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Book 38: Daomerge Chapter 38: The Night Before the Daomerge

Back down on the vast ice continent, Daoist Towerdawn and Daoist Fireflame stared with heads raised as the realmship rapidly advanced into the great tempest high up in the skies.

“Big brother, do you think he will succeed in the Daomerge?” Daoist Fireflame asked.

“He trains in one of the legendary Omega Daos. His Daomerge will be very difficult.” Daoist Towerdawn shook his head. During the many chaos cycles Ji Ning had spent in the Icewind Sea, the two had naturally discussed the Dao with each other. “He is the only Daolord friend I have ever made. I hope he succeeds in his Daomerge.”

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Ning’s group spent more than a hundred million years in slowly flying through the tempest layer, then began to hasten back to his homeland.

The Daomerge Firecloud Flower was the most important treasure Ning had acquired in the Icewind Sea. However, he had also acquired fifteen Incense Spirit-Fruits on top of that!

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The Flamedragon Realmverse. Vastheaven Territory. Vastheaven Palace.

Whoosh. A realmship passed through the barriers protecting the palace, then descended upon the Darknorth Estate. Usually, the only people in the Darknorth Estate were Su Youji and Pillsaint. Ning’s disciples generally didn’t dare to come disturb them.

“Ji Ning.”

“Master.” Emperor Solesky, Su Youji, and Pillsaint all came out to greet him.

Ning and the others flew out of the realmship. Ning stored the realmship away, then turned and smiled. “Big brother. Youji. Pillsaint.”

“You succeeded?” Emperor Solesky asked expectantly.

“I found the Daomerge Firecloud Flower,” Ning said. “I’m planning to spend the next year preparing for it. I’ll also remake the formations and barriers protecting Vastheaven Palace! After that, I plan to initiate the Daomerge.”

“The Daomerge?” Solesky, Su Youji, and Pillsaint were all shocked.

“Master, you are going to attempt the Daomerge this soon?” Su Youji said frantically, “Master, you aren’t even close to your lifespan limits yet. There’s no need for you to rush! You can wait another hundred thousand chaos cycles before attempting the Daomerge.”

“What you don’t realize is that the Firecloud Daomerge Flower must be used within a thousand years of harvesting it,” Ning said. “More importantly... even if I delayed for a while longer, it wouldn’t be of any benefit to me in the Daomerge.”

There were literally no improvements he could make. He couldn’t even get a hint of a new insight with regards to the Omega Sword Dao. Waiting would be a pure waste of time. In addition, Ning knew just how difficult the Daomerge for the Omega Sword Dao would be. He had to be completely decisive and resolute in facing it; he couldn’t show the slightest bit of cowardice. His only chance was in charging through remorselessly and then succeeding!

“Master, you...” Su Youji’s eyes were filled with concern. “Be careful.” She had wanted to attempt the Daomerge alongside Ning, but she herself had just recently become a Daolord of the Fourth Step. Her Dao wasn’t all that strong, and as a result she hadn’t even reached the Verge of the Daomerge yet. Pillsaint was also a Daolord of the Fourth Step, but he also needed a great deal of time to prepare for it.

“Don’t worry.” Ning looked at Su Youji. “Youji, let me know when you are planning to engage in the Daomerge. I’ll have a present waiting for you.”

Ning could sense who truly cared about him. This was even more true now that he had reached such great heights in the Dao of Karma. Of the three present (Solesky, Pillsaint, Su Youji), without a doubt Su Youji cared about Ning the most, and the karmic lines binding the two of them were extremely deep. She probably wouldn’t even hesitate to sacrifice her own life to protect him, and so Ning naturally felt closer to Su Youji.

“Ji Ning, should we tell Hegemon Brightshore and the others that you are attempting the Daomerge?” Solesky asked. “All three Hegemons have requested me to inform them in advance if you are planning to engage in the Daomerge.”

“No need to tell them.” Ning shook his head. “I don’t want to cause too much of a fuss.”

