rode the realmship out of the Flamedragon Realmverse and towards the Hiddenfiend Realmverse.

These two realmverses were fairly far away from each other. The realmship needed to engage in extremely long-distance spacetime teleports, and it needed as much time as was needed to boil a kettle of tea in order to build up energy between each teleport.

Sixty thousand years later. Whoosh. A realmship suddenly appeared from a spatial tear within the void outside the Hiddenfiend Realmverse.

“And here we are.” Ning stared at the world outside the realmship, his eyes lighting up. This was his first time visiting another realmverse. In contrast, Whitethaw, Azurefiend, and Flamewing were all quite calm. They had all visited many places; Ning was the only inexperienced one present.

“Mm. This place is fairly close to the Blacksun. A single teleport will take us there.” Ning had already acquired a star map of the Hiddenfiend Realmverse prior to arriving.

One more spacetime teleport later, Ning found himself staring at a beautiful and distant star. To be precise, it was an absolutely enormous war machine that was riddled with channels and canals that made up complicated rune-paths. The Blacksun was a terrifying war machine that was capable of changing the destiny of entire realmverse sectors. Just by looking at it, Ning felt an ancient aura of power sweep across him, pressing down upon him like an invisible threat.

“Fellow Daoist Darknorth.” A voice rang out, followed by a chubby youth appearing on the Blacksun who stared in Ning’s direction. Although they were over a hundred billion kilometers away, the two were able to see each other with ease.

“Hegemon Wuye.” Ning put away his realmship.

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Book 38: Daomerge Chapter 26: Jade Slip

Prior to visiting Realmslord Windgrace, Ji Ning had long ago sent word via the Sixteen Realmverses Alliance that he would be coming. Realmslord Windgrace was quite willing to meet with Ning as well.

The Blacksun. Ning’s group of four was led to a courtyard within it.

Hegemon Wuye smiled: “Master has been waiting for quite some time. When he heard that you were coming, he was quite excited. I felt quite eager as well. I’ve heard of your illustrious reputation long ago, Darknorth, and I’ve also heard of Flamewing God the Chaos Primordial. Today, I’ve finally met you two.” He was unable to disguise his interested glance towards the nearby Flamewing.

Flamewing was quite chubby, but was much larger than Wuye. When he saw Wuye, he mumbled, “He looks yummy.”

Hegemon Wuye’s face turned pale and he hurriedly pushed the door open and called, “Master!”

There was a withered tree inside the courtyard. Below it was a prayer mat, with a disheveled-looking old man seated atop it. The old man’s eyebrows looked quite messy, but his gaze was extremely calm. He had a smile on his face, and he pointed to the prayer mats next to him. “Darknorth, my young friend. Sit.”

“Thank you, Realmslord Windgrace.” Ning walked over and sat down on a prayer mat. Azurefiend and Whitethaw did the same, while Flamewing lazily sauntered over to a boulder and lay down on it while shaking his rump.

“Chaos Primordials truly are extraordinary,” Realmslord Windgrace praised. He then glanced at Ning. “Darknorth, my young friend... I’m sure you didn’t come to visit me just to show off your Chaos Primordial.”

“There is indeed something I wish for you to help me with, Realmslord,” Ning said.

“Go ahead and explain.” Realmslord Windgrace was quite willing to help Ning out; the more he helped Ning out, the greater his chances of acquiring the Flamewing God after Ning failed the Daomerge would be.

“I’ve heard legends of two marvelous items that are of tremendous use during the Daomerge. One is known as the Daomerge Firecloud Flower, while the other is known as the Incense Spirit-Fruit,” Ning said. “Are you aware of them, Realmslord?”

Realmslord Windgrace looked at Ning in astonishment, then sighed. “Impressive, truly impressive. Daolord Darknorth, how is it that you know of such incredibly rare items? Even I only learned of them due to a lucky encounter.”

Ning was delighted. He immediately asked, “Realmslord, do you know where they can be found?”

