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Book 6: Breaking Through the Cocoon, Becoming a Butterfly Chapter 31: Opening the Celestial Eye, Manifesting the Divine Sense

Blood splattered everywhere. Waterflame Lotuses continued to swivel in the area around Ji Ning, and Ning himself continued to stand firm and kill. "I have to acquire one of the top three divine abilities." Ning remembered what the spirit of the estate had said; he would at most be able to acquire the third divine ability. No matter how powerful that giant yellow bear, the spirit of the manor, was, he would only be able to give a vague prediction. He didn't dare say for certain if Ning would acquire the third divine ability.

What did this mean? Even if Ning went all out, it was hard to say if he would acquire it. If that was the case, then of course Ning would have to go all out!

"Kill." Ning's mind was filled with the clear images of the old, cunning Ji Ninefire; of Granny Shadow, who had threatened suicide to force him away; of Ah Xing, the devoted old servant of Granny Shadow; of the heroic, steadfast Truekeep; and of course, of his glacial-face, warm-hearted father, Ji Yichuan. And Uncle White, who had doted on him ever since he was young...

"I want you to all live! Father, Uncle White, Patriarch. You all must live." Ning stared at the strongmen charging towards him, and in his mind, there was only a single word – kill! Kill! Kill all who barred his way!

He had those he wished to protect! Those he valued! Nobody could take them away!

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The nine swords controlled by divine will assisted Ning, helping him block nearby attacks. Those nine swords supported him, but the flood of strongmen continued to roar furiously as they threw themselves towards the encircled Ning. Ning's struggling efforts grew weaker and weaker, but his gaze was filled with ever-greater berserk fury and steadfast resolve.

He knew what he needed to do. He knew his own heart.

"Bang!"

Within his soul, there was a colossal explosion, a sound akin to Pangu splitting open the heavens and establishing the universe. Ning's divine will, which had originally been those nine flying swords...could now sense with incomparable clarity the location of every single strongman around him. He could even clearly sense every single bit of skin, flesh, and hair on their bodies. That distant, pitch-black tablet nearby. Those giant tables, filled with large amounts of weapons. It was all within his range of sense.

It was as though...Ning had gained an additional eye, an eye which could clearly see everything around him, letting nothing escape!

"Divine sense!" Ning instantly understood. His divine will had already evolved to a new, higher level. Zifu Disciples were generally all capable of dividing their minds, and Wanxiang Adepts were mostly capable of manifesting their divine will to control material items. Only Primal Daoists were capable of opening

the Celestial Eye and manifest their divine sense. Everything within the range of one's divine sense would be revealed, as though seen clearly with the naked eye.

It was extremely hard to progress in the soul, but in the path of Immortals, the soul was incomparably important. Only a sufficiently powerful soul would be able to command ever-greater amounts of elemental energy. If an ordinary mortal was in possession of the elemental energy of an Immortal, there was only one possible outcome; he wouldn't be able to tame the elemental energy, which would wildly burst forth and shatter his bones and his flesh, slaying him.

Advancing in the soul was something which could be done through visualization techniques, through gaining comprehension into the Dao, through strengthening the body to support the soul, or through training one's will.

Training the will...another phrase for it might be training one's Dao-heart! Ning had already reached the 'divine will' level when he was eleven. In the past five years, Ning had made astonishing amounts of progress with regards to comprehending the Dao, eventually reaching the Dao Domain level. Clearly, this had all been very beneficial to his soul.

His body had just reached the Blood-Drop Rebirth level as a Fiendgod refiner, allowing him to once more strengthen the body to support the soul. And, in the past five years, he had visualized the [Nuwa Painting] every single day, allowing him to rise in power ceaselessly. And today...

Ning had first battled at Oxhorn Mountain, then witnessed his clansmen decide to fight to the death, and had even chosen to flee alone, then undergo the Divine Abilities Hall's trial in the hopes of acquiring one of the top three divine abilities. Everything he had experienced today...it had all tested and forged his will. In utter despair, his will had grown only stronger. And his Dao-heart had become even more perfectly pure and durable.

The Dao-heart and the will...to the soul, they were like the commanders of an army! The same soldiers, if led by strict military discipline, would only rise in battle-strength considerably. But if the military leadership was poor, they would be much less effective.

The same was true for the Dao-heart and the will. A soul, when determined, would allow the Immortal practitioner to unleash great power. Even if one's base of elemental ki energy was extremely deep, one would still need to use will in order to forcibly summon and activate that power. When one's will was weak, however, the excessively formidable amount of elemental energy would be rendered unusable, and perhaps even some simple bewitching illusions would cause one to perish.

Thus, to Immortal practitioners, training one's Dao-heart was extremely important. The more perfect and pure one's Dao-heart was, the farther one would be able to travel on the Immortal path.

"Five years of comprehending the Dao. Five years of visualization. My increase in power as a Fiendgod refiner. All of these things established a firm, solid base for me. Today, my Dao-heart has been further tempered, allowing me to break through at one blow, to open my Celestial Eye and establish my divine sense." A vertical-pupiled eye suddenly appeared in the middle of Ning's forehead. This vertical-pupiled eye was the corridor to the 'soul' in Ning's consciousness; it was as though Ning's soul was staring towards the outside world through this eye.

Within the Celestial Eye's range of vision, Ning could instantly tell how these strongmen had been condensed from the fog and energy. "Close." The eye in the middle of Ning's forehead closed.

Upon the Celestial Eye opening, even some of the high level transformations which various monsters and devils were capable of unleashing would be easily seen through. In addition, the divine sense covered an extremely wide region, and could see everything within it with perfect clarity. Even in the middle of a bewildering formation, the divine sense could sense everything clearly, preventing it from bewitching Ning.

Ordinary formations, especially bewildering formations, were generally of limited use against Immortal practitioners who were capable of using divine sense. But of course, there were some powerful formations capable of bewildering even the divine sense, but the vast majority of Wanxiang Adepts didn't have access to those sorts of grand formations.

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"Whoosh!" The nine swords, controlled by divine will, suddenly increased in power tremendously. Nine rays of sword light howled as they flashed through the air, chopping one row after another of strongmen into two pieces. All of their heads went flying, their bodies shattering and dissolving into the mist.

"Kill, kill kill." A look of delight appeared on Ning's face. "All of you, come over here." Ning stared towards the table in front of him, which was covered with many weapons. One sword after another rose into the air, and a dense cluster of nearly a hundred flying swords flew towards him, all of them transforming into flowing, liquid streams of sword light. With each blow, they slaughtered a heap of strongmen, and many strongmen constantly collapsed, dispersing into mist.

Nearly a hundred swords, transformed into nearly a hundred rays of sword light, danced around Ning. As for Ning himself, he stood there, not needing to fight personally any longer.

"My divine will is now too powerful." Ning was completely stunned and overjoyed. His divine will had undergone a qualitative change, and its range had been expanded to as far as he could see with the naked eye. As for the power of his divine will to control material objects, it had risen by a terrifying amount! Previously, when his divine will had controlled those swords, it had done so with the power of an early-stage Zifu-level Fiendgod. But now, the evolved divine will contained the power of a peak-stage Zifu-level Fiendgod!

The power of his divine will was now even greater than Ning's own physical power as a Fiendgod! Such a terrifying strength...when amplified by the Rainwater Sword Domain, even when just using some simple sword techniques rather than the 'Rain Line' technique, each blow swept through a crowd of enemies. In addition, the controlled swords didn't need to worry about defense, and thus were able to display sword techniques in an even fiercer, more vicious manner. Their power would naturally be tremendous.

Whoosh! Whoosh! Whoosh!

Groups after groups of strongmen collapsed. Under the dominating, sweeping prowess of those hundred swords, the strongmen died at an astonishing rate. "My divine will is now even more powerful than I am in close-quarters combat." Ning murmured to himself. His soul had advanced far, far more than he had as a Fiendgod Body Refiner or as a Ki Refiner. His soul was already at the level of 'Opening

the Celestial Eye, Manifesting the Divine Sense', a level which only Primal Daoists should be able to reach.

Every sweeping blow of the controlled swords contained greater power than Ning's earlier, personal blows. These hundred swords were like a hundred amplified Ning's, dominating the region. Groups of strongmen continuously collapsed, and as the rate at which they died quickened, the rate at which they were reformed quickened slightly as well.

New strongmen continuously were condensed from the mist. Kill, kill, kill! The hundred flashing sword lights struck out like roaring dragons, bellowing through the air. However, the strongmen were growing increasingly powerful as well. The killing rate dropped from a group per blow, to five or six per blow, to two or three per blow, all the way down to one per blow. However, because the hundred swords were fighting in unison, they were still extremely efficient.

"Whew!"

Ning looked around himself. It was completely silent. There was no motion or sound, only those hundred flying swords that were hovering in the air. "No more?" Ning was stunned. "It's empty?" Ning stared at his surroundings. The only thing present was that pitch-black tablet. The many weapons lay soundlessly on their table. It was as though this world was telling Ning...that he had killed all of the strongmen!

Whoosh. A figure appeared by his side. It was the giant yellow bear, who stared at Ning, surprise in his eyes. "Are you the reincarnation of a Celestial Immortal?" The giant yellow bear murmured. "Or the reincarnation of a Primordial Fiendgod?"

Giving how astonishingly keen Ning's hearing was, he naturally heard the murmured words of the giant yellow bear. Reincarnation of a Celestial Immortal? Reincarnation of a Primordial Fiendgod? Others might not know about their past lives, but Ning knew it with perfect clarity.

"Simply by relying on comprehending the Dao, tempering your Dao-heart, and training your Fiendgod body...it is virtually impossible for you to raise your soul to the level of gaining 'divine sense'." The giant yellow bear looked at Ning. "Immortal practitioners generally need to first reach the Primal Daoist level. With the soul being nurtured within primal energy, it will grow and develop, eventually opening the Celestial Eye and establishing the divine sense."

"First, become a Primal Daoist; then, acquire divine sense. This is the case for virtually everyone! Less than one in ten thousand Wanxiang Adepts would be able to acquire divine sense." The giant yellow bear shook his head. "Generally speaking, those who are capable of acquiring divine sense prior to the Primal Daoist level are in actuality Immortals and other great powers who reincarnated. Or, of course, those who encountered a tremendously good twist of fate. Can it be that you are a reincarnated Immortal? But if you truly were a reincarnated Immortal, there should have been elders of your school who came to welcome you long ago. Or...can it be that you encountered another fortunate twist of fate, even before you entered the underwater estate?"

Ning just blinked, not saying anything. Twist of fate? Would encountering the Lord of Cui Palace of the Netherworld Kingdom, and being bestowed with the visualization technique, [Nuwa Painting] count? Would the fact that, by luck, he managed to avoid drinking Grandma Meng's soup before being

reincarnated and thus was able to train in the [Nuwa Painting] visualization technique as an infant count?

“Elder, which divine ability can I acquire?” Ning hurriedly asked. “You killed all of the strongmen. Naturally, you can acquire the first.” The giant yellow bear blinked. “Follow me.”

He grabbed Ning with his paw. Whoosh! The surrounding region of gray mist began to tremble and distort. Ning even had the strange feeling that time was passing extremely slowly, then extremely quickly.

“How much time passed?” Ning was rather nervous. He was afraid that if too much time passed, unforeseen variables would occur at Oxhorn Mountain. “Don’t worry. No need to be concerned over how long this process of receiving the divine ability will take.” The giant yellow bear said. “In the past, the manifestation and the divine ability which Master left behind was placed in an area completely sealed off from space and time. Thus, by comparison to the outside world, time here was virtually frozen. You could spend a century here, but only a single breath’s worth of time would occur in the outside world.”

Ning was secretly shocked, but he quickly calmed himself. When he had been in the Netherworld Kingdom, the regions near the Bridge of Despair moved at extremely different rates of time. Clearly, some of the great powers in the Three Realms were capable of changing the flow of time.

“I wonder what sort of divine ability the first master of the estate left behind.” Ning secretly mused to himself.

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Book 6: Breaking Through the Cocoon, Becoming a Butterfly Chapter 32: Receiving the Divine Ability

They were surrounded by fog. Ji Ning and the giant yellow bear stood above the fog, and the previously contorting space and time had calmed down. “That is...!” Ning stared towards the front. Far away, in the distant corners of that boundless gray fog, there was a towering building that flashed with eye-catching golden light. It was like an altar. From the distance, one could see that it had layers of stairs, which led towards the very top of this building.

“Why are you standing here like an idiot?” The giant yellow bear grabbed Ning by the elbow, then walked forward, traveling multiple kilometers with every single step. The distant, towering edifice became clearer and clearer, and its golden light became more and more dazzling. At the same time, the boundless majesty it emanated caused Ning’s heart to tremble.

Moments later, Ning arrived at the very lowest step of this towering edifice. Raising his head, he stared upwards at the various steps. He could immediately tell that there were most likely thousands of steps, from the ground to the peak.

“Go.” The giant yellow bear raised his head, looking towards the peak of the altar as well. “Follow the steps to the very top, and accept the divine ability which Master left behind.”

“Yes.” Ning nodded. This was his stroke of good fortune! An incomparably precious stroke of good fortune! This divine ability had been left behind by one of the great powers of the Three Realms which

had been created after Pangu established the universe! After learning it, he would be able to kill Adept Xu Li and save his father and family members.

“Father. Wait for your child a few moments longer.” Ning immediately began to run up the steps. But as soon as he stepped atop the first one....

BANG! It was as though the world had collapsed. Ning sensed his entire soul tremble and rumble. At the instant when Ning’s right foot landed on the first stair, it was as though he had been fused with the entire altar, and ancient, long-gone information began to transmit directly into Ning’s soul, burrowing into his memories.

The transmission had begun! Ning hadn’t expected that he would begin to receive the transmission of the divine ability upon stepping onto the very first step...although he was caught somewhat off-guard, Ning quickly began to submerge himself in understanding the ancient information that was being sent towards him.

After a few moments, Ning stepped onto the second stair, and more of that ancient information flooded towards him. One step, another step, yet another step...this ancient, profound information slowly entered Ning’s soul, having been divided into countless little bits and pieces, so as to allow Ning to adapt to this process. As this was a truly, incredibly powerful divine ability, if all the information regarding it had been instantly sent into Ning’s soul, even though Ning’s soul was powerful, he would’ve instantly been rendered an idiot.

“It has begun.” From the below the altar, the giant yellow bear lifted his head, watching as Ning took one step after another atop the altar. His eyes held a very complicated look within them; excitement, anticipation, and wistfulness. “The divine ability which Master left behind has finally found an heir.”

“Master...are you still alive?” A hint of tears appeared within the giant yellow bear’s eyes. In his heart, he only had a single, true master. That was the first master of the estate. The four masters who had come afterwards, including Ji Ning, were in reality the heirs to the first master, but unfortunately, the second, third, and fourth masters hadn’t been able to acquire so much as a single one of the divine abilities. Naturally, they couldn’t be considered true successors. But now, Ji Ning was finally beginning to receive this divine ability.

“Master’s successor.” The giant yellow bear’s had a lost look in his eyes, and his thoughts were whirling about. When the first master had left behind this estate then left, the giant yellow bear had known...that the first master had gone to deal with a tremendous tribulation. Precisely because even the first master wasn’t absolutely confident in his ability to survive the tribulation, he had created this estate, as he was unwilling to permit the divine ability he was proudest of to simply disappear with him.

Countless years had passed...the Three Realms had become fixed and orderly. The three thousand major worlds and the trillions of minor worlds had been born. But his master had never returned to this estate. This filled the giant yellow bear’s heart with unease. Was his master still alive? Although he worried about his master in his heart, he continued to obey his master’s order, and treated finding a successor as the most important matter of all.

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One step. Then another step. Atop the towering, lofty edifice, Ning continued to slowly advance upwards. He didn't know how much time had passed, but finally, he had reached the top.

Only now did Ning awaken from his trance. The primordial, ancient divine ability's information as well as tricks and knacks had all been infused into his soul. They were like words that had been printed atop his soul itself; even if Ning wanted to forget them, he wouldn't be able to. And even if someone used a technique to search his soul, they wouldn't be able to find anything.

"The divine ability...[Starseizer Hand]." Ning murmured gently to himself. He could clearly see one image after another in his mind. There was a vast, boundless void, and within it, there was a giant hand that seemed to be countless kilometers in length. The giant hand passed through the endless void, actually snatching at one of the stars within the void and easily crushing it into dust.

Under the strikes of that infinitely large hand, the vast, towering bodies of a countless sea of Fiendgods who were shouting boastfully were all smashed into nothingness.

That giant hand cupped a world within it, and trapped within the world was a fiery Fiendgod who radiated flames. With a gentle pinch of the giant hand, the world was shattered and the Fiendgod perished.