“Fine. It’ll be as you choose.” Solesky nodded. Solesky knew that there were two reasons why Hegemon Brightshore and the others wished to be notified of Ning’s Daomerge attempt. The first reason was because Realmlord Windgrace had requested it. The second was because they wanted a chance to prepare themselves! Once a Daolord failed his Daomerge, his truesoul would begin to disintegrate, but this was a fairly slow process. The more powerful a truesoul was, the more time would be needed before it fully disintegrated.

It must be remembered that even World God Northrest’s truesoul managed to survive for nearly a chaos cycle before disintegrating. Given Ning’s current level of insight, even if his truesoul did disintegrate it would probably be able to last for an extremely long period of time. Given that he was guaranteed to die and given how much time he had, who knew what he might do? Would he cause any trouble?

Many Samsara Daolords who failed the Daomerge would lose themselves and do as they pleased, doing some things which they normally would never dare to do. Some would become so crazy that they would massacre people in great numbers.

It must be remembered that Ning had the Flamewing God on his side. The more powerful a Daolord was, the more terrifying that Daolord could be when he went crazy. If Ning failed the Daomerge and

truly became a demonic figure, then led the Flamewing God on a rampage... who could possibly stop him?

“All I wish for during my Daomerge is peace and quiet,” Ning said calmly. “I know exactly what Realmslord Windgrace is attempting, as well as the ‘Lonely King’ of the Icepeak Army who has been slowly biding his time. However... I shall be the one to decide who I will give Flamewing to, if I give it to anyone at all.”

Ning knew that both were waiting for him to fail his Daomerge and then die! In truth, in his heart, Ning wasn't willing to actually force Flamewing to serve someone else in the event that he failed his Daomerge and died. He wanted for Flamewing to be able to make a choice for itself.

“We'll wait and see.” Ning had made some decisions regarding this long ago. If he failed his Daomerge and began to die, he would become an object of terror to others. If he succeeded? The results would go without saying.

“I don't need to worry about any of that. I only need to do one thing... complete the Daomerge!” Ning was filled with a terrifying degree of focus on the Daomerge.

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Ning had mastered many different Daos during the chaos cycles he had spent in the Icewind Sea, including the Dao of Numerancy. He had also spent a great deal of time further perfecting the Dao of Formations for the sake of the Three Realms and Vastheaven Palace. He had studied many formations from both the Sithe as well as the cultivator civilizations, then used them as references in order to perfect a terrifying complicated grand formation.

This grand formation was formed by a total of fifty-two separate formations. Ning was preparing to set it up in both Vastheaven Palace as well as the Three Realms. This grand formation was incredibly profound; most likely, even a Hegemon who had reached that level via the Dao of Formations would not find it easy to reach this formation. This was because this was a formation that combined the essences of many ancient grandmasters; Ning was just setting them up in accordance with their wisdom, then using his own insights to merge all fifty-two of them together.

These two different schools of formations were like Yin and Yang, merging together to form a whole. Even a Hegemon of the Dao of Formations who wished to technically solve and then breach it would find it to be quite difficult; most likely, he would need an extremely long period of time before succeeding.

As for using raw force to overpower it? Ning had so many treasures that he was certainly using only the finest energy sources for these formations. These tremendously powerful energy sources, when matched with these mighty formations, would ensure that not even ten Hegemons working together would be able to shake this formation. Ning himself was at the Hegemonic level of power, and so he knew just how strong this formation was.

However, Ning wasn't confident in his formation being able to stand up to Realmslord Windgrace's legendary 'Blacksun' weapon. The Blacksun was able to easily connect two extremely distant places together and was also able to unleash attacks of incredible power.

“The location and existence of the Three Realms has always been a secret. Everyone who knows of it has long ago sworn a lifeblood oath not to divulge its location,” Ning mused. “If I fail the Daomerge, I’ll do my best to leave behind something else for the Three Realms. However, there’s a limit to what I can do. The rest will be up to future generations.”

Ning felt quite calm and relaxed about this. He had seen both great joy and great sorrow. If he failed the Daomerge, he would die. The future of the Three Realms would indeed be up to the cultivators of the Three Realms themselves.

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Time flowed on, one day after another. Ning established formations in both Vastheaven Palace and the Three Realms, with the materials and energy sources he used being equivalent in value to the network of three Hegemons! To Ning, however, these things weren’t really all that important.