“Daomerge Firecloud Flowers and Incense Spirit-Fruits should be considered legendary treasures for Daolords attempting the Daomerge,” Realmslord Windgrace said. “When I served Autarch Titanos, we once discussed Daomerge treasures, with the topic focusing on the treasures that provided incredibly marvelous effects for short periods of time. Autarch Titanos praised the Daomerge Firecloud Flower as being best, with the Incense Spirit-Fruit being second.”

“Both of these two items vastly surpass the Voidsea Jadeseals. During the Daomerge, someone who has eaten an Incense Spirit-Fruit will enter a truly profound state where his body is divided into nine different incarnations. All nine of them can test out a simulated Daomerge while the true body undergoes the real Daomerge. So long as one of the nine incarnations succeeds, the true body can succeed in the Daomerge as well,” Realmslord Windgrace said. “As for the Daomerge Firecloud Flower, it’s even more remarkable. It can allow for the creation of eighty-one incarnations that will all simulate the Daomerge at the same time!”

“But of course, what I’m saying only stands true for ordinary Daolords. The more talented a Daolord is, the more energy each incarnation consumes from an Incense Spirit-Fruit or a Daomerge Firecloud Flower. Those who have fused multiple Supreme Daos will only be able to create a single incarnation after eating an Incense Spirit-Fruit, while a Daomerge Firecloud Flower can at most maintain a total of nine incarnations. These two treasures have a similar function, which means you can only choose to use one of them. You can’t mix and match... and they only have these marvelous effects when you use them during your actual Daomerge.”

Realmslord Windgrace looked at Ning and smiled. “What, Darknorth... do you need the Daomerge Firecloud Flower?”

Ning was amazed. So this was the effect these items had? The Voidsea Jadeseal allowed for just a single simulated Daomerge, but it didn’t have to be used during the actual Daomerge! The problem with it was that it just wasn’t all that powerful in comparison. For supreme Daolords who had fused multiple Supreme Daos, it would only allow for a small part of the Daomerge to be simulated.

In comparison, the Incense Spirit-Fruit was clearly far more powerful, while the Daomerge Firecloud Flower was ridiculously effective. The problem was, they could only be used during the actual Daomerge!

“So someone who has fused multiple Supreme Daos can have nine incarnations assisting him when he uses the Daomerge Firecloud Flower?” Ning mused to himself, “Then my Omega Dao... I wonder if I’ll have even a single incarnation.” As for the Incense Spirit-Fruit, Ning had already mentally discarded it.

“You train in an Omega Dao, yes?” Realmslord Windgrace asked.

“Yes.” Ning acknowledged it.

“Daomerges for Omega Daos are incredibly difficult. I imagine only the top Daomerge treasure, the Daomerge Firecloud Flower, will be of some use to you.” Realmslord Windgrace shook his head. “And its use will probably be highly limited. I’ve heard of Omega Daolords who have used it but still failed. There has just never been anyone successful in an Omega Daomerge.” Realmslord Windgrace let out a sigh.

Every single realmverse had a few Hegemons, which meant that the vast Chaosverse had a large number of them... but it had never seen so much as a single successful Omega Daomerge!

“As long as it helps out, I’ll take it.” Ning laughed. “Anything that can increase my chances by even a sliver is a good thing. Perhaps that’ll be the sliver that pushes me over to success during the Daomerge.”

“That’s a nice way to view it. You need that sort of attitude when you attempt the Daomerge. If you are panicking, you’ll have lost half the battle before it even starts,” Realmslord Windgrace said.

“Realmslord, do you know where Daomerge Firecloud Flowers can be found?” Ning asked.

“I do. They can be found in several places,” Realmslord Windgrace said. “Daomerge Firecloud Flowers are incredibly valuable to Daolords, but to us they are nothing more than fairly unusual treasures that are generally used to create pills.”

Ning was overjoyed. His eyes lit up as he asked, “If the Daomerge Firecloud Flowers are used to create pills, will they perhaps be of even greater assistance during the Daomerge?”