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"Beyond the Three Realms, there is the infinite void. The void contains the Solar Star and the Lunar Star, the two most exalted of celestial bodies, as well as numerous other powerful stars. These stars are infinitely majestic and powerful, and even Celestial Immortals would find it difficult to do anything to them. Some of the bits and pieces of rubble which fall down from these stars, after passing through the endless, infinite void, might land on various worlds, where they will be treated as precious materials for forging magic treasures. And yet, my master's divine ability is named the 'Starseizer'; from this, one can imagine how infinitely powerful it is." The giant yellow bear appeared by Ning's side.

Ning nodded lightly. After having received this divine ability, he could clearly sense how terrifyingly powerful it was. It's power completely surpassed his imagination. Ning understood, now, why the giant yellow bear had wanted for him to wait five years...why he had felt that it would be better to let Ning's father and family die, rather than lose the chance to acquire this divine ability.

However, what was meant to be would be. Although Ning had stubbornly insisted on immediately challenging the Divine Abilities Hall, in the end, he had still acquired this divine ability.

"In the end, you still learned this divine ability." The giant yellow bear looked at Ning. "If it weren't for the fact that your soul had reached the 'divine will' level, even five years later, you would only have had a good chance at acquiring the first divine ability...even I didn't imagine that your soul would be able to make a breakthrough."

"Oh?" Ning was shocked. "Is it truly so difficult to acquire the first divine ability? I felt as though, after my soul made a breakthrough, I completely dominated the enemies to the point of annihilating all of the strongmen."

The giant yellow bear glanced sideways at Ning. "If you didn't have your divine will, even after five years, would your divine power have lasted long enough for you to annihilate that many strongmen?"

Ning came to his senses. Right. He had relied on his divine will to control nearly a hundred swords to dominate and slaughter those strongmen. This didn't use up any of his divine power. But if he didn't have divine will, and had relied on close-quarters combat...he would have used up an astonishing amount of divine power! For example, when he had reached the later stages of the test of the Divine Abilities Hall, he had less than 20% of his divine power remaining, while the strongmen had only grown more and more powerful.

"No matter what, in the end, you succeeded and acquired this. This divine ability." The giant yellow bear pointed at a giant, distant prayer mat. "Go to that prayer mat. To kneel and pay your respects to Master."

"Right." Ning nodded. The benevolence a master showed in teaching his art was as weighty as the heavens themselves. Ning walked forward, then immediately fell to his knees before the prayer mat.

As soon as he knelt down, instantly, at the top of the altar, directly in front of Ning, a towering figure suddenly appeared, at least three thousand meters in height. He had ancient, bronze skin, a glowing face, and wore roughly sown bestial furs as clothes. His appearance was similar to humans, with the only difference being that he had only a single arm! He had only a single right arm, and did not have a left arm.

This majestic figure stared at Ning, a faint look of pleasure on his face. He said softly, "You have already received the divine ability. Once you overcome your Celestial Tribulation and become a Celestial Immortal, you can be considered the disciple of myself, Daoist Threelives. Do not be negligent and lazy, and thus lower my prestige." And then, the massive, single-armed figure gently pointed with his right hand towards Ji Ning.

Whooooosh. Five rays of light instantly shot towards Ning...and then, the towering figure suddenly disappeared. A look of surprised joy on Ning's face, Ning instantly sat down in the lotus position. The five rays of light quickly flooded into Ning's body, and slowly, ripples began to appear on Ning's form as well.

"Master." The giant yellow bear saw the towering, one-armed figure appear, then vanish. He couldn't help but mumble to himself. He knew...that the illusion was nothing more than something his master had left behind. Anyone who received his master's divine ability and who came to the top of this altar and knelt down before this prayer mat would cause illusion to appear.

Ning was seated in the lotus position, and his two hands were currently emanating five-colored lights. Ning's hands seemed to have transformed into some sort of precious treasures. The five-colored lights swirled about them, then slowly began to fuse together into a chaotic color.

"Whew." Everything fell silent, and Ning's hands returned to normal as well. Ning opened his eyes, then lowered his head to look at the palms of his hands. With but a thought, the palms of his hands manifested a complicated, circular divine tattoo. "Divine Starseizing Tattoo! The Starseizer has six cycles, and I've already successfully completed the first one." And then, the divine tattoos faded away, no longer visible to the naked eye.

Every single divine ability required tremendous amounts of time to train in. They wouldn't be mastered in one go. Even techniques like the [Heavenly Transformation] or the [Windwing Evasion] had to be trained in multiple stages.

As for this divine ability, [Starseizing Hand], the way in which it was trained in was known as the [Six Cycles of the Starseizer]. Only upon reaching the Zifu level as a Fiendgod could one train in the first cycle! At the Wanxiang Adept level, one could train in the second. As a Primal Daoist, one could train in the third.

With each breakthrough into a completely new level as a Fiendgod, one could train in the next cycle. This divine ability placed tremendous pressure on the divine body, and if it wasn't strong enough, there was no way it could be trained.

"The teachings you received of the divine ability [Starseizing Hand] are the original teachings." The giant yellow bear said. "Even if you train all the way to the first master's level, this divine ability will still be enough for you to use. As for the [Windwing Evasion] you trained in, that was only the simplified version."

"Simplified?" Ning was startled. "How could the divine abilities that the primordial Fiendgods used to dominate the Three Realms be so casually taught to others?" The giant yellow bear shook his head. "Shortly after Pangu established the heavens, one of the primordial Fiendgods, a giant Roc, developed a type of flying evasion technique. With a single sweep of his wings, he could traverse a hundred thousand kilometers. This flying technique is the divine ability...[Garuda's Wings]! I imagine some great power must have watched the Roc fly. After meditating on it for a long period of time, he wrote down this book known as the [Windwing Evasion]."

Ning nodded slightly. So this divine ability, [Windwing Evasion], was just actually the simplified version of the [Garuda's Wings].

"If you had the original teachings of this technique in book form, you could spend thousands of years reading it." The giant yellow bear said. "You spent many months memorizing Master's [Starseizing Hand], even though it was directly sent into your soul. How could the original copy of a true divine ability be so easily memorized?"

"I spent months traversing those steps?" Ning was shocked. "Only an instant passed in the outside world. No need to worry about your father." The giant yellow bear said.

Ning nodded, then said solemnly, "Senior, dare I ask, who exactly is this master of mine, 'Daoist Threelives'?" Just now, that giant, towering illusion had only referred to himself as 'Daoist Threelives'. Ning knew nothing else of him.

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Book 6: Breaking Through the Cocoon, Becoming a Butterfly Chapter 33: Evanescent Demonslayer Sword

The giant yellow bear, upon hearing Ning speak of his master, 'Daoist Threelives', couldn't help but feel very happy. He immediately said, "Ji Ning, do you know that when Fiendgods are born, there are differences in their levels as well?"

“Differences in Fiendgods at birth? Aren’t they all born from the universe itself?” Ning asked. “No.” The giant yellow bear said. “Before the Three Realms were born, and even before Pangu established the universe, there was nothing aside from primordial chaos. In that era, the primordial chaos gave birth to some ancient and powerful Fiendgods, such as Pangu or Nuwa. They were Fiendgods who were born from the primordial chaos. Some of these Primordial Fiendgods were strong, while others were weak. The most powerful of them was naturally Pangu!”

“After Pangu established the universe, the universe itself gave birth to some new living creatures. These creatures, being born from the universe itself, were also referred to as innate, Heavenborn Fiendgods. Afterwards, after many transformations, the three thousand major worlds were created, and in the process of the creation of each major world, some Fiendgods would be created. These are the most ordinary of Fiendgods.”

“In short, Fiendgods can be classified according to when they were born; there are Primordial Fiendgods, Heavenborn Fiendgods, and ordinary Fiendgods.” The giant yellow bear looked at Ning. “As for Master, he is one of the Primordial Fiendgods.”

Ning held his breath. What a tremendous history! But when he thought about it carefully, it made sense for Fiendgods to be divided into three different tiers, based on their birth. After all, Pangu was capable of establishing the universe itself; from this, one could imagine how powerful he was. As for many of the other Fiendgods which Ning had heard of, some of them were only at the Xiantian level when born. Compared to Pangu...they were countless times weaker.

As for this Daoist Threelives, since he was so powerful, it made sense that he was born as a Primordial Fiendgod. “One’s tier of birth determines both one’s potential as well as one’s power at birth.” The giant yellow bear said. “But no matter how lowly one’s class is at birth, one still has the chance to become an awe-inspiring, major figure of the Three Realms. For example, there are some individuals who were born as members of extremely ordinary races, but after undergoing countless tribulations, also became powerful figures who could stand shoulder-to-shoulder with Master.”

“Ji Ning, although you are merely a human, you too have this chance.” The giant yellow bear said. Ning nodded gently. He understood. For example, the Lord of Cui Palace was another person from his homeland of Earth. And yet, he rose to become one of the most exalted figures of the Netherworld Kingdom, the First Judge of the Dead.”

“Master had countless experiences.” The giant yellow bear’s gaze grew dreamy as he thought back to the past. “He personally knew figures like Pangu and Nuwa, and even provided some guidance to the giant Roc and some other juniors. He then established his own school, and many Fiendgods flocked to his banner to listen to him expound on the Dao...and thus, Master ended up having many titles. Daoist Threelives, Daoist Starseizer, One-Armed Divine Master, True God of the Right Arm...”

Ning had a thought, and he hurriedly asked, “Could it be that Master, Daoist Threelives, was born with just one arm?”

“No.” The giant yellow bear shook his head. “Although I don’t know the details, I know that when Master was born from the primordial chaos, he had two arms. Afterwards, because of a major battle, he lost an arm. Master felt deep shame due to this, and thus from that day onwards, only permitted himself to have a single arm. But precisely because he only had a single arm, Master made a further

breakthrough in the divine ability, 'Starseizing Hand', which he had developed while meditating within the primordial chaos. He reached an even more divine, miraculous level! This breakthrough made it so that the Starseizing Hand could be ranked as one of the ten strongest divine abilities out of the countless divine abilities that had been devised after Pangu established the universe!"

A look of surprised shock appeared on Ning's face. What an incredible fellow! This Master of Ning's, whom he had only seen as an illusion, was actually this powerful? How many Fiendgods had there been since Pangu had established the universe? How many divine abilities had been devised? For the Starseizing Hand to be ranked amongst the top ten...it was far more astonishing than he had been able to imagine, previously.

"You have no need to ask about anything else for now." The giant yellow bear looked at Ning. "After countless years have passed and countless eras, the universe is now in the era of the three thousand major worlds and the trillion minor worlds. This is the era of the Celestial Court administering the Three Realms harmoniously. To you, these ancient secrets of the primordial eras are far too distant and irrelevant. There is no point in you learning these things; they will only vex you unnecessarily. Master once said that only after you become a Celestial Immortal, will you truly be considered Master's disciple."

Ning nodded.

"It is time for you to leave now." The giant yellow bear said. "No rush." Ning said hurriedly. "My Fiendgod body has just reached the Zifu level. According to the rules of the Treasure Hall, I should be able to select another Mortal-ranked magic treasure, right?"

The giant yellow bear nodded. To acquire a magic treasure from the Treasure Hall, there were only two possibilities; one was to rise to a new level as a Fiendgod, while the other was to challenge the Wargod Hall.

"Senior, please provide me with a list of the Mortal-ranked magic treasures of the Treasure Hall." Ning said. "I'll read it here, and decide on which treasure I want. After I leave, I'll be able to choose it immediately."

"You certainly know how to save time." The giant yellow bear laughed. The list of treasures was extremely complicated. It required quite a bit of time to review. In this place of transmission of knowledge, separated from time and space from the outside world, time moved at a much slower rate. It naturally would be best for him to do the reading here.

"Right." The giant yellow bear said. "Your soul has now reached the level of having 'divine sense', and you have learned the divine ability, [Starseizing Hand]. It would be simplicity itself for you to challenge the second level of the Wargod Hall, and you even have a chance to challenge the third level. Would you be willing to do so?"

"I only have a 'chance' at challenging the third level?" Ning asked. His power had already risen by an astonishing amount. He had made a spiritual breakthrough! He had also now acquired an incredibly powerful divine ability, the [Starseizing Hand]. He was completely confident in being able to slay Adept Xu with a single blow.

“If your divine power was strong enough to allow you to use the [Starseizing Hand] with abandon, then of course you would have a high chance of success.” The giant yellow bear smirked. “But how many times will your current level of Crimsonbright divine power permit you to use the [Starseizing Hand]?”

Ning hesitated slightly, then stretched out his hands. The Divine Starseizing Tattoos appeared, and the Crimsonbright divine power in his body filled his two palms. A surge of incomparably powerful might filled Ning’s mind, and he even felt as though he could shatter a mountain with a single slap from his hands.

“Bang!” “Bang!” Ning’s two hands each formed sword-fingers, chopping down towards the air in front of him. Swish! Swish! Two rays of pressured energy waves, emitting an ear-piercing howl, rumbled out like crashing thunder.

“So powerful.” Ning was tongue-tied from awe. He hadn’t used any sword techniques, simply pointed with two fingers in a sword-finger position, and yet the energy wave had been so astonishing...Ning had the feeling that if Jadechild was in front of him, he could smash Jadechild to smithereens with a single palm.

“However, the amount of divine power which is used up is also astonishing.” Ning mused to himself, “I only struck out a single time, but I used up so much. The Crimsonbright divine power in my body probably is only enough to permit me to strike out a few dozen times.”

In a life-and-death battle, a few dozen strikes was more than enough. But to challenge the Wargod Hall, for his divine power to only be able to last for so long truly wouldn’t be enough.

“I won’t challenge the Wargod Hall.” Ning said. “I don’t have the time to waste.” “Right.” The giant yellow bear nodded. He pointed to an empty space nearby, and an extremely thick book with golden lettering appeared. Atop it were two characters, for the words ‘Precious Treasure’. “Because this is your second time selecting a Mortal-ranked magic treasure, the amount of treasures available in this book will be greater than previously. If you were to challenge and overcome the second level of the Wargod Hall, when choosing your third magic treasure, you would be permitted to freely choose from all of the Mortal-ranked magic treasures which Master acquired.”

Ning understood. This was the difference between challenging the first and the second levels of the Wargod Hall. The second level was far more difficult than the first level, so naturally, the rewards would be different as well. Although it was still a matter of selecting Mortal-ranked magic treasures, the further along this path he went, the greater his choices would be.”

“Indeed.” As Ning flipped through the book, he immediately saw the difference. “There are some more treasures recorded here than there was last time, and the additions are all extremely rare and powerful treasures.”

“Jade Dragon Cutters...what a savage magic treasure.” Ning read carefully. “Souldrinker Bell. Far more powerful than the Myriad Wraths Banner, and on a much higher level.” Ning sighed in praise. If Bei Zishan had completed his Myriad Wraiths banner, it would have become a top-grade Mortal-ranked item. The methods by which it was created, however, were simply too despicable. By comparison, this Souldrinker Bell was far more intricate and exquisite, and in terms of power, it was even more powerful than a Myriad Wraiths Banner.

Ning read through the descriptions of one treasure after another. There were magic treasures, there were formation flags...although all of them moved Ning, there wasn't a single one which inspired a great feeling of desire within Ji Ning. This was because, after acquiring the divine ability, [Starseizing Hand], the Darknorth swords in Ning's hands would swing out with extremely great power already. Although these magic treasures were powerful, if Ning were to control them, the power released would be far weaker from the power released from him using his divine ability.

"Magic treasures are inferior to divine abilities, it seems." Ning sighed in his heart. In reality, he had forgotten that the real issue was...what sort of divine ability he had just learned!

"Eh?" Ning flipped past another page. His eyes suddenly lit up. This magic treasure was known as the Evanescent Demonslayer Sword. It was a top-grade Mortal-ranked magic treasure, a magic treasure that had been created for the purpose of slaughter. It was forged from an extremely precious material, the golden Nirvana crystals. This was a magic treasure which was extremely well suited for slaughter and for sneak attacks. It was originally an Earth-ranked magic treasure, but after repeated forgings, it had dropped in power to become a top-grade Mortal-ranked magic treasure. However, after committing enough slaughter, it could slowly rise in power to its innate level, and once more become an Earth-ranked magic treasure.

Ning read through the descriptions carefully. There were incomparably detailed notes regarding this magic treasure. According to the notes in this book, it was indeed true that some of the top-grade Mortal-ranked magic treasures Daoist Threelives had kept here had the potential for future growth. However, it wasn't its potential for growth which attracted Ning.

"Alright. This is the one I choose." Ning felt joy in his heart. The Evanescent Demonslayer Sword had an aura of impermanence and transience about it; it was very hard to detect. Even if the Evanescent Demonslayer Sword drew close to a foe, the foe probably wouldn't sense anything. This was what pleased Ning the most about it.

Ning continued to flip through the book at a slightly faster clip, finally finishing it. "And?" The giant yellow bear looked at Ning. "Evanescent Demonslayer Sword." Ning said.