“No, no! If you use them to make pills, you’ll actually waste the special effect they have during the Daomerge,” Realmslord Windgrace said hurriedly. “Daomerge Firecloud Flowers are naturally endowed with those unique properties, but once you use it to create a pill the properties are lost. In addition, they can only be used within a thousand years after they first bloom! After a thousand years go by, their aura will completely vanish and their medicinal value will drop by over 90% as well.”

Ning nodded. “Then where can they be harvested?”

Realmslord Windgrace frowned. “Are you still going to go for one? The place they are located is incredibly dangerous. I know where they can be found, but even I wouldn’t dare to go there without a good reason. Generally speaking, several of my friends would join forces in venturing there.”

“The place is that dangerous?” Ning was surprised.

“The Chaosverse is filled with countless marvels as well as many incredibly dangerous places. However, the Chaosverse is so fast that it’s hard to even locate those places unless you know exactly where they are,” Realmslord Windgrace said. “Ordinary realmverses and otherverses would never be able to give birth to something like a Daomerge Firecloud Flower. Only some of the truly marvelous places of the Chaosverse, places which gather together countless different types of universal essence, can possibly give birth to such remarkable treasures.”

“All of these places, however, are tightly protected by the prime essences of the Chaosverse,” Realmslord Windgrace said. “The Sithe attempted to invade and conquer many of these places and take their contents by force, but the result was that they suffered tremendously heavy casualties.”

“So what type of dangers do those places hold?” Ning asked.

“A type of being known as a ‘Sourcewalker’,” Realmslord Windgrace said. “Let me put it to you like this. Normally, the Chaosverse can give birth to two extremely perfect types of beings. The first are known as the ‘Chaos Godbeasts’, while the second are known as the ‘Ancients’.”

Ning nodded slowly. Hegemon Brightshore was a Chaos Godbeast, while Ninedust was a member of the Ancients. They were born at the World level and had incredibly perfect divine bodies.

“Chaos Godbeasts have comparatively lower levels of comprehension, while Ancients take human form and have much higher comprehension skills,” Realmslord Windgrace said.

Ning smiled. The only member of the Brightshore Imperials to succeed in the Daomerge was Hegemon Brightshore himself. It was incredibly difficult for Chaos Godbeasts as a race to succeed in the Daomerge. Azurefiend and Welkin were both Chaos Godbeasts, but they were the only Hegemons to have ever arisen from their race. They had no colleagues at all. They were unable or unwilling to spend their entire lives taking care of weaker Chaos Godbeasts as Hegemon Brightshore did, and so they wandered by themselves through the Chaosverse. This was something they had been accustomed to since youth. In contrast, Ancients were far more intelligent and thus had far more Eternal Emperors in comparison.

“Chaos Godbeasts and Ancients... they are present in virtually every realmverse. They are quite common,” Realmslord Windgrace said. “However... two types of living beings are born within the prime essences of the Chaosverse, and they are even more elite. One type is fairly unintelligent, and they are known as the ‘Chaos Primordials’. The other is fairly intelligent and also has human form, and they are known as ‘Chaos Essence Walkers’, or ‘Sourcewalkers’ for short.”

“Chaos Primordials and Sourcewalkers are born with far more exalted bloodlines than Chaos Godbeasts and Ancients,” Realmslord Windgrace said. “However... they represent even greater extremes as well.”

“Chaos Primordials are as unintelligent as mortal children, but are born with virtually indestructible bodies. In contrast, Sourcewalkers are very intelligent and have incredible comprehension skills. They are incredibly solitary and proud figures who do not dwell in ordinary places. They delight in dwelling in treasured places where countless streams of essence from the Chaosverse gather together, and they treat those places as their own territories,” Realmslord Windgrace said. “Unlike Chaos Primordials, they cannot be ‘tamed’; they are simply far too intelligent. There is no way one can force them to submit.”

“If you wish to go to one of those sacred places where Daomerge Firecloud Flowers can be harvested, that means you are going to steal treasures from a Sourcewalker’s territory. You will enrage them.” Realmslord Windgrace shook his head.

Ning pondered this matter. He wasn’t surprised at all. Although this was his first time hearing of ‘Sourcewalkers’, he had already heard of strange beings that were on par with the Autarchs themselves. Why would he be shocked to hear that there were certain creatures on par with Chaos Primordials in might?

“Sourcewalkers are all extremely intelligent, which means they do have a weakness; their bodies aren’t nearly as indestructible as that of the Chaos Primordials, and they are born with much lower levels of strength. However, they can slowly cultivate and grow with time! Thus, there are varying levels of power amongst Sourcewalkers. The weaker ones are perhaps merely at the Hegemonic level, while the most

powerful were supposedly on par with the Sithe Exalts, capable of killing us in an instant,” Realmslord Windgrace said.

Ning relaxed slightly. If even the most powerful were ‘merely’ on par with Sith Exalts, that meant they were still much weaker than the Autarchs. It must be remembered that it took three Sithe Exalts working together to capture the Flamewing God; a single one wasn’t able to do the trick. Plus, he wouldn’t be so unlucky as to run into literally the most powerful type of Sourcewalker in existence, right?

“When the Sithe furiously invaded those sacred places to loot the treasures, they enraged the prime essences of the Chaosverse with their greed. The prime essences allowed the Sourcewalkers to borrow from the inherent power of those sacred places, resulting in them becoming much more powerful. This was why the Sithe suffered greatly for their actions,” Realmslord Windgrace said. “However... you must be cautious if you do go.”

Realmslord Windgrace suddenly waved his hand, causing a jade slip to appear. He then filled it with his godsense, imprinting it with a great deal of information.

“This is one of the closer locations. If you ride on your realmship, you should reach it in just a few hundred thousand years. As I recall, this place has Daomerge Firecloud Flowers within it. This slip now contains all of the information I know regarding that place.” As Realmslord Windgrace spoke, he delivered the jade slip to Ning. “Remember, the information I provided covers just the vast majority of situations, not all situations. I didn’t delve too deeply into that place either. You really must be careful.”

“Thank you, Realmslord.” Ning accepted the slip.

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After having received the intelligence he needed, that very day Ning bade Realmslord Windgrace farewell and embarked on a return journey.

He had to first deal with Emperor Melobo, then take on ten honorary disciples for Emperor Mirrorsnow. Only then could he go adventuring with a calm heart. Anything was possible while out adventuring, after all. He might be forced to initiate the Daomerge for some reason, which would be disastrous if these karmic knots were not resolved.

[The Desolate Era](#)

Book 38: Daomerge Chapter 27: Emperor Melobo

After sixty thousand years, Ji Ning returned from the Hiddenfiend Realmverse to his homeland in the Flamedragon Realmverse, at which point his first course of action was to go meet with Hegemon Brightshore.

Whoosh. Hegemon Brightshore noticed right away when Ning and the others entered the Brightshore Kingdom. He appeared at the peak of a tall mountain, having set a banquet in welcome.

“Darknorth!” Hegemon Brightshore called out loudly. Ning and the others turned to look, then all flew over and landed. They sat down, with Flamewing naturally beginning to eat and drink with delight.

"I'm embarrassed to say this..." Hegemon Brightshore shook his head, stroking his beard after downing two cups of wine, "I thought I'd definitely be able to find Emperor Melobo within a hundred thousand years, but this Aeonian Emperor truly is slippery. I've been tracking him in secret, but I haven't been able to find his true body. Recently, I asked Netherlily to help out as well. Only when the two of us worked together did we managed to find him roughly ten thousand years ago."

Ning let out a sigh of relief upon hearing the words 'managed to find him'. "I'll have to thank Hegemon Netherlily," Ning said.

"A minor matter. The three of us are usually quite bored," Hegemon Brightshore said with a laugh. "Honestly though, Emperor Melobo really did hide his tracks quite carefully. He's afraid that the Dao Alliance will discover him devouring some of their Daolords of the Fourth Step, and so he has been cautious to the extreme. Not even the other Aeonians know his whereabouts."

"If you truly wish to go into hiding, you need to ensure that not even your allies know where you are. That's the safest way to handle it." Ning asked, "Oh, right. So where is Emperor Melobo currently?"