"Haha, good eye." The giant yellow bear nodded. "I, too, felt that the Evanescent Demonslayer Sword is the most suited to you. This Evanescent Demonslayer Sword is extremely good at hiding its aura, and quite suited to stealth attacks. Now that you have made a breakthrough in your soul, your divine will is incomparably astonishing. You can absolutely control this Evanescent Demonslayer Sword to engage in long-distance sneak attacks! More importantly, you don't even need to fill it with your elemental ki; this will further lessen the ki ripples, making it even harder for your enemies to detect your Evanescent Demonslayer Sword."

Ning nodded. This was what he had been thinking about as well. He didn't need to use his elemental ki, and could simply use divine will to control this Evanescent Demonslayer Sword...

This magic treasure was innately hard to detect. Without any elemental ki ripples, it was just like an ordinary piece of muddy rock. It was too hard to notice it. His divine will could stealthily control the Evanescent Demonslayer Sword to drill through the ground until it reached the enemy, then suddenly attack!

Even a Wanxiang Adept, upon suffering a sneak attack at close quarters, probably wouldn't have enough time to command his magic treasures before having his head pierced.

"My divine will is perfectly matched for combination attacks with this Evanescent Demonslayer Sword." Ning mused to himself. "Senior, let's go now." Ning said hurriedly. Since he had acquired the Evanescent Demonslayer Sword, he needed to immediately return to Oxhorn Mountain.

"Alright. Hurry up a bit. Previously, you spent roughly an hour undergoing the trial of the Divine Abilities Hall." The giant yellow bear grabbed Ning, and then in the next breath, they vanished into thin air.

The Desolate Era

Book 6: Breaking Through the Cocoon, Becoming a Butterfly Chapter 34: Ji Ning Returns, the Final Battle

It was already close to nightfall. The edges of the Golden Crow could still be seen, setting in the west.

At the northern edges of Serpentwing Lake.

Whoosh! A figure suddenly surged into the skies, moving as fast as lightning. This was Ji Ning, who had just been teleported out of the aquatic estate. Ning's right hand was wielding one of his flying swords, the Evanescent Demonslayer Sword. The Evanescent Demonslayer Sword was the size of his palm, and it was so dim as to be half-translucent. The dark, translucent, palm-sized flying sword had a faint bloodstain atop it as well.

"Windwing Evasion!" Ning executed the Windwing Evasion, transforming into a ray of light and moving far faster than sound, instantly traversing a distance of tens of kilometers.

"Father. Wait for me." Ning's eyes were filled with urgency. Previously, he had acquired this most suitable of assassination weapons, the Evanescent Demonslayer Sword. Now, Ning had been immediately teleported to the northernmost part of Serpentwing Lake. He immediately moved forward, binding this new treasure to him while flying forward.

"I spent an hour in the Divine Abilities Hall. Father. You have to be able to hold on." Ning burned with urgency. Whoosh! He was like a giant Roc in flight. Even Xiantian lifeforms probably wouldn't even be able to catch a glimpse of Ji Ning as he moved forward.

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Roughly two minutes later, Ji Ning saw, far in the distance, that grand sealing formation, which looked like a giant shell of clear water. The grand sealing formation completely covered covered the entire Oxhorn Mountain.

Although the distance from Serpentwing Lake to Oxhorn Mountain was thousands of kilometers, Ning's speed was now extremely fast. It must be understood that a Zifu Disciple who rode atop a magic treasure and travelled would be able to move two hundred thousand kilometers a day. Prior to this, when the Wanxiang Adept, Adept Xu Li, had led Dong Fanyu and the others, they had spent just two hours to make it to Swallow Mountain. They had travelled a hundred thousand kilometers in a single hour! Thus, every few minutes, they were travelling thousands of kilometers.

When using his divine ability, Windwing Evasion, Ning was far faster than Adept Xu Li. Thus, it made sense for him to be able to make it from Serpentwing Lake to Oxhorn Mountain in two minutes.

“Break!” Ning held a Darknorth sword in his hand, and the divine tattoo atop the palm gripping the hilt of the sword began to faintly emerge. The Darknorth sword in his hand pierced straight towards the grand sealing formation in front of him, and Ning himself didn’t lessen his speed in the slightest.

Bang! Ning shot through like a meteor, piercing directly through the grand sealing formation and into the other side! “Father!” Upon piercing through the grand sealing formation, Ning saw the nether energy emanating from up ahead. The enormous Netherwyrms lay coiled atop Oxhorn Mountain. With but a thought, Ning’s awe-inspiring divine will parted a path through the fog. His divine sense encompassed the entire Oxhorn Mountain, including the entire Netherwyrms Heavenlock Formation.

Within the field of his divine sense, everything was made clear. The frantic, worried Patriarch Ninefire. The quietly waiting Granny Shadow. His father, Ji Yichuan, who had executed the forbidden technique and whose aura had risen to the heavens...

And also the white-robed, white-haired man who looked similar to his father, but whose aura was the same as the Whitewater Hound’s.

All of them were within the reach of his divine sense. “I made it.” Ning’s heart relaxed as he hurried forward. His divine sense also encompassed Adept Xu Li, Nong Zidao, and their group. To his divine sense, the bewildering function of the nether fog was completely useless, unable to affect Ning at all. Everything within the grand formation could be clearly seen by Ning’s divine sense!

“Charge.” Ning’s speed didn’t lessen in the slightest. He immediately utilized his Windwing Evasion to charge towards Adept Xu Li.

Halfway up Oxhorn Mountain. The face of Ninefire, who was controlling the entire grand formation, instantly changed. Others couldn’t see it, but as the master of the formation, he immediately discovered Ning charging into the Netherwyrms Heavenlock Formation.

“Ji Ning?” Ninefire’s face instantly turned white from terror. Ning was the hope for the Ji clan’s future rise to power. He had entrusted Ning with the official writ for the City of Ten Thousand Swords. So long as Ning survived...even if the rest of them all perished, it wouldn’t impact the future of the Ji clan that much. Ninefire knew that all of them were going to die, but in his heart, he had still been calm, because Ning had already escaped.

But now, Ning had returned. “Ji Ning! Leave, quick, leave!” Ninefire transmitted mentally, his thoughts filled with berserk fury. “Who told you to come back? Leave, leave!” Ninefire was truly frantic. Frantic and enraged, frantic to the point of insanity.

If Ning were to die here, then the Ji clan would truly be annihilated. He, Ninefire, would have no face with which to meet the ancestors of the Ji clan.

“Leave!!! Have you come to throw your life away?” Ninefire howled with rage. His voice carried a sobbing quality to it, but he could sense that Ning’s speed hadn’t lessened at all, and that he was continuing to charge straight towards Snowdragon Mountain’s group.

Ninefire, upon discovering Ning's appearance, had lost his mind out of franticness. If he had calmed down, he would have realized...that Ning was clearly within the Netherwurm Heavenlock Formation, and he hadn't created a passage for Ning through the nether fog. How, then, was Ning advancing directly towards Snowdragon Mountain's group, as though he could see them?

But Ninefire had been driven to the brink of berserk madness. Even tears had begun to appear in his eyes. How could he possibly calm down at a time like this?

"Ji Ning, leave, leave, quickly leave." Ninefire sent frantically. "Yichuan, Yichuan, quick, stop your son. Ning didn't leave. He's attacking Snowdragon Mountain's group again!"

Whoosh! Yichuan was currently leaning against a large, crooked tree trunk. Suddenly, he heard the Patriarch's voice transmitted into his mind. And then, a corridor suddenly appeared within the nether fog which spanned into the distance. In the distance, he saw a figure moving as fast as lightning towards Yichuan's general direction. This was because Yichuan was currently very close to Snowdragon Mountain's group.

"Ji Ning?" Yichuan's face instantly turned completely white as well, and disbelief appeared in his eyes. He had already prepared himself for death, and his heart had been incomparably calm because his son had departed. The Ji clan would flourish, thanks to his son, and his son's name would become famous throughout the vast world.

But! Ji Ning had actually returned. "LEAVE!!!" Yichuan howled hoarsely towards Ning, his face savage. "Ji Ning, who told you to return? Leave!!! If you don't leave, even in death, I won't be able to close my eyes in peace. Quick, leave!"

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Immediately after charging into the Netherwurm Heavenlock Formation, Ning heard the voices of the Patriarch, and then a corridor in the nether fog ahead of him appeared, revealing, in the distance, his father, Yichuan! His father, Yichuan, was currently just three hundred meters away from Adept Xu Li's group.

"Leave!" "Quick, leave!" "If you leave, even in death, I won't be able to close my eyes in peace!" "We will be ashamed to face the ancestors of the Ji clan!"

Patriarch Ninefire and his father, Yichuan, had been incomparably calm in the face of death, but they were now nearly at the point of collapse. Ning's appearance...was like an utter nightmare to them! They would rather have their souls destroyed than see such a sight. They were at the point of insanity.

Ning's heart trembled upon hearing his father and the Patriarch's voices. He knew what his father and the Patriarch were thinking. "They'll understand soon enough." Ning's eyes turned sharp, and a ray of light pierced through the ground, controlled by Ning's divine will. The Evanescent Demonslayer Sword was moving deep underground at a high speed towards the direction of Adept Xu Li.

Swoosh! Ning himself used his divine ability, the Windwing Evasion, and moved lightning-fast towards Adept Xu Li's group...

Surrounded by nether fog and a snowy white dragon, Adept Xu Li, Lu Huang, Nong Zidao, and the other Immortal practitioners were all quite relaxed and leisurely. Only Nong Zidao was frowning, his eyes

closed as he focused on his analysis. The nether fog bewildering formation's elemental ki ley lines had clearly grown much more complicated. Fortunately, he had gained some experience from breaking the formation previously, and so he was still able to break through this one. Only, he now needed considerably more time.

"Eh?" Adept Xu Li's face changed slightly. He turned his head, staring into the distance; he could sense that the grand sealing formation he had set up had been pierced through. "Who just passed through my sealing formation?" Adept Xu Li's heart clenched. He grew cautious, and a Dao-seal appeared in his hand out of nowhere.

As a Wanxiang Adept, he had experienced quite a few dangers. Naturally, he was very cautious. Before preparing for victory, he would first prepare his retreat in event of defeat.

"Whoosh!" "Whoosh!" The 'Black Serpent Cord' and the 'Earth Garrison Seal', his two mighty Earth-ranked magic treasures, all appeared and hovered around him, prepared to guard him at all times. But suddenly...

Swoosh! A figure charged in from within the nether fog, swooping in like a giant Roc. The figure was currently wielding a pair of swords, and moved so fast that Adept Xu Li and the others had to sigh in amazement. But upon seeing the charging figure, Adept Xu Li let out a sigh of relief, then called out in a high voice, "Ji Ning! Can it be that you have come to deliver your life..."

His voice was still echoing within the region as he summoned seventy two flying swords out of nowhere, sending them enveloping towards Ji Ning. Adept Xu Li already had some experience with dealing with Ning's speed; this time, he immediately used the many flying swords to entangle Ji Ning.

"Bang!" An explosive sound rang out. One after another of the flying swords were knocked flying away, and a sword flash immediately appeared in front of Adept Xu Li. Boom! Boom! The Earth-ranked magic treasures, 'Black Serpent Cord' and 'Earth Garrison Seal', were all blasted away, and the sword light flashed past Adept Xu Li's head...sending it flying.

Adept Xu Li had died!

Rumble...the snowy white dragon that had been coiling around them disappeared as well, and the Zifu Disciples, astonished, weren't able to react at all. "Bang!" An illusory figure suddenly appeared from from the ground, slashing past Nong Zidao's head!

Nong Zidao had been completely absorbed in analyzing the formation. Even now, he was still absorbed in his task...and so, just like that, Nong Zidao died!

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It all happened in the blink of an eye! Adept Xu Li and Nong Zidao had both died in the blink of an eye. Ji Ning had immediately used his divine ability, 'Starseizing Hand', while the Darknorth swords in his hands had also unleashed their most powerful attacks. The power of these attacks was incredible. The seventy two flying swords had all been knocked away, and the two Earth-ranked magic treasures had both been sent flying as well. The sword flash had passed directly through the snowy white dragon and slaughtered Adept Xu Li!

It was simply too fast. Adept Xu Li, upon seeing Ning, had been quite confident, but Ning's terrifying sword blow...had simply been too fast and too furious. Adept Xu had wanted to use his two Earth-ranked magic treasures to block, but before he had, Ning's sword had already killed him.

"You...you..." Only now did the other Zifu Disciples react. They stared in astonishment at Ji Ning. It had simply been too fast. In the blink of an eye, both Nong Zidao and Adept Xu Li had died? A mighty, venerable Wanxiang Adept, Xu Li, who had prior experience fighting Ji Ning...how could it be that he had been instantly killed in their first exchange of blows, to the point where he didn't even have the chance to flee? What was going on?

"Leave!" "Quick, leave!" "If you leave, even in death, I won't be able to close my eyes in peace!" "We will be ashamed to face the ancestors of the Ji clan!"

Their voices were still echoing, but then...they fell silent. The controller of the formation, Ji Ninefire, was completely stunned. As for Ning's father, Ji Yichuan, he had ignored everything and charged more than three hundred meters towards him. His face had been filled with agonized rage, and he was bellowing out the words, "Ji Ning, quick..."

His words instantly became trapped in his throat. He saw the two corpses which now lay fallen on the ground. One was Wanxiang Adept Xu Li, who previously had been as calm and composed as the wind or the clouds, yet who held power that could shake the heavens. The other was the formations expert, Nong Zidao. Blood and brain matter lay oozing on the ground. Clearly, the two were deader than dead.

"This!" Yichuan was completely stunned. He stared in disbelief at his nearby son, who was holding a Darknorth sword in front of Adept Xu Li's corpse.

"Ji Ning, you can be arrogant for now, but our Snowdragon Mountain will definitely avenge us!" The frenzied, grief-stricken roars of the seven nearby Zifu Disciples nearby rang out.

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Book 6: Breaking Through the Cocoon, Becoming a Butterfly Chapter 35: Snowdragon Mountain's Prestige

Ji Yichuan was both surprised and delighted. As for the seven nearby Zifu Disciples, who were calling out bravely despite being in despair, Yichuan paid them no mind at all. The only one he cared about was Ji Ning, who was next to the bodies of those two on the ground; Adept Xu Li and Nong Zidao.

"How could...how could...it's only, only been a short while..." Yichuan couldn't believe it. How short a period of time had transpired, as he had charged over here from three hundred meters away? Adept Xu Li, an exalted Wanxiang Adept, had perished.

A corridor through the nether fog parted. Ji Ninefire, who had been watching from afar halfway up the mountain, quickly ran this way through the corridor. His face was covered with surprise and delight. Yichuan hadn't personally seen the slaughter that had just occurred, but Patriarch Ninefire had been able to vaguely sense it all through his control of the nether fog. Although it wasn't very clear, he knew without a doubt...that Ning had used only a single blow to kill Adept Xu Li.

"In a short hour, Ji Ning's actually undergone a world-shaking transformation." Ninefire's heart was filled with unspeakable joy. "This truly is a blessing for our Ji clan!"

“Little Shadow, Liu Xing, Truekeep, all of you, come over. Snowdragon Mountain’s Adept Xu Li has already perished.” Ninefire sent to them while hurrying over.

In the various other regions. Granny Shadow and the others had felt shock and terror in their hearts, because just now, they had heard Adept Xu Li roar, “Ji Ning, have you come to deliver your life?” Granny Shadow and the others were incomparably terrified upon hearing this; hadn’t Ning left? Why had he returned? Or was Adept Xu Li lying?

And right in the middle of their fear, the Patriarch’s voice came towards them. “Snowdragon Mountain’s Adept Xu Li has already perished.” “Perished?” “The Wanxiang Adept perished?” Truekeep, Granny Shadow, and the others felt both astonishment as well as amazement. How could such a powerful Wanxiang Adept have died like this? They hurriedly traversed the corridors through the nether fog which had just opened before them, and they hastened towards Ning’s direction.

Soon...one figure after another arrived, moving at high speed. Ji Yichuan. Ji Ninefire. Granny Shadow. Ji Truekeep. The old servant, Ah Xing. The white-robed, white-haired man. The Thunderhawk.

“Uncle White.” Ning looked at the white-robed, white-haired man who had appeared before him, especially at the face that was striking similar to his father’s. He couldn’t help but call out in surprised delight, “You made a breakthrough?”

“By relying on the liquefied elemental essence, I broke through.” The Whitewater Hound nodded. He looked towards Ji Ning with eyes filled with love. “I didn’t expect that at the end, we would all survive. After all these years, I’ve never been able to speak with you. I didn’t expect that today, Ning, son, I would be able to speak with you.” Ning beamed.

“Adept Xu Li and Nong Zidao?” Truekeep looked at the surrounding area. “They’ve been cremated already.” Yichuan had a rare smile on his face as well. Just now, Ning had immediately cremated the remains and taken the magic treasures. Ning pointed at the seven utterly despondent Zifu Disciples. “Patriarch, how should we deal with these seven? The seven of them aren’t able to fight back at all; we can do with them as we please.”

“The seven of them?” Ninefire turned his head, sweeping them with a glance. “Kill them all. Our Ji clan has already established an enormous grudge with Snowdragon Mountain. There’s no point to keeping them.”

“No.” “Don’t kill me, I’m willing to give up my treasures in exchange for my life. “You will regret it. Your Ji clan will definitely be annihilated by the fiery rage of Snowdragon Mountain.” “Keep acting arrogantly. Your Ji clan will definitely be annihilated within a single day.”

Some of the seven Zifu Disciples were begging for their lives, while others were cursing angrily. Patriarch Ninefire frowned as he pointed at one of the middle-aged men. He barked, “What did you say? Our Ji clan will be annihilated within a single day?”

“Hahaha.” Lu Huang laughed wildly. “Do you know who you killed? The person you just killed was a Wanxiang Adept of our Snowdragon Mountain! Wanxiang Adepts can be considered high-level members of our sect. When they die, the main sect will instantly know, and also know where they died.”

The faces of Ning, Ninefire, and the others all changed. There were indeed quite a few methods by which a location could be divided. For a major sect like Snowdragon Mountain, it would be quite normal for them to leave some markings behind on their Wanxiang Adepts.

“It is one thing for us Zifu Disciples to die, but the main sect will immediately send people over to investigate the death of Adept Xu Li.” Lu Huang looked at Ning. “Ji Ning. Although you are formidable and although you are a talent, in the face of our entire Snowdragon Mountain, you will definitely die.”

“Right. The death of an Adept is an enormous matter. The elders of the main sect will definitely arrive within a single day. You will definitely perish.”

“Before the Celestial Envoys of the Grand Xia Dynasty who you are waiting for will arrive, our elders of the sect will arrive.”

The morale of the Zifu Disciples clearly began to rise. Swish! Suddenly, without giving them any chance to respond, a semi-translucent shadow flashed past, instantly piercing through the heads of the various Zifu Disciples. Blood sprayed everywhere, and then all of them collapsed, dead.

“So fast.” “There were no warning signs at all.” The faces of Ninefire, Truekeep, and the others all changed. Ning’s attack had created no ripples or disturbances at all! After all, Ning hadn’t even filled the Evanescent Demonslayer Sword with his elemental ki; he had completely relied on his divine will to control it. Naturally, Ning was able to attack without giving any warning signs. The seven were still cursing in despair, but in the next instant, they had all died.

“Xu Li is already dead.” Ning said solemnly. “The worst case scenario would be that the Snowdragon Mountain really will send even more powerful experts to come here to investigate. We need to immediately make preparations.”

“What the hell is this? There’s no end to this!” Truekeep gritted his teeth painfully. “Alas!” Patriarch Ninefire shook his head as well. Previously, they had all been incomparably excited, but now, a bucket of ice water had been poured on their heads. Their hearts turned cold!

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More than a million kilometers away from Swallow Mountain. Snow drifted down from the skies. It was perpetually freezing here. The endless mountains stretched in a chain, as far as the eye could see. Some were tall, while others were short; some had peaks that stretched into the clouds. This was the location of the main sect of one of the great powers within Stillwater Commandery, Snowdragon Mountain.

Snowdragon Mountain’s main sect was divided into three factions, and the leaders of the three factions were all Summit Lords, with the positions being assumed by Primal Daoists.

The three tallest, most awe-inspiring majestic mountain peaks...were the residences of the three Primal Daoists. There were many other mountain peaks around them, which were the residences of the various Wanxiang Adepts. Naturally, there were many Zifu Disciples who would follow these Wanxiang Adepts or serve the Primal Daoists, waiting for a chance to hear them expound on the Dao.

Within Coldfocus Peak of Snowdragon Mountain were halls and palaces. Within one of the main palaces, there was a jade bed, atop which sat a red-clothed youth in the lotus position. By his side stood a pair of maids. They stood there nervously, not daring to make a sound and disturb him.

Coldfocus Peak...it was a mountain peak that was ranked amongst the top peaks of the many mountains of Snowdragon Mountain's main sect. The Summit Lord, Xue Hongyi, was a truly outstanding genius that had been cultivated by Snowdragon Mountain. Age ten, Xiantian. Age sixteen, Zifu. Age thirty nine, Wanxiang. Thirty years later, after many trials and tests, he had become a member of the Grand Xia Dynasty's Raindragon Guard!

In the Raindragon Guard, he had learned some particularly powerful techniques. His battle prowess was now within the top three of the Wanxiang Adepts of Snowdragon Mountain.

There could be a tremendous gap in power between two Wanxiang Adepts. The likes of Adept Xu Li were simply ordinary Wanxiang Adepts. There were some particularly talented Wanxiang Adepts who trained in some extremely powerful techniques, who had extremely formidable magic treasures or divine abilities, or controlled particularly powerful golems who were capable of fighting beyond their level and approach the Primal Daoist level of combat power.

Amongst Zifu Disciples, there were outstanding talents and also comparative weaklings. The weaklings were like Ji Ninefire; the stronger ones were like Dong Ziqi. Both were peak Zifu Disciples, but a single Dong Ziqi could battle ten Ji Ninefire's. As for the more formidable ones like Jadechild, because of their divine abilities, they could dominate a group of Zifu Disciples by themselves. And of course, there were monsters like Ning, who could kill Jadechild as easily as slaughtering a chicken.

Amongst Wanxiang Adepts, there could similarly be a great difference in power levels. Xue Hongyi was one of the most dazzling ones, who had close to a Primal Daoist's power in battle.

"Hongyi." An icy cold voice suddenly rang out by the ears of the red-clothed youth. "Hm?" The red-clothed youth opened his eyes, a look of respect appearing in them. "Master." "Your junior apprentice-brother Xu Li just perished, and it should have been within the Swallow Mountain region." The icy voice continued, "Hongyi, go make a trip to Swallow Mountain and investigate how your junior apprentice-brother Xu Li died. You are a member of the Raindragon Guard; you can borrow their teleportation array to move to Swallow Mountain as quickly as possible."

"Yes, Master." The red-clothed youth nodded. He was an orphan whom his master had taken in, because he had been discovered on Snowdragon Mountain's territory. Back then, because he had been found wearing not but a red, cotton-padded jacket, his master had bestowed him with the surname of 'Xue', meaning 'snow', and his name as 'Hongyi', meaning 'red clothes'. The relationship between himself and his master was akin to that between a true father and a son. Only, the two weren't good at expressing it, as they both had cold, sharp personalities.

"Whoosh." A red cloud suddenly appeared before the red-clothed youth, and in an instant, it flew out of the main hall, howling through the air as it disappeared into the horizons at an astonishing speed.

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Oxhorn Mountain. The Ji clan was currently deciding how they should deal with the expert which Snowdragon Mountain would invariably send over.

"A major sect such as Snowdragon Mountain cares the most about their reputation. Our 'puny little Ji clan' has killed so many of their disciples; they definitely won't let this matter rest." Truekeep said frantically. "Now, our only chance is to hope for the Celestial Envoy of the Grand Xia Dynasty to arrive.

Once the Celestial Envoy arrives, we will have the protection of the Dynasty. No matter how audacious Snowdragon Mountain is, they won't dare attack."

"But the expert from Snowdragon Mountain will arrive within the day." Ninefire said with a frown. "As for the Celestial Envoy of the Grand Xia Dynasty, the Envoy probably won't be able to arrive within a day." All of them were pondering.

"Our only option is to flee." Granny Shadow said in her hoarse voice. "Right. Flee." Ninefire said. "We cannot fight head on. We can't let Ji Ning take on this sort of danger again. We shall flee immediately. After we flee, Snowdragon Mountain will spend some extra time investigating. As long as we can delay until the Celestial Envoy arrives, we will have succeeded."

"I'm just afraid that if the experts of Snowdragon Mountain aren't able to find us, in their rage, they will harm our ordinary clansmen." Truekeep said.

Ning's face suddenly changed as he turned to look into the distance. "Eh?" Everyone else, seeing Ning's face change, also turned to look towards the distance.

The nether fog around them had grown sparse. Ning and the others could now see far into the distance...and because Ning's soul had reached the 'divine sense' level, his senses were extremely acute. He could sense that from far away in the sky, there were faint ripples. Thus, he had turned to look.

From afar...a towering, lofty, wide warship was currently pressing down, emanating waves of energy as it flew over. There were massive armored warriors standing atop the ship, and all of them had extraordinary auras and gazes. This group of warriors surrounded a tall, slender youngster who was dressed in a magnificent uniform and who wore a crown on his forehead. His bearing was extraordinary, and by his side there was an armored man who was fawning on him.

The warship had two mighty pillars and two flags fluttering atop them!

Atop the first flag were two characters: "Still" and "Water."

Atop the other flag were two other characters: "North" and "Mont."

"The Northmont clan, of the Marquis of Stillwater." Ninefire raised his head, staring at the enormous ship which flew through the airs towards them. Upon seeing the great flag atop the warship, he couldn't help but murmur to himself.

"The Marquis of Stillwater!" Ning was shocked as well. The Stillwater Commandery was a vast, vast land, and it had all been enfeoffed to the Marquis of Stillwater! One could imagine how vast the power of the Marquis of Stillwater was. Only the Raindragon Guards could be considered to be on par with him, but with regards to some of the matters within the territory of the Marquis, not even the Raindragon Guard would dare to casually interfere in and disrupt the Marquis of Stillwater's management of his lands.

"That is...General Dong." Truekeep said. "The person standing next to the youngster is General Dong."

The warship continued to fly towards them. General Dong, who stood atop the warship, by the side of the youngster in the beautiful black uniform, hurriedly barked downwards, "Members of the Ji clan and Snowdragon Mountain, hurry and pay your respects to the exalted envoy of the Marquis of Stillwater!"

His voice echoed and rumbled, reverberating throughout the lands.

Ji Ning, Ji Ninefire, Ji Yichuan, and the others all felt puzzlement in their hearts. Upon seeing the two massive flags aboard the giant warship, they all understood that this warship belonged to the Northpeak clan of the Marquis of Stillwater, the clan with the most exalted power and authority in the entirety of Stillwater Commandery.

However, they had clearly made the report to the Grand Xia Dynasty, and had hoped to transfer the rights to the elemental ore mine to the Grand Xia Dynasty. It was the Celestial Envoy of the Grand Xia Dynasty which they had been awaiting this entire time. Why, then, had the envoy of the Marquis of Stillwater Commandery come?

“Come, let’s go up.” Ninefire said softly. “Right.” All of them acknowledged. Although the arrival of the envoy of the Marquisate of Stillwater was quite strange, even General Dong, the general in charge of the forces of the Grand Xia Dynasty stationed in Swallow Mountain, was standing next to the envoy like a fawning sycophant. How could the Ji clan possibly dare offend them?

“Let’s go.” A flying boat appeared out of nowhere. Ning and the others boarded the boat, then flew upwards into the sky. There, high in the sky, the heroic warriors aboard the warship stood proudly, clearly all at the Zifu Disciple level. This made the hearts of Ning and the others clench. This really was the Northmont clan of the Marquis of Stillwater, one of the eight hundred marquisdoms that had been enfeoffed after the Grand Xia Dynasty had unified the world. An ancient marquisate which had existed for countless years...any squad of warriors it casually sent out would all be at least at the Zifu Disciple level.

“Ji Ninefire, your Ji clan has had a stroke of great fortune.” General Dong snorted coldly. “The young master is right up ahead, awaiting you all. Hurry and enter.”

“Thank you, General Dong.” Ninefire said with a smile while leading Ning and the others within. The Ji clan’s forces moved across the deck of the warship, under the guidance of the armored warriors.

“How impressive.” Ning swept the area around himself slightly with his gaze, and discovered that this warship was covered with complicated runes. A powerful aura lay hidden within this warship. “This shouldn’t be a magic treasure; it should be some sort of mechanical golem-ship!”

The warship was divided into three floors. Ascending the stairs, Ning and the others moved into the main hall of the second floor. This main hall was extremely broad, and within there was a youngster in a luxurious black uniform. This black-uniformed youngster was staring through the window, hands clasped, towards the boundless mist outside. By his side, there were two maids, and an old man who was nervously standing in a corner.

“Dong Fanyu!” Ning instantly recognized this person. This was one of the Zifu Disciples of the Swallow Mountain branch of Snowdragon Mountain. Although he had never seen this man in person before, he had seen his image in intelligence reports.

“Where is Adept Xu?” Dong Fanyu, upon seeing the Ji clan enter, couldn’t help but say in astonishment, “Where are senior apprentice-brother Zidao and the others?” But no members of the Ji clan paid him any heed.

“We pay our respects to the exalted envoy,” Ninefire said, immediately bowing low, almost to the ground. Behind him, Ning and the others all bowed in respect as well.

Only now did the black-uniformed youth who had been looking through the window with clasped hands turn to them. His face was smooth and pale. A faint smile was on his face, and he looked quite amiable. Sweeping them with a glance, he said, "Arise." Only now did the members of the Ji clan rise from their bow.

"Eh?" The black-uniformed youth frowned, then laughed, "Just your group? General Dong, didn't you say that Snowdragon Mountain and the Ji clan were engaging in a battle here at Oxhorn Mountain?"

General Dong hurriedly said to him, "Reporting to the young master: Snowdragon Mountain did indeed have quite a few Immortal practitioners who were battling the Ji clan at Oxhorn Mountain. Didn't Dong Fanyu also stated that even the Wanxiang Adept, Xu Li, had gone to participate? Ji Ninefire! I ask you this: Where are the forces of Snowdragon Mountain? The exalted envoy of the Marquis of Stillwater has come; how dare they not come to pay their respects?"

Ji Ninefire hurriedly said, "Reporting to the exalted envoy: The forces of Snowdragon Mountain wished to destroy my Ji clan. My Ji clan strove to battle against them, and in the end, annihilated all of the invading forces of Snowdragon Mountain."

"Impossible!" Dong Fanyu, who had been listening nearby, bellowed out, "Adept Xu Li was a Wanxiang Adept. How could the Zifu Disciples of your Ji clan have killed Adept Xu Li? As I see it, by relying on your grand formation, you've separated everything within from the outside world. You knew that the young master has arrived, but Adept Xu Li and the others remain trapped within the formation and do not know of his arrival."

The black-uniformed youngster stood there, not speaking, just watching.

Ninefire said, "Adept Xu Li truly has perished. Ji Ning." Ninefire turned and spoke to Ning. "Take out Adept Xu Li's magic treasure, that giant seal; let this Dong Fanyu take a look." Ning waved his hand, and that grand seal appeared within it. It was the 'Earth Garrison Seal'. The appearance of it alone indicated that it possessed extraordinary power.

Dong Fanyu said, astonished, "I, I've never seen Adept Xu Li use his grand seal, but I've flown atop the Adept's flying magic treasures."

"This should be an Earth-ranked magic treasure." The black-uniformed youngster suddenly said. Ning waved his hand again, and a small ship appeared within his palm. Although it was within his palm, it was enough to instantly turn Dong Fanyu's face ashen. "How can this be!"

The nearby General Dong's pupils contracted, and then he laughed, "It seems as though this Ji clan has rather extraordinary abilities. Previously, according to Dong Fanyu's report, Dong Ziqi, Jadechild, and nearly twenty other Zifu Disciples perished here at Oxhorn Mountain. I didn't expect that even Adept Xu Li and the others who hastened here would all perish here as well."

Clap! Clap! Clap! The black-uniformed youngster suddenly began to clap his hands. "I am Northmont Baiwei." The black-uniformed youngster laughed. "I imagine all of you from the Ji clan know why I have come on this trip. I'm here for that elemental ore mine within the borders of your Ji clan's domain. My goal is simple – I wish for your Ji clan to transfer the rights to the elemental ore mine to the Marquisate of Stillwater, and our estate will also give your clan 30%!"

Ninefire stuttered, "But, but we've already report this to the Grand Xia Dynasty..." "No need to worry." The black-uniformed youngster shook his head. "The Marquisate of Stillwater arrived first. After we sign a transfer agreement, even if the Celestial Envoy of the Grand Xia Dynasty arrives, it will be to no avail. The Marquisate of Stillwater will naturally shield you in this matter."

The members of the Ji clan all let out sighs of relief. To the Ji clan, transferring the mine to the Marquisate of Stillwater or to the Grand Xia Dynasty made no difference. Within the Stillwater Commandery...the Marquisate of Stillwater had a status that was equivalent to the Grand Xia Dynasty's, because this land had been enfeoffed to the Marquis of Stillwater. If the Marquis of Stillwater chose to take control over certain matters, not even the Grand Xia Dynasty would find it easy to casually intervene.