"The Orchidfall Everworld of the Orchidfall Territory," Hegemon Brightshore said.

"The Orchidfall Territory?" Ning nodded slowly.

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The Orchidfall Territory was an ordinary territory located within the Dao Alliance. Inside the Orchidfall Everworld was a powerful sect known as the Sacred Orchidfall, with the most powerful member being a Daolord of the Fourth Step who had quite a few disciples.

"You aren't Daolord Orchidfall. Who are you?" An alluringly beautiful woman stared angrily at the plainly dressed man before her.

"Haha... my aura is Daolord Orchidfall's aura, and my appearance is his appearance. How could I possibly not be him?" The man's voice seemed quite strange and sinister.

"Daolord Orchidfall isn't as powerful as you are. There's no way he could've destroyed my avatar in just one strike, then caught me with such ease." The woman's forehead was creased in anger. "Who are you?!"

The man laughed, his laughter becoming even more evil and piercing to the ear. It echoed within the vast palace, but there was no one else in the entire palace aside from the two of them. "Who am I?" The man's appearance slowly began to change, as did his aura. Soon, he had transformed into a evil-looking man with long red hair. His eyes were staring greedily at the woman in front of him, as though he was caressing her with his gaze.

"You..." A puzzled look appeared on the woman's face. "An Emperor?"

"Oh, it seems you do not recognize me." The long red-haired man let out a smile. "I am an Aeonian, the mighty Emperor Melobo. I am your savior, the one who shall rescue you from your doomed path as a Samsara Daolord."

"What do you want?" The woman was rather nervous. Her power had been completely sealed away, making it impossible for her to fight back.

“You are absolutely beautiful. Whew. Such beauty...” the long red-haired man said, a blissful look on his face, “I have to say, Emperor Waveshift has truly been a blessing to the Flamedragon Realmverse. He gave us Crimsonwave Temple, and even techniques like [Vitalis]. As a result, I can now easily simulate the auras of others, allowing me to infiltrate the Dao Alliance and catch beautiful Daolords like yourself with increasing ease.”

“Y-you... you are an Aeonian. Are you....” the woman began to panic.

“Daolord Yu, do your best to fight back and struggle against me. That’ll make things more fun.” Emperor Melobo walked towards her one step at a time, licking his lips.

Aeonians were a very special race. They devoured cultivators like food, which allowed their Aeonian bloodline to evolve. However, after completing the Daomerge and becoming an Eternal Emperor, eating Daolords became of negligible assistance no matter how many they ate. Alas, there were some Aeonians who simply liked to eat cultivators. Not for the sake of growing stronger, but just for the taste; it was just an intrinsic hunger they had! Emperor Melobo was one who delighted in devouring surpassingly beautiful female Daolords. Their auras made him feel extremely comfortable, which was why he viewed them as perfectly delicious morsels.

Long ago, Emperor Melobo had devoured Daolord Allgod’s Dao-companion. Daolord Allgod had gone completely crazy, with killing Emperor Melobo becoming his strongest desire.

“Aeonians...” the woman felt shock, horror, and anger. And yet, there was nothing she could do.

“We view you cultivators the same way you might view wild animals! You, however, are the most delicious of morsels.” Emperor Melobo enjoyed the horrified look on the woman’s face. “Don’t worry. More and more female Daolords will accompany you in my belly.”

“The Dao Alliance will definitely discover you. You’ll definitely die!” The woman was filled with hatred.

“Impossible.” Emperor Melobo shook his head. “Prior to acquiring the [Vitalis] technique, I already moved with great care for fear of the Dao Alliance... and now that I have it and can disguise myself? It’ll be completely impossible for them to find me. I only act when all factors are completely under my control, and I never make any mistakes. Even if they try to reverse spacetime to scan for what had happened, they won’t find me.”

Emperor Melobo was very confident in his own cautious nature. He felt certain that although a Hegemon who whole-heartedly searched for him via multiple channels might be able to find him, it was virtually impossible for anyone else. Only the most supreme powers of the realmverse would be able to find him, and that only if they were using all of their resources.