"Are you willing?" Northmont Baiwei smiled. "Willing, willing!" Ninefire said hurriedly. Ning and the others didn't speak out in opposition. "Excellent." Baiwei smiled, then nodded. "I will order my people to go and investigate the quality of this elemental ore mine. Also; the rest of you can retire, but Ji Ning is to stay behind."

Ji Ning was to stay behind? The Ji clan was startled. The nearby Dong Fanyu and General Dong all bowed and immediately said, "Yes," then obediently departed. Although the Ji clan was puzzled, they still acknowledged the order and left.

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"Ji Ninefire. Congratulations." General Dong, walking atop the wide planks of the ship, said with clasped hands. "Luck, all luck." Ninefire hurriedly laughed, but a look of surprise was on his face. "Our Ji clan didn't make a report to the Marquisate of Stillwater. How did they manage to send someone over so quickly?"

"How should I know?" General Dong shook his head. "If I sent someone to make a report, they probably wouldn't even have arrived at the city of Stillwater yet." Ninefire nodded lightly.

Everyone in the Ji clan was rather worried about Ning, who had remained in the hall. Dong Fanyu, off to the side, was gnashing his teeth. Even Adept Xu Li had died. He felt completely unable to accept this.

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Within the hall. Only Northmont Baiwei and Ji Ning were present, along with two maids.

"Young master, might I ask why you have asked me, Ji Ning, to stay behind?" Ning said with great courtesy. "No need to stand on ceremony." Baiwei sat down, then pointed at a nearby black chair and said, "You can sit as well. Also, my name is Northmont Baiwei. You can just address me as Baiwei; I don't actually have an official position."

"Thank you, young master Baiwei." Ning sat down. Baiwei looked towards Ning. "At eleven years of age, you slaughtered the criminal Bei Zishan, who the Raindragon Guard was pursuing. You should now be sixteen years of age. If my guess is correct, the reason why the Ji clan was able to exceed everyone's expectations this time and cause Snowdragon Mountain to suffer major losses was because of you, Ji Ning."

Ning was startled. This young master, Northmont Baiwei, seemed to know quite a few things. He even knew that Ning was the one who had killed Bei Zishan.

“No need to worry. I didn’t investigate you on purpose.” Baiwei smiled. “To be honest, this is the first time I’ve come out on a mission on Father’s orders. Naturally, I must be cautious when carrying out my first assignment. Although this mission is a simple one, I still did a careful investigation into your Ji clan.”

Ning was secretly startled. The Northmont clan of Stillwater was an ancient clan that had existed for as nearly as long as the Grand Xia Dynasty itself had. The descendants of a clan like this were simply extraordinary; even when serving as an envoy to a minor clan like the Ji clan, they would first investigate everything clearly. From this, one could tell how cautious they were.

“You killed Bei Zishan at age eleven, then Jadechild and Xu Li at age sixteen.” Baiwei sighed, impressed. “Even though you relied on the supporting power of a formation, I must admit that I am in admiration for your record in battle.”

“I risked my life, and luck was on my side.” Ning shook his head and sighed. “My Ji clan very nearly perished, there at Oxhorn Mountain.” When he thought back to the twists and turns of the battle on Oxhorn Mountain, Ning still felt some lingering fear.

“You had luck, but you also had strength.” Baiwei said. “A genius like will truly be stifled in a small place like Swallow Mountain. Given your talent...if you don’t have a formidable master instructing you, I fear that in the future, it will be hard for you to achieve great things. For example, if you don’t have access to some supreme training techniques, it will be hard for you to even become a Wanxiang Adept.”

Ning nodded. “I do indeed have the intention of going on a journey and also paying respects to a teacher and master, but I must wait a period of time first.” Baiwei nodded. With a wave of his hand, he produced an insignia. “If you go to the city of Stillwater, you can come seek me out.”

Ning was startled. An insignia? If he accepted it, that meant that he was accepting a favor from this person. This Northmont Baiwei had an exalted status, but he acted in a cautious manner, and treated Ning, a Zifu Disciple from an ordinary clan, with such courtesy. A person like this was worth befriending.

“Thank you, young master Baiwei.” Ning hesitated slightly, then accepted the insignia. The front side of the insignia had the characters ‘North’ and ‘Mont’, while the other side had the characters ‘Black’ and ‘Tiger’. Ning couldn’t help but mumble in a low voice, “North Mont Black Tiger?”

“That refers to my father, Northmont Blacktiger.” Baiwei smiled. Ning immediately said, “When I go to Stillwater City, I will definitely pay you a visit, young master Baiwei.”

“My subordinates will spend quite some time investigating the quality of this elemental ore mine. Let us listen to some music and wait for them.” Baiwei waved his hand lightly, and instantly, the maids appeared from behind the curtains at the sides of the hall. They were carrying musical instruments and were all extremely beautiful. Soon, music began to ring out.

At the same time, other maids delivered delicacies for them to eat. After a long period of casual conversation, Ning began to feel an increased sense of goodwill towards this Northmont Baiwei. But suddenly...

“The Raindragon Guards have a mission to capture the members of the Ji clan for interrogation. I would like to ask the master of this warship to assist me in this.” A cold, sharp voice rang out from straight ahead, echoing within the warship. Even Ning and Baiwei, who were within the main hall, could clearly hear this voice. Ning turned his head to stare out through the glass. He saw, from afar, a red-clothed youth who stood there above a red cloud. The youth was staring coldly in their direction.

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Book 6: Breaking Through the Cocoon, Becoming a Butterfly Chapter 37: Matters Resolved

Atop the warship. Ji Ninefire, Ji Yichuan, and the others all felt shock in their hearts. The Raindragon Guards had come to arrest them for interrogation? Their Ji clan had never committed any grave sins.

“This Raindragon Guard is most likely a member of Snowdragon Mountain.” Ji Truekeep sent. “Right. He came quite quickly. He hastened here in just two short hours from the main Snowdragon Mountain sect.” Ninefire nodded as well.

The only enemy they had offended was Snowdragon Mountain. And, as a major sect, it was normal for Snowdragon Mountain to have members who were also Raindragon Guards.

“A Raindragon Guard is here to deal with a case?” A gentle voice rang out, and the black-uniformed Northmont Baiwei leisurely strolled out down the stairs from the second floor, with Ning following behind him. While walking down, Baiwei glanced at the red-clothed youngster who stood in midair in the distance. “What case does the Raindragon Guard have, for you to come arrest the members of the Ji clan?”

The distant Xue Hongyi, standing upon that red cloud, saw that black-uniformed youth, and his face immediately changed. As a member of the Raindragon Guard, it could be said that his power was extremely great, almost dominantly so, within Stillwater Commandery. However, upon encountering someone from the Marquisate of Stillwater, he had to somewhat restrain himself. An ordinary member of the Marquisate was one thing, but from the clothes of the youngster before him, Hongyi could tell at one glance that this youngster was of the main lineage of the Marquisate.

“How did I end up running into someone from the main lineage of the Marquisate of Stillwater?” Hongyi frowned slightly. He hesitated momentarily, but then still said, “I have come here on assignment to arrest the wanted criminal, ‘Kebu’. I suspect that the criminal Kebu is hiding within the territory of the Ji clan, and is being protected by them.”

“You are in pursuit of the wanted criminal, Kebu?” Baiwei said softly. “Do you have a military order?” “I do.” A black scroll appeared out of nowhere within Hongyi’s hands. He unwrapped it, and it was covered with characters that proclaimed a military order had been sent for the arrest of the wanted criminal, Kebu, and that the order had been issued to ‘Xue Hongyi’.

Baiwei glanced at it, immediately able to tell that this truly was a military order. Frowning slightly, he glanced at Xue Hongyi. He mused to himself that this Xue Hongyi truly was remarkable; upon seeing him, Baiwei had immediately understood that this person should be a member of Snowdragon Mountain, here to capture the Ji clan and take revenge upon them! To a mighty, exalted Raindragon Guard, dealing with the Ji clan would be simplicity itself. And yet, he had first gone to accept a military

mission, and then find the excuse of claiming that the Ji clan was suspected of aiding and hiding a wanted criminal. This really was an airtight plan.

“What should we do?” “A military order from the Raindragon Guard?” The members of the Ji clan were all somewhat panicking. As for Ning, he stared at the distant scroll of parchment, then gave the red-clothed youngster a careful glance. “Based on what Adept Mu Xiao had told me, he had only been permitted to join the Raindragon Guard after becoming a late-stage Wanxiang Adept. I imagine that this red-clothed youngster’s strength is considerable as well. Given how young he appears...he must be a genius as well.”

The younger a person looked, the more others needed to be wary of that person. If, for example, a toddler who appeared to be only five or six years old had suddenly appeared, proclaiming that he was here on behalf of the Raindragon Guard, that would be truly terrifying.

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“I am here on military orders to capture a wanted criminal. Young master, please assist me in this matter.” Xue Hongyi’s attitude was noticeably more polite now. “I only see that your military orders refer to the capture of the wanted criminal ‘Kebu’; they say nothing about seizing members of the Ji clan.” Northmont Baiwei snapped. “I think you had best depart.”

Xue Hongyi, standing atop that red cloud in the distance, grew angry. He barked, “The wanted criminal, Kebu, is hiding within the Ji clan. The Raindragon Guard has come to arrest him. Can it be, young master, that you are going to give him shelter?”

At a time like this, the reputation of Snowdragon Mountain was completely useless. Only the reputation of the Raindragon Guard would be effective!

“Bullshit!” Baiwei pointed at Xue Hongyi and cursed, “Do you know what is going on, right now? Why have I come here? Go ask the members of Snowdragon Mountain this question! Dong Fanyu, hurry up and go speak to your uncle-master.”

Dong Fanyu was nervous. “Dong Fanyu.” Atop the red cloud, Xue Hongyi gave him a glance and verified that it was indeed Dong Fanyu. Prior to coming, he naturally had familiarized himself with the appearances of the members of the Swallow Mountain branch. Earlier, when passing through Snowdragon City, he had discovered that there wasn’t even a single Zifu Disciple present. “What is going on, Fanyu? Why has this young master of the Marquisate of Stillwater come here?”

Dong Fanyu hurriedly said, “This young master of the Marquisate is the Marquisate’s envoy. He has come to sign a transfer agreement with the Ji clan.” “Transfer agreement?” Xue Hongyi frowned.

Northmont Baiwei laughed loudly. “Your fellow disciples of Snowdragon Mountain, including Adept Xu Li, all died here, because they wanted to forcibly take this elemental ore mine. However, this elemental ore mine has already been transferred to the Marquisate of Stillwater; naturally, we will protect the Ji clan.”

“Even if you came with a military order specifically specifying the Ji clan as to be apprehended, the high level members of your Raindragon Guard would need to come to an accord with the Marquisate of Stillwater on this matter.” Baiwei snapped. “In addition, carry a message from me to the Primal Daoists

of your Snowdragon Mountain. The Ji clan is under the protection of the Marquisate of Stillwater! Let him be wiser in his actions!”

Xue Hongyi, hearing this, ground his teeth. “Fine.” Xue Hongyi immediately flew away atop his red cloud, transforming into a streak of red light that quickly disappeared.

If Northmont Baiwei wished to help the Ji clan due to personal reasons, he, Xue Hongyi, would’ve dared to rely on his status as a Raindragon Guard to struggle against him. But...

If this person came in the capacity of envoy, and had signed a transfer agreement, he was currently representing the entire Marquisate of Stillwater! If the Marquisate declared that someone was under their protection, then within the borders of Stillwater Commandery, not even Raindragon Guards would dare to interfere. If a truly evil and vicious criminal was within the Ji clan, they would still need to go negotiate with the Marquisate of Stillwater. Only after the Marquisate gave its blessing would the Raindragon Guard go make the arrest.

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“Thank you, young master.” “Thank you, young master, for saving our Ji clan.” The members of the Ji clan watched as the red-clothed youngster departed. All of them spoke with great joy. Previously, when they had heard that this person had come on orders from the Raindragon Guard, they had been so terrified that their hearts had trembled.

Ning said hurriedly as well, “Thank you, young master Baiwei.” “I came here to sign a transfer agreement. It is my duty to guarantee your safety.” Baiwei laughed softly. “That fellow name Xue Hongyi, he dressed himself in the imperial garbs of the Raindragon Guard, but he forgot his station! How dare he act so arrogantly in front of the Marquisate of Stillwater? Hmph! Nothing more than Snowdragon Mountain!”

The Ji clan, listening, all felt envious. These words were utterly domineering. Nothing more than Snowdragon Mountain! To the Marquisate of Stillwater, Snowdragon Mountain was nothing more than one of the powers under its dominion. If the Marquisate was angered, it wouldn’t be hard for it to completely uproot the entire Snowdragon Mountain. But to the Ji clan, Snowdragon Mountain was an enormous creature, while the Marquisate was an even more unimaginably powerful behemoth.

From far away, two figures flew over. They quickly landed on the ship’s deck. They were warriors, dressed in armor. One of them said respectfully, “Reporting to the young master: We have finished our investigations. This elemental ore mine has a circumference of four thousand kilometers, and is more than three hundred kilometers deep. The quality is extremely high, and there are even quite a few high-grade elemental stones.”

“Mm.” Baiwei nodded slightly with satisfaction, then laughed as he looked towards Ning and Ninefire. “Patriarch Ninefire of the Ji clan and Ji Ning, the two of you can follow me into the main hall, where we shall sign the transfer agreement.”

“Right.” Ninefire and Ning all acknowledged as they followed Baiwei into the second floor of the hall.

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There were two scrolls lying on a table within the room. The wording on both scrolls was identical; they were both transfer agreements. They described how the division would be, how the Ji clan would be protected; everything was explained in detail.

“Take out your official writ for the City of Ten Thousand Swords. Press the insignia of it against it as a seal, then sign your names.” Northmont Baiwei said. “The grand seal of the Marquisate is already there. We are simply waiting for your seals now.”

Ning and Ninefire exchanged glances. Not hesitating at all, they immediately signed their names and sealed both documents.

“One of the agreements will be left with you. The other will belong to the Marquisate.” Baiwei smiled. “This is all according to the rules.”

Ninefire immediately laughed. “Our Ji clan is boundlessly overjoyed to have survived this tribulation. 70% of this elemental ore mine shall belong to the Marquisate, but for our Ji clan, 10% is enough. The remaining 20%, our Ji clan would like to offer to you, young master, to thank you for saving our Ji clan.”

Ninefire was a sly old fellow who had lived for nearly four centuries. How crafty was he? He knew very well that although on the surface, 30% of this elemental ore mine was to belong to the Ji clan, in reality, that amount would be secretly whittled down. It was better for them to directly offer it to an important person, so as to gain that person’s favor.

“No need.” Baiwei smiled. “As soon as Ji Ning and I met each other, it felt as though we were two old friends. Don’t worry. There will be no ‘whittling down’ of your share of the elemental ore mine. Who would dare try to seize something belonging to my friend?”

Friend? Ning’s heart turned warm. Baiwei continued, “I will arrange for soldiers to take responsibility for excavating this elemental ore mine. When the time comes, your Ji clan can take responsibility for mining out the actual ore. The elemental ore you mine out can simply be sent to the soldiers.”

“Alright.” Ninefire hurriedly nodded. “Mm.” Baiwei nodded gently as well. Ninefire, seeing that this person still wished to speak with Ning, immediately said, “If there’s nothing else, I will leave.” And then, he departed.

The only ones left in the hall were Ning, Baiwei, and the two maids.

“Ji Ning,” Baiwei said, “You have had such incredible accomplishments, even within the Ji clan; your innate talent vastly surpasses that of that ‘Xue Hongyi’ fellow’s. I urge you not to spend too much time in a small place such as this. The vast world is the place you truly belong. In the future, you will definitely become a momentous figure within the entire Stillwater Commandery.”

Ning said hurriedly, “Young master Baiwei, you praise me too highly. However, very soon, I will go out adventuring.”

“Mm.” Baiwei nodded slightly. Ning continued, “I have always been interested about one thing. Dare I ask, young master, how is it that you arrived at the Ji clan so quickly? It most likely would’ve taken quite some time for the news that the Ji clan has found an elemental ore mine to even make its way to the Marquisate.”

If the Marquisate of Stillwater hadn't arrived when he did, the Ji clan most likely would've had no end of troubles.

"Hahaha..." Baiwei laughed. "Do you know how this elemental ore mine was formed?" Ning shook his head puzzled. "I..."

Baiwei smiled. "This elemental ore mine was formed after a magical formation was set up by a Primal Daoist who was training here in seclusion to try and make a breakthrough. The formation drew in and condensed boundless amounts of natural, elemental energy, finally resulting in the formation of this giant elemental ore mine. As for that Primal Daoist, he broke through to the Earth Immortal stage."

"Earth Immortal?" Ning was startled. So that underground stone room was where the Earth Immortal had stayed. "That Earth Immortal is known as Immortal Firedragon." Baiwei said. "After making his breakthrough, he was invited to join the Marquisate of Stillwater. In his welcoming banquet, my father spoke with him and quickly learned of the existence of an elemental ore mine here, and that it was within the Ji clan's territory. Thus, I was given this mission and came to sign the transfer agreement with your Ji clan."

Ning now understood. So it hadn't been the Ji clan making a report; rather, it was that the Marquisate had already known of this. No wonder they had arrived so quickly!

"Alright. This matter is now at an end. I won't stay here any longer. If you, brother Ji, have anything further that you need, you can come find me. I will definitely show the hospitality expected of a host." Northmont Baiwei laughed.

"Definitely." Ning responded.

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Oxhorn Mountain. The Netherwyrms Heavenlock Formation had been collected. The members of the Ji clan raised their heads, staring towards the distant horizon. That warship had already departed, leaving behind only eight Zifu Disciple level soldiers.

"Cough." Ji Yichuan, who up till now had maintained a fierce aura, suddenly seemed to grow fragile. His face turned ashen, and he began to cough.

"Father." Ning turned his head towards his father, Yichuan.

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Book 6: Breaking Through the Cocoon, Becoming a Butterfly Chapter 38: Leaving Swallow Mountain

Ji Yichuan coughed, his face ashen. Seeing the worried look on his son's face, he couldn't help but laugh. "Previously, I used multiple forbidden techniques. My Zifu has been twisting and contorting, and is on the verge of collapse. Thus, my body has suddenly grown much weaker."

"Used multiple forbidden techniques?" Ning was astonished. "Father, then, you..." "Hahaha." Yichuan laughed jubilantly as he stroked Ning's head. "This battle was the last battle I would ever fight. Afterwards, I will become a useless cripple. Naturally, I had to use as many forbidden techniques as I could."

Ning's face changed. Forbidden techniques were enormously harmful to the body; they relied on sacrificing the body's future longevity, then using that to reach a level of power beyond that which was normally possible.

"Yichuan, your body...?" Ji Ninefire's face changed as well. "I should be able to live for another month." Yichuan said. "A month!" Ning's face instantly turned white, without any trace of blood.

Why. Why had it ended up like this? He...he had clearly made it back in time. Why did it have to be like this?

"Ji Ning." Yichuan looked at his son. "You've seen so much life and death. Can it be that you still do not understand? To me, living a life akin to a cripple's would be a life of torture. I would rather die gloriously after my final, greatest battle...that the fate to which I belong." Ning's body was faintly trembling as he listened.

"In addition, your mother has been waiting for me for too long. I should go accompany her." Yichuan looked at his son. Looked at him closely. "After your mother died, the only thing keeping me here was you. But you no longer need my protection. You are now capable of truly spreading your wings and roaming about the world."

"No, Father..." Ning looked at his father, his eyes turning moist.

They had survived a tremendous tribulation. They should have been overjoyed, but Ning simply couldn't find it in himself to rejoice, no matter what.

Time passed by. Ning spent every single day with his father. Each time, the two of them, father and son, would train in swordplay with each other. Although they were simply sparring and displaying their techniques, the two of them fully absorbed themselves within their fights. By their side, a snowy white hound would often appear. At other times, a young Bluestone would appear. Still other times, their steward, Autumn Leaf, would watch from the side.

Finally...that day came.

Yichuan reclined on his seat. The Whitewater Hound was in its original form and by Yichuan's side, its head gently nudging against Yichuan.

"Little White." Yichuan gently stroked the fur atop the Whitewater Hound's head. "To have had a brother like you in my life...I die with no regrets." The Whitewater Hound lowered its head, its tears falling down.

"Ji Ning." Yichuan looked at the nearby Ning. "Originally, I wanted to let Little White regain his freedom. However, as a Zifu-level Godbeast, I'm afraid that after he regains his free will, he will be captured by other Immortal practitioners. In addition, Little White has watched you grow up and is very close to you. I want to have him follow you. This is my wish, and it is also Little White's wish."

Ning nodded lightly. "Alright." Yichuan looked at his lifelong brother. "Little White. Help me take care of Ji Ning. When I'm going, you will be Ning's elder relative. Make sure you keep him from going astray." The Whitewater Hound nodded lightly.

From within his clothes, Yichuan retrieved a piece of beast skin parchment, handing it over to Ning. "I know that you deeply desire to know who it was that killed your uncle and harmed myself and your mother so badly. The name is on this, along with some information about him. I originally wanted to let Grandfather give it to you, but since I survived and returned from Oxhorn Mountain, I decided to give it to you personally."

Ning accepted the beast skin, his eyes flashing with a fierce light. Grinding his teeth, he said, "I swear that I, Ji Ning, will definitely kill them and take revenge!"

Yichuan nodded. "I won't stop you from taking revenge. However, remember this. In the hearts of myself and your mother, your life is far more valuable than theirs."

Ning nodded. "I understand."

"Mm." Yichuan could clearly sense his life force ebbing away. His breathing grew weak. Smiling, he said, "Remember. After I die, cremate me and scatter my ashes over Serpentwing Lake. I once promised your mother that after I died, I would accompany her."

Ning forced back his tears as he listened. "In my life," Yichuan continued, "I was fearless and worry-free as a child, hard-working as a youth, and relied on the sword in my hand to become famous throughout Swallow Mountain." He stared towards the empty skies, his gaze growing distant. "I once swore that I would rely on the sword in my hand to make my name resonate throughout the boundless lands of the Grand Xia Dynasty! Unfortunately...I won't be able to accomplish it. However...my son will accomplish it."

Yichuan looked at Ning. His eyes were filled with endless expectations. "Ji Ning. You will accomplish it!"

A sour feeling was in Ning's heart. He could still clearly remember how his father had taught him, step by step, how to use the sword.

"From today onwards, I will train you in the sword." He was only a toddler. His father had seemed so tall, so muscular, so big. Starting from those thirteen basic sword stances, his father had taught him, step by step...

Ning now understood that at that moment in time, his father, whose own Immortal path had been shattered, had entrusted his expectations in the sword to Ning himself.

"I will accomplish it." Ning looked at his father and made gave his word. "Father, I will accomplish it. I definitely will. I will definitely make my name resound throughout the boundless lands of the Grand Xia Dynasty."

Yichuan reached out with his hand, gently stroking Ning's face. His hand was trembling.

"Remember. Live a good life. Live an exciting life." Yichuan's voice was beginning to fade, but his smile only grew brighter and brighter. "Live a happy life. A happy, free life..."

His father's hand suddenly went limp, and his eyes closed as well.

Thud.

Ning fell to his knees, pressing his head to the ground, grinding his teeth. “AAAAAH!” Ning suddenly aised his head again, letting out a loud howl.

The Whitewater Hound used its head to gently nudge Yichuan’s body. As it did, tears appeared in the corner of its eyes as well.

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No one was aware of what had happened. Ji Yichuan died quietly. Only Ji Ning and the Whitewater Hound were by his side. The other servants on Brightheart Island did not have any idea.

“Splash.” “Splash.” A boat was floating about atop Serpentwing Lake. Ning was at the helm of the boat, holding a crematory urn while sprinkling the ashes within the urn towards the water of the lake, letting the wind pick it up and merge it into the lake.

The glow of the setting sun was around him.

A small boat. A solitary youth. A large, snowy white hound. Together, they slowly drifted on the lake.

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Ning didn’t immediately leave Swallow Mountain. He continued to live atop Brightheart Island, within Serpentwing Lake. He also made a trip to the underwater estate, where he challenged and passed the second level of the Wargod Hall! The second level, to the current Ning, posed no danger whatsoever. Afterwards, Ning selected yet another Mortal-ranked magic treasure.

Time passed, and in the blink of an eye, autumn left and winter arrived. There were large goose-feathers of snow falling down from the skies in the outside world. As for Ning, he sat within his study, executing swordplay techniques with his fingers, then recording a few things down on a beastskin parchment.

“Autumn Leaf.” Ning called out. “Young master.” Autumn Leaf soon pushed the door open and walked in.

“Arrange for some people to notify the City of Ten Thousand Swords and West Prefecture City.” Ning said. “Tell them that I am leaving.” Autumn Leaf was stunned, and she looked at Ning. “Leaving? Young master, are you going to leave Swallow Mountain?”

Autumn Leaf had known long ago that this day would come. Her young master was a supreme talent, the likes of which was rarely seen in the world. Sooner or later, he would leave Swallow Mountain. But now that this day had actually arrived, Autumn Leaf still felt heartsick and unwilling to part from him.

“You truly are foolish.” Ning walked forward, reaching out and wiping away Autumn Leaf’s tears. “I need to go out on a good adventure. The world is so vast, and there are so many experts within it. I can’t just hide here and bask in my own self-importance.”

“Understood. Autumn Leaf understands.” Autumn Leaf said hurriedly. “Autumn Leaf.” Ning took out a kalestone and handed it to her. “This kalestone has some treasures within. I have prepared them for you and Bluestone. Spring Grass died. Although I am leaving, I have to take good care of Bluestone. There is a book within the kalestone that carefully details the ways in which these treasures can be used.”

“Amongst them is an essence-cleansing pill which I acquired from that Wanxiang Adept. After eating it, one will qualitatively transform and rise in power, making the likelihood of you entering the Xiantian lifeform stage become much higher.” Ning said.

“This...this is too precious.” Autumn Leaf, shocked, hurriedly refused. Ning looked at Autumn Leaf. “The path of Immortal cultivation is a long one. I don’t want to see you die early on, Autumn Leaf. If you become a Xiantian lifeform, you will live longer. Don’t refuse...perhaps in places like Swallow Mountain, essence-cleansing pills are precious, but to formidable figures like Wanxiang Adepts, they aren’t much at all.”

“Live longer.” Autumn Leaf nodded gently, no longer refusing. She looked at Ning. “Young master, will you return?” “Of course.” Ning sighed as he spoke. “I will definitely return. Here within Serpentwing Lake, there are many things which I cannot bear to part from. Once I have reached my goals in training, I will return and live here at Serpentwing Lake permanently.”

“I will wait for you, young master.” Autumn Leaf looked at Ning. Ning laughed. “Don’t just wait pointlessly. If you do meet someone you like, then marry him.” Autumn Leaf shook her head. “I am your handmaiden, young master. I will be your handmaiden for my entire life.”

Ning didn’t say anything further.

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The next day. The outside world was covered with a decorative silver layer of snow. The snow was so white, so pure. Ji Young, Ji Redflower, Ji Ninefire, Ji Truekeep, and the other members of the Ji clan had all hurried here.

“These are some secret manuals that I managed to acquire by a stroke of good fortune.” Ning handed them over to Patriarch Ninefire. “Most of them are comparable to the [Melody of Ten Thousand Swords] or the [Raindrop Sutra].”

“This scroll records the insights on formations by a Loose Immortal, known as the [Nine Scrolls on Formations].” Ning handed this to Patriarch Ninefire as well. “The profound mysteries within are unfathomable. However, to study formations requires talent and time. In the future, I hope that it can be entrusted to a suitable clansman.”

Ninefire, Truekeep, and the others were all shocked. The insights of a Loose Immortal regarding formations?

“As for this, this is known as the [Thunderflame Sword Addendum].” Ning took out a fur-clad book. “This was developed based on my hypotheses regarding the fragments of the [Thunderflame Sword] we possess. It includes some of my own insights regarding swordplay. I was able to create four additional sword techniques, and thus this [Thunderflame Sword Addendum] has a total of seven major sword techniques.”

“As for this...over the course of the last half year, I have spent virtually all my energy and effort on creating this.” Ning took out another fur-clad book. It had three characters written on it: ‘Rain’ ‘Water’ ‘Sutra’. “The set of sword techniques recorded within, I named the [Rainwater Sutra]. In the future, if

anyone in our Ji clan can reach the level of mastery in the [Raindrop Sutra], they can learn from this [Rainwater Sutra].”

Ning looked at the book within his hands, filled with emotions. Over the past half year, he had pondered nonstop regarding this. He had summarized all of the insights he had gained regarding the ‘Dao of Rainwater’, then written it all down into this [Rainwater Sutra]. The summarization process had caused Ning to make great strides in further understanding the Dao of Rainwater as well.

As the person who had comprehended the Rainwater Sword Domain, the [Rainwater Sutra] he had written contained hundreds of different layers of insight regarding the True Meaning of the Dao. Even his every stroke of the brush had contained sword-intent within.

“This...” Ninefire and the others, upon seeing the three large words imprinted atop the [Rainwater Sutra], could sense the sword-intent pouring from this tome. Their faces all changed. As experts, they could sense how extraordinary this [Rainwater Sutra] was. Even they felt the awe-inspiring presence from it; no wonder Ji Ning required practitioners to master the [Raindrop Sutra] before learning from his [Rainwater Sutra].

“From today onwards, the [Rainwater Sutra] will be the treasure that protects our entire Ji clan.” Ninefire said with incomparable excitement. The other clansmen were all excited as well. For the clan to produce a genius was a matter of luck, but for this book to be left behind would allow them to raise more geniuses in the future. This [Rainwater Sutra] was clearly above the level of the [Melody of Ten Thousand Swords] and other secret manuals.

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Ning didn’t ask for others to send him off. He had Ninefire and the others all go back.

Late at night. It was very quiet. Ning, by himself, led the Whitewater Hound to the side of the lake, then knelt down atop the snow. Facing the endless waters of Serpentwing Lake, he kowtowed three times, then said solemnly, “Father, Mother, I, Ji Ning, will execute our enemies within Snowdragon Mountain and take revenge for the two of you. I will also definitely make my name resound within the vast lands of the Grand Xia Dynasty.”

“Please forgive your son for having to depart for a time.” Ning rose to his feet, then looked at the Whitewater Hound by his side. “Uncle White, let’s go.”

“That little girl...” The Whitewater Hound sent to Ning. Ning glanced towards the distance. There stood Autumn Flower, far away in the darkness. Autumn Flower knew that Ning was going to leave, so she hadn’t slept at all. She was waiting quietly. Upon her seeing Ning look towards her, she couldn’t help but cry. Ning grinned towards her.

“Let’s go.” Ning stepped onto the boat that had appeared out of nowhere in front of him, and the Whitewater Hound followed him onto it as well. Whoosh! The boat soared rapidly into the air, piercing through the dark night skies.

“Young master.” Autumn Leaf immediately ran forward a few steps. Raising her head, she stared towards the distance. “I will definitely wait for your return, young master. Definitely.”

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The night sky. The flying boat was amidst the clouds. Ning looked down at the vast, endless world. He could see the massive lake below him as well: Serpentwing Lake. He could also see Brightheart Island at the center of it.

Ning gave it a deep, meaningful look. There were too many things here which he couldn't bear to part from.

"Let's go!" Ning turned his head, staring towards the vast, endless night sky. Outside Swallow Mountain, there was an even larger, even more exciting world.

Swoosh!

The flying boat had only a youngster and a snowy white dog atop it. It quickly disappeared into the horizons of the world.

[The Desolate Era](#)

Book 7: Stillwater City Chapter 1: Mid-Journey

A boat was soaring through the clouds and the mist, heading straight towards Stillwater City. Ji Ning lay there within the boat, leaning against the stern of the boat. From this position, he could stare down at the boundless land beneath him.

"Uncle. Father. Mother. They must be avenged." Ning pondered to himself. The scroll his father had left him had the name of his enemy. There had been a total of three malefactors; the primary one was named 'Dong Seven'. This was an extremely strange name, but this Dong Seven's grandfather was a Primal Daoist.

Ning knew his own power quite well. To be able to kill Adept Xu Li truly didn't mean anything. After all, there were exceptionally powerful, talented Wanxiang Adepts such as that Xue Hongyi, who Ning didn't feel confident in being able to defeat. As for those lofty, exalted Primal Daoists...most likely, a single breath of primal flame from them could incinerate Ning and shatter his soul.

Primal fire...this was a sort of ability someone only had upon becoming a Primal Daoist. No one who was not a Primal Daoist was capable of it, much like how the 'Myriad Manifestations' could only be unleashed by someone who was at least at the Wanxiang Adept level.

"A total of three culprits, with Dong Seven being the primary one. As for the other two, 'Yu Dong' and 'Shui Yi', they were accomplices." Ning pondered to himself. According to what his father had told him, Yu Dong and Shui Yi were like manservants who followed behind Dong Seven. Upon Seven giving the order, they would immediately attack and kill.

Strictly speaking, the killers were actually Yu Dong and Shui Yi, with Dong Seven having given the order.

"Dong Seven! Yu Dong! Shui Yi! All three of you deserve death." A savage light flashed past Ning's eyes, and then he considered what to do. "For now, I can't be in a rush to get revenge. My foundations are still quite shallow; I don't even know exactly how strong Dong Seven and the other two currently are, nor where they are located. There's no way I can take revenge."