“Y-you...” Daolord Yu felt a sense of sorrow and grief in her heart. There had to be a reason why Emperor Melobo had been able to stay alive for so long. How much longer would it be before he died?

“That look of despair on your face is simply delicious.” Emperor Melobo continued to slowly walk towards her, extending a hand to gently stroke her face. Daolord Yu wanted to dodge, but her power had been completely sealed away; how could she possibly avoid him? A twisted, excited look appeared on Emperor Melobo’s face, and he began to open his mouth.

Right at this moment, a foot was suddenly planted right in his face. This kick was lightning fast, giving him no time to dodge at all. A muffled boom could be heard as Emperor Melobo was knocked flying backwards, smashing into the distant dais at the end of the palace. He bounced off the dais, then smashed into an enormous pillar before finally falling to the ground. He was bleeding from every orifice, and his face had been completely wrecked.

“Who?!” Emperor Melobo stared forwards in shock and horror.

“Who is this?” Moments ago, Daolord Yu had been gripped by despair. Now, her eyes lit up as she saw that white-robed youth who had a black scabbard on his back had appeared in front of her. Next to him were four figures. The first was a white-bearded, white-robed old man who had six curved horns on his head. The second was a wizened old man. The third was a muscular, white-furred creature. The fourth was a fat man who was eating some meat.

Daolord Yu didn't recognize any of the other four, but she instantly recognized the white-robed youth who had kicked Emperor Melobo. “Daolord Darknorth!” she cried out in delight. This was the most legendary Daolord to have ever existed in the Endless Territories.

Ning turned to glance at her. He recognized her as well. Long ago, when he had first gone out exploring, he had acquired information on all of the known Daolords of the Flamedragon Realmverse. He immediately smiled and said, “Daolord Yu, everything has come to an end. There will no longer be an Emperor Melobo in this world.”

Daolord Yu immediately understood what this meant. She said with grateful excitement, “Thank you, Daolord Darknorth.” When she looked at him, she felt for some unknown reason that his aura truly was special. In fact, she couldn't help but begin to feel stirred by him. She was a female Daolord of the Fourth Step, but she had never had a Dao-companion in her life. This was her first time meeting Ning, and she could feel her heart stirring.

“NO!” The heavily-bleeding Emperor Melobo hurriedly crawled to his feet, frantically smiling and bowing. “Daolord Darknorth, Hegemon Brightshore, Hegemon Azurefiend, Flamewing God... I've never offended any of you! Daolord Darknorth, please spare me. I'll never dare to enter the Dao Alliance's territory again. Never again!”

Just now, when Ning had said that there would 'no longer be an Emperor Melobo in this world', Melobo had felt truly terrified. In truth, Daolord Darknorth's very appearance had terrified him. Daolord Darknorth was now an exalted figure who had a Hegemon as his retainer and a Chaos Primordial as his servant. Even the other Hegemons dreaded him. Who would dare to antagonize him? There were now two transcendent figures in the Sixteen Realmverses Alliance. One was Realmslord Windgrace, the other was this monstrously talented Daolord, Darknorth.

“Hegemon Brightshore? Hegemon Azurefiend?” Daolord Yu was stunned. She didn't know the secret identity of the Flamewing God, but she was shocked to hear that there were actually two Hegemons standing before her.

“Darknorth.” Hegemon Brightshore chuckled and said, “Don't waste words on Melobo. Just go ahead and kill him.”

“Don’t kill me!” Emperor Melobo was at the verge of tears. He was an ordinary Emperor and didn’t have all that much courage. He begged, “I’ve never caused trouble for any of you. If there’s something you want, just tell me, Daolord Darknorth! I’ll definitely obey you.”

Ning said, “Melobo, there’s a reason I didn’t just kill you with that earlier kick. There’s something I need to tell you first.”

Melobo’s face turned pale. And indeed, Ning was telling the truth. Given his Hegemonic power, he was easily capable of annihilating Emperor Melobo with a single kick.