"It's best if I first go to Stillwater City. I should find a school and enter it." Ning mused to himself. Ning was no fool. His parents had previously told him as well that after he went out into the world, he should

find a major power to take shelter under. After all, it was extremely dangerous for a single, solitary person to go wandering the world by himself. If he had someone to rely on, then things would naturally be different. For ordinary Zifu Disciples, it was quite hard for them to be accepted into a school, but unrivaled geniuses like Ning could easily join with a major power.

Since he obviously was capable of joining a major power, Ning naturally wouldn't make things difficult for himself and act rashly by himself.

"Upon entering a school...I will be able to learn divine abilities within the school, and even learn some supreme Ki Refining techniques." Ning mused to himself. Even someone like Jadechild had been able to learn the 'Heavenly Transformation' technique at Snowdragon Mountain. As long as Ning chose a school that was even more powerful than Snowdragon Mountain, he felt certain that the school should definitely have a divine ability within.

"By borrowing from a school's strength...my own power shall rise greatly, and my horizons shall be expanded. Only then will I be qualified to take revenge." Ning didn't wish to lose his life for the sake of revenge.

It was just as his parents had said; taking revenge was one matter, but his life was more important. He was going to ensure that his name was known throughout the vast world, and that one day, he was going to meet again with the Lord of Cui Palace.

"Unfortunately, I am not strong enough. Otherwise, I could simply directly enter the Raindragon Guard." Ning shook his head. It was too difficult for one to join the Raindragon Guard. Even Adept Mu Xiao had entered as a late-stage Wanxiang Adept. If Ning were to enter, even if he truly were to pass, upon others discovering that Ning was only at the seventh stage of the [Crimsonbright Diagram of the Nine Heavens] and yet capable of unleashing such great power thanks to the [Starseizing Hand], they would certainly realize that something was amiss.

His divine ability, the [Starseizing Hand], was his true trump card. Ning wasn't willing to rely on this technique to enter the Raindragon Guard.

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"First find a school and borrow from their strength to increase my own. Afterwards, I'll join the Raindragon Guard. The Raindragon Guard's divine abilities and techniques should be all-encompassing, and most likely even more powerful than those available to the Marquisate of Stillwater." Ning nodded. If one was to stand at the peak, it would be sheer stupidity to foolishly struggle randomly. Without a powerful Ki Refining technique, he wouldn't be able to break through to the Wanxiang level, much less the Primal Daoist level.

The more precious a Ki Refining technique was, the less willing a school would be to allow outsiders to gain access to it. Anyone who disseminated a precious Ki Refining technique would be hunted and killed by the school!

Given that his talent was unparalleled...first entering a school, and then entering the Raindragon Guard was the proper course of action.

The path of cultivation was one where, as the saying went, every third person in a line could become one's teacher. The spirit of the underwater estate had also advised Ning to take on many different teachers and masters, to absorb the best from them, and thus more easily become one of the great powers of the Three Realms in the future.

"Uncle White." Ning spoke out. The Whitewater Hound atop the boat turned to look towards Ning. "Tell me. On this trip to Stillwater City, should I first find a master and then pay a visit to Northmont Baiwei? Or should I go see Northmont Baiwei first?" Ning said. "This man has treated me quite well, and he asked me to go meet him if I were to go to Stillwater City."

"Northmont Baiwei?" The Whitewater Hound spoke in the human tongue. "This person has an extraordinary background, and likes to make friends. Since he asked you to do so, go and see him. This Northmont Baiwei must be quite familiar with Stillwater City and the various schools within. This will be of assistance to you in choosing a school to join."

Ning nodded lightly. This made sense. After all, the only major sect within the Stillwater Commandery area which Ning was familiar with was Snowdragon Mountain. He didn't know much about the others. However, within the borders of the Stillwater Commandery, Snowdragon Mountain couldn't be considered one of the top schools. Only a school that had an Immortal guarding it could be considered a top school.

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The flying boat Ning was aboard didn't fly too quickly. Each time, it would spend roughly seventeen or eighteen hours flying, with the other six or seven hours on the ground, where Ning would search for a place to train, rest, visualize the [Nuwa Painting], and other things. Travelling at this rate, he was able to advance nearly a hundred thousand kilometers each day.

The sixth day after Ning had left Swallow Mountain. He was aboard his flying boat, moving through the clouds. "Eh?" Ning suddenly sensed a powerful ripple. He couldn't help but turn his head to look, only to see in the distance, a tall ship was pressing down at high speed, generating waves of air in its wake.

Aboard the large ship, there were many beautiful, flower-like women. On the second deck of the large ship, there sat a young noble with white skin, who had three beautiful women by his side, massaging his legs and his shoulders. This young noble was dressed in red clothes. He held a cup of wine in his hands. He flicked a glance towards Ning, but paid him no heed.

"Look at that man dressed in furs. I wonder which wild, backwater region he came from. He has no class at all."

"I can tell with a single glance that he doesn't come from a major clan."

Those beautiful, flower-like women aboard the ship all spoke as they looked towards Ning. Whoosh! The large ship sped off into the distance, quickly disappearing from Ning's field of vision.

"That ship is rather fast, at least. I imagine that a Wanxiang Adept is controlling it." Ning still lay there in his own boat. It continued to 'slowly' and 'leisurely' advance at the rate of a hundred thousand kilometers each day. Actually, through the flying speed of a magic treasure, one could come to a rough determination regarding the strength of its controller.

“The closer we get to Stillwater City, the more frequently we encounter Immortal practitioners. That large vessel was the sixth one we have encountered.” Ning sighed with emotion.

Stillwater City was the heart and core of the vast Stillwater Commandery. Immortals and devils congregated there. All of the larger clans, schools, and sects would establish a branch in Stillwater City. Many Loose Immortals also enjoyed to gather there in Stillwater City. Because so many Immortals and devils were there, all sorts of treasures were available in the city, which could be traded for.

In addition, the security of Stillwater City was excellent. One could peacefully train there.

“Time to rest.” With but a thought, Ning sent his boat charging downwards, towards the desolate mountain forests below him.

Given Ning’s current power, it was indeed quite hard for him to encounter true danger while he was adventuring. Only Primal Daoists could truly render him helpless, but which of the Primal Daoists wouldn’t be hidden away in their own estates or caves, training? Even if they occasionally came out and wandered, they either travelled about in grand fashion or moved about tracelessly.

Whoosh. The boat charged into the mountain forest, then disappeared. Ning and the Whitewater Hound landed on the ground. “I should rest here, I suppose.” Ning said. With a wave of his hand, he tossed out three formation flags which landed far into the distance, then disappeared without a trace.

From the outside world, one wouldn’t be able to see Ning and the Whitewater Hound within this area at all. Ning sat down in the lotus position, beginning to train quietly, the image of Lady Nuwa floating in his mind.

The Whitewater Hound took out a scroll as well, and it lay there, staring at the dense, complicated array of characters atop the scroll. This was a copy of the [Nine Scrolls on Formations]. Ning had the original [Nine Scrolls on Formations], and so by using a simple technique, ‘Water Seal Technique’, he had printed out two copies of the scrolls. He had left one with his tribe, then gave the other to the Whitewater Hound.

Uncle White was quite knowledgeable regarding formations. In fact, his accomplishments far outstripped Nong Zidao’s; naturally, he surpassed Ning as well. Only, he hadn’t had sufficiently good scrolls on formations to study from. Now that he acquired the [Nine Scrolls on Formations], he naturally spent every day studying it.

The skies slowly grew bright.

Ning rose to his feet. “Uncle White.” Ning looked at the nearby Whitewater Hound, who was still lying there, staring at the scroll. Upon hearing Ning’s shout, he immediately clambered to his feet, collecting the scroll.

“Let’s go.” Ning boarded the ship, with the Whitewater Hound following him. Swoosh! The flying boat immediately and quickly flew into the skies, continuing to head towards Stillwater City.

“Eh?” After flying just a few dozen kilometers, the boat suddenly came to a halt. Ning lowered his head, staring downwards. “What is it?” The Whitewater Hound looked at Ning.

"I sense a disturbance." Ning lowered his head, looking down at the mountainous forests beneath him. Based on the strengths of the ripples and the general location from which they came, he could tell that it should be Zifu Disciples who were battling. He immediately spread out his divine sense, quickly covering the mountain forest below him with it.

Even when he had first broken through to the level of manifesting his divine sense, Ning had been able to encompass a region of a hundred kilometers. After the passage of half a year, his divine sense's reach had further expanded.

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Within the mountain forest.

"We are the disciples of the Meng clan." A handsome, pale-skinned youth was roaring in anger. By his side, there was a willowy, extremely beautiful maiden, along with an extremely muscular and sturdy, tiger-backed, bear-waisted youth. The three of them were struggling to defend against their attackers, who were a pair of white-robed men.

The two white-robed men had unleashed their magic treasures and had completely trapped the three of them. "Dregs of Snowdragon Mountain. Once my father learns of this, he will definitely annihilate you two pieces of trash." The handsome, white-skinned youth roared.

"If the two of you were to leave...our clan won't come take revenge for a trifling matter such as this. But if we die, our Meng clan will definitely investigate this matter to the very end." The willowy woman shouted in anger and fear as well.

Only that sturdy, muscular youth remained completely silent.

The three of them truly were disciples of the Meng clan. The Meng clan was one of the highly ranked, extremely large clans within Stillwater Commandery, even more powerful than Snowdragon Mountain. However, as one of the supreme clans...it had quite a bit internal strife as well. Even the Ji clan of the West Prefecture had its own internal struggles, much less a supreme, giant clan like this one. These three were ordinary in terms of talent, and they were born to a fairly low status within the clan. They weren't viewed as important, and found it hard to even gain a chance to learn some top-class techniques. Thus, after making their breakthrough to the early Zifu Disciple stage, they immediately joined forces and set out in the hopes of making it to Stillwatery City and joining a school.

There were quite a few disciples of major clans who would enter a school. Generally, they were all people who were not treated with importance in their own clans.

"Senior apprentice-brother, judging from their clothing, these three truly are of the Meng clan." The two white-robed men were speaking mentally to each other. "Should we kill them?"

"Clearly, you don't understand. A truly high-level member of the Meng clan, when setting out on a trip, will have an entire entourage of maids, servants, and guards. These three in front of us might truly be of the Meng clan, but even so, they definitely don't have any important status within the clan. Kill'm."

"Alright."

The two white-robed men came to their decision, then immediately began to launch killing blows.

The Desolate Era

Book 7: Stillwater City Chapter 2: Arrival

Originally, the combined forces of the three members of the Meng clan had been enough to just barely hold on, but when the two disciples of Snowdragon Mountain stopped holding back, the three Meng clan members instantly found fighting back much more taxing.

“If I had known this would happen, I would’ve listened to what Rocky said.” The beautiful, willowy maiden’s face was ashen. She was filled with regret. These three hadn’t dared to continue with their training after becoming Zifu Disciples, because if upon reaching the middle Zifu stage, their foundation would have solidified into a set pattern. Some of the more powerful schools wouldn’t be willing to take them on as disciples.

Thus, all three of them remained at the early Zifu Disciple stage. Prior to heading out, Meng Roch had said: “Little Xin, our power, amongst Zifu Disciples, is at the bottom end of the scale. If we were to fly on magic treasures, then once we are attacked...we will be in danger. I recommend we walk on the ground or ride on mounts, just like ordinary people, and travel slowly. Although it will take more time, it will be far safer. Immortal practitioners can’t be bothered to act against ordinary commoners.”

“You idiot.” The other fellow, Meng Jun, had said with anger, “Ride on a mount and travel slowly on the ground? That’s a distance of a million kilometers. We’ll probably spend a year before we arrive! Hiking up mountains and wading through lakes? Even if you are willing, I’m not. I refuse to believe that if we fly as fast as we can, with the goal of making it in a few days, we will be as unlucky as to encounter someone who attacks us.”

“Rocky, Meng Jun’s words are reasonable. It’s just a few days. There won’t be any problems.” Meng Xin hadn’t wanted to spend a full year, and so they decided to fly to Stillwater City.

Unfortunately...they really did encounter bandits. Some Immortal cultivators kept their heads down and toiled bitterly towards perfection, others relied on battle to grow, while still others relied on ambushing and slaughtering. Ambushing and slaughtering was the fastest way to acquire treasures. There truly were quite a few who engaged in this line of work.

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“Slash.” One silk ribbon after another coiled about, defending against those encroaching flying swords, but the force of the impact still caused Meng Xin to vomit up a mouthful of blood. “Little Xin!” The nearby, straightforward man, Roch, grew frantic. He gritted his teeth, and his face suddenly turned red as his aura rose dramatically. The nine black stones flying about in front of him suddenly began to move at a far higher speed, and they howled through the air towards the two white-robed men.

“Hurry, leave, immediately leave!” Roch howled.

“Rocky!” Xin’s face changed. She naturally could tell that Roch had just used a forbidden technique. They had come on this trip to join a school. Using a forbidden skill resulted in harm to one’s cultivation foundation; most likely, it would be hard for him to join a good school now.

“Hurry and leave!” Roch seemed to be on the verge of insanity. “Hurry and leave!” The nearby, white-skinned youth had already transformed into a wisp of azure smoke, fleeing at high speed. Gritting her teeth, Xin followed after him and fled.

The two white-robed men, seeing this, just laughed coldly. They wanted to flee, as easy as that? Those two were dreaming.

Slash! Slash!

Suddenly, a blurred form emerged from the ground, moving as fast as lightning and piercing straight through the heads of those two white-robed men.

“How could this be?!” “How could...” The two white-robed men stared, their wide eyes filled with disbelief. The two of them had engaged in quite a few acts of banditry; they were extremely cautious. Even when engaging others in battle, they would pay close attention to their surroundings, but they hadn’t sensed any elemental ki ripples earlier. And yet, they had been suddenly ambushed by a flying sword beneath their feet, and their protective magic treasures hadn’t stopped it at all.

Blood splattered everywhere, mixed in with a bit of white. The bodies of the two white-robed men went limp, and then they collapsed, life having fled.

“Kill, kill.” The simple, straightforward Meng Roch was in a berserk state, frantically controlling those nine black stone globes. But suddenly, he saw, to his amazement...that the two white-robed men collapsed to the ground? Dead?

“But...but...” Roch couldn’t believe it. As for Meng Jun, who had been fleeing at high speed, he turned to glance behind himself. Upon doing so, he saw those two white-robed figures, lying collapsed on the ground. Given his visual acuity as an Immortal practitioner, he could clearly see the bloodstains on the ground.

“Little Sister Xin!” Jun hurriedly sent. “Don’t flee. Those two members of Snowdragon Mountain are dead.” Xin couldn’t help but come to a halt as well. She turned, only to see that those two figures that had been battling them earlier had indeed slumped to the ground.

“Come, let’s go see what happened.” Meng Jun said hurriedly. “Right.” Meng Xin grew cautious as well. The two of them flew at high speed, returning to the scene of the previous battle. Jun and Xin had confusion on their faces. They stared at Roch, who appeared completely stunned. Jun then said, “Rocky, what happened?”

Bang! Suddenly, flames descended from the heavens, completely enveloping the bodies of those two members of Snowdragon Mountain, completely incinerating them.

“Fire!” The three members of the Meng clan were all startled. They watched as a figure emerged from the mountain forest, followed by the unclear outlines of an earthbound beast. When they took a closer look...they saw that it appeared to be a delicate-looking, fur-clad youth, along with a large, snowy white hound.

Swoosh. The fur-clad youth waved his hand, and the magic treasures left behind by the incinerated members of Snowdragon Mountain all disappeared.

“Thank you, senior, for your kindness in saving our lives.” The simple, straightforward Roch fell to his knees, kowtowing to express his thanks.

“No need to show such great courtesy. No need to address me as senior either. We can simply address each other as fellow Daoist.” Ning couldn’t help but have a good impression of this straightforward man as he looked at him. Previously, he had been watching with divine sense, and had discovered that this man had used a forbidden technique and had gone berserk while instructing the woman to leave. This made Ning think of the uncle he had never met.

This was what his uncle had done; that was why Ning’s mother had been able to escape, which was why Ning was able to enter the world. Although Ning had moved quickly, and even used his divine will to control the Evanescent Demonslayer Sword to attack before he himself arrived, it would be hard for the honest-looking man to recover from the damage his usage of a forbidden technique had inflicted on himself. “What a pity.” Ning sighed to himself.

“Thank you, fellow Daoist.” The white-skinned youth hurriedly pulled the honest man to his feet. “The three of us are the disciples of the Meng clan. This is Meng Roch. Next to him is Meng Xin, while I am Meng Jun. Might I ask who you are, fellow Daoist?”

“Rocky.” Xin pulled at Roch’s hands as well, tears gathering in her eyes. At the same time, she looked towards Ning. Towards this fur-clad youth, she felt both curiosity and dread. Ning nodded. “My name is Ji Ning. I encountered the three of you by luck, on this trip to Stillwater City.”

“Brother Ji Ning, you are headed to Stillwater City as well?” The handsome, slender youth said with joy, “The three of us are headed to Stillwater City as well. Brother Ji Ning, would you be willing to travel along with us?”

Roch and that maiden, Xin, revealed expectant looks on their faces. Ning nodded slightly. “Alright!” Earlier, when he had stretched out his divine sense, Roch had just executed that forbidden technique. Thus, Ning didn’t know who these three were. Judging from their names, however, he could tell that they were from the same clan, and it seemed to be that they definitely weren’t that old.

“A single clan actually sent out three Zifu Disciples, all of the same age.” Ning mused to himself. “And all of the same surname, Meng. The map I have showing the various supreme powers include a clan named Meng.”

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One of the reasons he elected to travel alongside these three, was that Ning wanted to learn more about the outside world from them. After all, the Ji clan’s information regarding the outside world was far too sparse.

“Come, my friend Ji Ning, taste this wine. This was brewed within our Meng clan.”

“My friend Ji Ning, come taste this fruit.”

A large boat was sailing through the cloudy skies. Ning and the three members of the Meng clan were all seated. There was a table before them, and the table was covered with fruit and wine. Ning was clearly very powerful, and the three members of the Meng clan wished to befriend him. In addition, for Ning to travel with them meant that he was like a guardian spirit for them.

“So they truly are of the Meng clan.” After having travelled with them for several days, Ning had learned more and more things. Of the three, Meng Jun was the most skilled in conversation as flattery; however, his flattery was too obvious, making Ning feel rather irritated by him.

Meng Xin was definitely an exceptional beauty, the likes of which would be hard to find in the Ji clan.

As for Meng Roch, that honest, straightforward man who had used the forbidden technique, he was the only one of the three whom Ning had a good impression of and was willing to make friends with.

“Meng Jun’s words are correct.” Xin shook her head, then said in a clear voice, “Our East Bend branch has always been squeezed and pressured. Even the clansmen of the East Bend’s main line of descent just barely get by. As for those of us from secondary lineages, our lives are even worse off...we are already lucky to have been able to reach the Zifu level in training. To acquire top-tier Ki Refining techniques? Completely impossible. The other Bends will all squeeze us and prevent our East Bend branch from growing. Thus, the three of us, after reaching the early Zifu stage, agreed to head out together to Stillwater City and settle within a major school in the city. We could go visit many schools and test them, one by one, but unfortunately, Rocky is already...”

Roch chuckled. “It’s fine. It’s enough that we are alive. I only use a forbidden technique once; the impact won’t be great. No matter what, we are almost at Stillwater City! We’ll have the opportunity to walk farther on the path of Immortals.”

“Right. We’ve left the clan.” Jun gritted his teeth. “When, in the future, we become Primal Daoists...hmph. All of those old fellows of the clan will come out and welcome us nervously.”

“Move forward stably, step by step.” Roch glanced at him. Jun immediately raised his head and sighed. “Unfortunately, the three of us are in an incomparably bad situation. We come from the exalted Meng clan, but our magic treasures were inferior to those two members of Snowdragon Mountain.” Jun suddenly glanced towards Ning. “My friend, Ji Ning, your power is incredible. You killed those two members of Snowdragon Mountain as easily as killing chickens. I imagine that their magic treasures, my friend Ji Ning, are completely meaningless. My friend Ji Ning...how about bestowing me with one or two of the magic treasures, so as to allow our strength to rise. That way, we won’t be slowing you down.”

“Just one or two. I don’t ask for too many.” Jun stared at Ning, his eyes filled with eagerness. Ning frowned slightly. This Meng Jun...engaging in excessive flattery was one thing, but this? Ning realized that Meng Jun had a ‘good point’; his tongue was completely shameless.

“No one feels irritated over having too many magic treasures.” Ning glanced at Jun. “I am preparing to go to Stillwater City to trade for some magic treasures, but I have too few on me. I’m afraid that I won’t have enough. Fellow Daoist Meng Jun, how about loaning me one or two?”

Meng Jun’s face turned white. He tittered nervously, but in his heart, he cursed, “How stingy. Last time, when I flattered young master Ruxu, young master Ruxu gifted me with a magic treasure. I’ve spent so much time flattering this Ji Ning and took out fine wine for him to drink, but I didn’t gain anything from it. I saw how powerful he was and the fact that he had a Zifu-level spirit-beast, and thought that he must be quite incredible. But he’s still stingy!”

Ning couldn't be bothered to even look at this Meng Jun. He had travelled with the three, primarily because he wanted to learn more about the outside world, and also because he felt kindly disposed towards Roch.

"Brother Ji Ning." Meng Xin suddenly pointed downwards and shouted, "Look, isn't that Stillwater City?" "Stillwater City?" Ning hurriedly turned to look as well.

Far in the distance, on the vast earth below them, there was an enormous, gigantic city. One couldn't see to the end of the city with the naked eye. Even though they were a thousand kilometers away, Ning could vaguely sense that a series of ripples was emanating from that vast, towering city. Although the ripples were seemingly weak, the power hidden within them was endless.

Ning, just staring at the city, felt an indescribable pressure emanating from it.

"We made it. Stillwater City." Ning's eyes were filled with anticipation. "Stillwater City." Jun, Roch, and Xin all had eagerness in their eyes as well. Eagerness towards the future.

[The Desolate Era](#)

Book 7: Stillwater City Chapter 3: Meeting Northmont Baiwei Again

"I heard that it is forbidden to fly in the air above Stillwater City. If anyone dares to fly past its airspace, they will be in trouble," Meng Jun said, while the others landed on the ground.

Ji Ning stared at the distant city of Stillwater. This was an unfathomably ancient city that had existed since the Fiendgod Era. They were currently only a few dozen kilometers away, but Ning could already sense the boundless torrent of elemental energy that was constantly coalescing within the city grounds. At the same time, a terrifying presence emanated out from it.

"The entire Stillwater City is like a gigantic formation; I imagine that there should be an Immortal-rank formation there," Ning mused to himself. Ning and the other three members of the Meng clan hurried towards Stillwater City's eastern gate. The eastern gate was three thousand meters wide and three hundred meters tall; from this, one could imagine how vast Stillwater City's walls were.

"Your trading caravan has a total of 321 members. Pay three hundred kilograms of thundergold!" In front of Ning, there was an awe-inspiring merchant caravan, with almost all members being at the Xiantian level. The caravan handed over three hundred pieces of thundergold, and then received around three hundred black embossed books as they entered the city.

"The city entrance fee is two kilograms of thundergold." A soldier dressed in Dao-armor barked towards Ning. Ning was leading the Whitewater Hound with him; naturally, they had to pay for two.

Ning waved his hand, retrieving two pieces of a golden metal that flashed with an azure light. This was thundergold. Its density vastly surpassed that of normal yellow gold's. In the past, when Ning had purchased his Darknorth swords, he had used just a small piece of thundergold...but to a Xiantian lifeform, two kilograms of thundergold wasn't that valuable. To Ning, it was even less noteworthy.

"Alright." Accepting the thundergold, the soldier handed out two black embossed books.

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Soon, the three members of the Meng clan and Ji Ning entered the city of Stillwater. The four of them flipped through the black embossed books in their heads, which had three characters on the cover: “Still” “Water” “City”. Upon taking a closer look, they discovered that it actually was a guide to the entire Stillwater City.

“Stillwater City is 9321 kilometers long and 8910 kilometers wide. It is divided into the east city, the south city, the north city, and the west city, and the Marquisate.” Ning read through the material clearly. The Marquisate was located at the very center of the city, and was roughly eight hundred kilometers in length. It was an absolutely forbidden territory! Entering without permission was a capital offense!

The east city, the south city, the north city; battle was forbidden in these regions, and they were safe places to live in. If anyone dared fight in the city, that would mean they were challenging the authority of the Marquisate of Stillwater! Thus, there were many, varied types of Immortal practitioners who lived in these three regions, and even some ancient Immortals would seclude themselves here and live peaceful lives.

“The west city?” Ning’s eyes lit up. The west city. This was the most bustling, lively part of Stillwater City! West Stillwater City was filled with many large estates, whose owners had exalted statuses or power rivaling the heavens. Naturally, there were some supreme clans, schools, and sects that who set up branches here as well. Many would come to Stillwater City and desire to take on a master, and these people would go to these branches to request admission. In addition, the west city had many merchants present as well.

There was just one thing! In the bustling, rowdy, lively west city, combat was only forbidden in the streets. As for the various estates? No matter how viciously or ferociously you battled within the branches of the various schools and sects, it was fine. But of course, that was if the masters of those estates and branches permitted you to do this.

“Northmont Blacktiger.” Ning looked at his book, and at the names of the various estates that were situated in the west city. Amongst them was the name, ‘Northmont Blacktiger’.

“Northmont Blacktiger Estate. It has a perimeter of ten kilometers. In Stillwater City, where every inch of ground is as valuable as gold...for Northmont Blacktiger’s estate to be so large must mean that his power is astonishing,” Ning mused to himself. There were also quite a few member of high-level members of the Marquis of Stillwater’s Northmont clan who had set up their own estates outside as well. Still, the Northmont Blacktiger Estate, in terms of size, was absolutely supreme amongst them. From this, one could tell what a status he had!

“Oh!” Meng Jun slapped his head. “So apparently, although it is forbidden for people to fly about in the skies above Stillwater City, as long as you are at the level of a Primal Daoist, you are permitted to fly about! I thought that all people were forbidden from flying.” Meng Jun had previously spoken about this in absolute terms, but upon seeing the words written on the book regarding the actual rules, he immediately remedied his ignorance.

“Brother Ji Ning, West Stillwater City is an incomparably bustling place, especially the ‘Treasure Trading Plaza’.” Meng Jun said enticingly. “Let’s go take a look.”

“I’ve heard that there are thousands of Immortal practitioners who have set up shop at the ‘Treasure Trading Plaza’,” Meng Xin was also quite eager. Meng Roch nodded as well. “Let’s take a look then.” Ning was quite eager as well. The Treasure Trading Plaza was a place that had been specially set aside for Immortal practitioners to trade treasures.

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Ning’s group had entered from the gates of the east city. They had to pass through the entire Stillwater City in order to reach the west city. This was a journey of thousands of kilometers. Fortunately, all three of them were Immortal practitioners...although they didn’t dare to move too boldly and so didn’t walk too quickly, in but a single hour, they had reached the Treasure Trading Plaza of West Stillwater City.

The Treasure Trading Plaza. This was actually an enormous public square, covered with a dense cluster of stalls. Many Immortal practitioners were here, having set up shop. Next to the stalls were various white stones that were covered with black words, explaining which treasures the stall owners were here to trade.

“So many.” Ning held his breath. “At a glance, I can see at least ten thousand Immortal practitioners. Stillwater City truly lives up to its reputation as a gathering place for Immortals and Devils. It is the heart of the entire Stillwater Commandery. The Treasure Trading Plaza actually has so many people gathered here.”

The Treasure Trading Plaza had all sorts of treasures, and even some extremely rare curious. The greatest benefit to conducting trade here was...it was comparatively cheaper! But the problem was...it wasn’t safe enough!

This was because it was located in the west city. In the west city, only the streets were safe from battle. There were no proscriptions against battle in the Treasure Trading Plaza! It was absolutely possible that someone might appear to kill you and seize your treasures...but of course, this was still fairly rare, because generally speaking, anyone who dared to bring out sufficiently valuable treasures to display also was in possession of enough power to intimidate any thieves.

“Although battle is not forbidden in the Treasure Trading Plaza, there’s no way to tell someone’s power just by looking at them. Thus, how can anyone know how powerful someone else is? Perhaps the merchant might be a bored Primal Daoist out for some fun,” Meng Xin said. Ning nodded.

“Little Jun!” Suddenly, a voice rang out. Meng Jun turned to look, and he was instantly delighted. “Third Uncle!” There was a balding, middle-aged man in the distance who was walking towards them, face covered with smiles.

Meng Xin and Meng Roch turned to look, immediately recognizing this man as well. They, too, hurriedly called out, “Uncle Ming!” “Haha, all three of you left your clan?” The balding, middle-aged man laughed. “It’s good that you came out. In the clan, every day, you’d have to swallow your temper and suffer indignities. It’s better to come out. Did the three of you just arrive in Stillwater City?”

Meng Jun hurriedly said, “We just arrived at Stillwater City. This time, we have come with the intention of finding a master. However, we were curious, and so we first came to pay a visit to the Treasure Trading Plaza.”

“There’s nothing special about the Treasure Trading Pavilion; it just has many different types of treasures, some of which might be valuable.” The balding man shook his head. “However, one gets bored after spending too much time browsing. This is your first time visiting Stillwater City; in the future, after you enter a school, you won’t have much free time to wander about. I’ve spent a century in Stillwater City; I’m very familiar with it. I’ll take you around to tour it and see some truly excellent areas.”

Meng Jun, Meng Xin, and Meng Roch were all overjoyed. “And this person is...?” The balding man had noticed Ning and the Whitewater Hound following behind Ning. Meng Jun glanced back at Ning, but didn’t say anything. At first, he had constantly fawned over Ning, but after having received no benefits after so long, he had begun to look down on Ning. Now, after he saw his Third Uncle...he had naturally mentally discarded Ning already. In the future, he was going to join a school; why would he need to pay attention to this Ji Ning?

“This is Brother Ji Ning,” Meng Xin said in a clear voice. “He saved the lives of us three.” “Oh?” The balding, middle-aged man immediately said, “Then I truly must thank you, fellow Daoist Ji Ning. Fellow Daoist Ji Ning, why don’t you come along with us? This will allow me to take better care of you, fellow Daoist, and show you proper thanks for your assistance.”

“No need.” Ning shook his head. Meng Xin and Meng Roch both looked at Ning, wanting to urge him to come. But Ning laughed and said, “Let’s part here. For us to have met was a form of karma; in the future, if karma wills it, we will meet again.” “Alright.” Roch nodded.

As for the nearby Meng Jun, he quirked his lips. He just smiled towards Ning, not saying anything; however, his smile was clearly quite superficial. “What a shallow person,” Ning, seeing the way by which Meng Jun was acting, couldn’t help but muse to himself.

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After watching the three members of the Meng clan depart behind their Third Uncle, and especially the way in which Meng Jun continuously chattered with and flattered the old man, causing his face to be wreathed in smiles, Ning couldn’t help but shake his head.

By the time the Golden Crow was about to set beneath the western mountains, Ji Ning, who had strolled about for quite some time, finally arrived at the Northmont Blacktiger Estate.

“What a dominating estate.” Ning stared at the distant estate. Before the gates of this towering estate were rows of heroic-looking soldiers. The enormous stone sculpture of a black tiger which stood next to the gate was especially intimidating; the head of the black tiger stared down at the passerbys, appearing quite tyrannical. All the pedestrians walking through the nearby streets couldn’t help but unconsciously move a bit farther away, not daring to go too close.

As for Ji Ning, he walked straight towards it.

“Who goes there?” One of the soldiers standing at the gate to the Northmont Blacktiger Estate shouted. Ning understood; once one reached a distance of thirty meters of the estate without permission, the Northmont Blacktiger Estate’s forces could simply kill the oncomer.

Ning waved his hand, and the 'Northmont Blacktiger' insignia which Northmont Baiwei had given him appeared within it. Upon seeing the insignia, a smile immediately appeared on the soldier's face, and he said with tremendous respect, "Might I ask who you have come to meet, milord? I will make the report."

"I am Ji Ning. I have come to meet young master Northmont Baiwei," Ning laughed. "I'll have to trouble you to make the report." "Alright, please wait a moment." The soldier quickly charged into the estate. As for the other estate guards, the look in their eyes as they glanced towards Ji Ning had become markedly more friendly. Still, they continued to stare icily towards the other pedestrians on the street.

"Hahaha..." Suddenly, loud, clear laughter rang out. A youth strode out quickly, dressed in a black uniform and with a crown on his head. Upon seeing Ning, his face became filled with excitement and joy. "Brother Ji Ning. I've waited so impatiently for you! You originally told me that you would come quite quickly, but in the blink of an eye, half a year has passed. You've truly broken my heart, hahaha. Your arrival in the city of Stillwater means that you've arrived in my home; there's no need for you to worry yourself over anything. Leave everything to me." As he spoke, he walked forward, pulling Ning by the arm in a very friendly manner. "Come, let's enter the carriage."

By his side, a carriage that seemed to be bathed in flames suddenly moved forward at high speed before coming to a halt outside the gates. In front of the carriage, there was a woman. The woman left the carriage, then said respectfully towards Northmont Baiwei, "Young master."