The atmosphere within the Darknorth Estate in Vastheaven Palace was extremely quiet and peaceful. Su Youji, Pillsaint, Hegemon Azurefiend, and even the normally-rambunctious Flamewing were all exceptionally quiet. All of them knew that Ji Ning was going to attempt the Daomerge the following day.

“Tomorrow...” Ning raised his head to stare into the night sky. “Flamewing.”

“Master.” The chubby Flamewing immediately walked over.

“Tomorrow, I shall attempt the Daomerge. If anything happens or if anyone comes to interrupt me, take me into your estate-world treasure,” Ning said.

“Understood.” Flamewing immediately said, “Don’t worry. I’ll eat anyone who tries to cause trouble.”

Ning smiled. This was nothing more than a backup plan. In truth, it was his Primaltwin which would be the most important part of his Daomerge, as it was in the Azureflower Estate and would be completely safe. It also had the Autarch’s stone dais and the Stonefire Pearl; that meant its chances at the Daomerge would be the highest. Ning had even sent over the Daomerge Firecloud Flower to his Primaltwin. Since his Primaltwin and his true body were all part of one whole, they would both engage in the Daomerge together. Thus, if anyone came to bother Ning’s true body it actually wouldn’t make much of a difference.

“Alright.” Ning stared into the night sky, his heart feeling exceptionally at peace. After his experiences in the Icewind Sea as well as the year he had spent quietly preparing formations, he had focused his entire Dao-heart upon the Daomerge.

Suddenly, a certain desire flashed through his heart; before he began the Daomerge, he wanted to take a look at the Three Realms. He decided to follow through on this desire.

“I’m going on a small trip. No need for you to follow me,” Ning said. He then took a single step forwards and vanished without a trace.

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Book 38: Daomerge Chapter 39: Seclusion

Ji Ning arrived at the Three Realms by himself. Given his mastery over the Dao of Karma and the Dao of Numerancy, it was virtually impossible for anyone to see him if he did not wish to be seen.

“The Three Realms.” The white-robed Ning sat there within the void in the lotus position, staring off into the distant emptiness of the primordial chaos. Long, long ago, the original ‘Three Realms’ had been located here. However, the ‘new’ Three Realms had been destroyed and reborn numerous times by now as a complete chaosworld. It was never again divided into the Celestial Realm, Mortal Realm, and Netherworld Kingdom, or the three thousand major worlds and trillion minor worlds.

Ning sat there in the lotus position, staring silently into the void. His spirit, however, was pulsing rapidly. He felt as though he could see the Three Realms of old. Countless scenes flashed through his mind.

His thoughts turned to how the Netherworld Kingdom had suffered an attack from the Seamless Alliance, resulting in Ning being reborn into the world without having drunk from Granny Meng’s soup. He had been born into the Ji clan...

He had been born to his father Ji Yichuan and his mother Yuchi Snow. He had then become apprenticed to the Black-White College, met his first master Immortal Diancai, befriended Mu Northson, then met Ninelotus and Yu Wei.

Ninelotus was a straightforward person who dared to choose the person she loved for herself, but she was also a person who was extremely decisive. The problems with the Youngflame clan had resulted in them separating, while Yu Wei had always silently supported him.

During the Conclave of Immortal Destiny, Lu Dongbin and the Xia Emperor, along with countless other Immortals and Fiendgods, all watched as Ning and Yu Wei finally ended up being together.

Alas, shortly afterwards Ning had been taken to the Tristar Crescent Abode of Mount Innerheart, where he had entered the tutelage of Patriarch Subhuti. By the time they next met, the Seamless Alliance and the Nuwa Alliance had already launched a furious war against each other...

“Yu Wei.” Ning continued to reminisce on the past. He truly did feel great sorrow and pity for his departed wife.

Those days, Ning had roamed and dominated the Three Realms. During the Endwar, he had personally reversed the entire outcome of the war, then departed the Three Realms to continue his adventures elsewhere. He had now reached such heights within the vast Chaosverse that even Hegemons felt dread towards him. Not only had he taken on a Hegemonic retainer, he had even tamed a Chaos Primordial and had Hegemonic power as a Samsara Daolord.

Given all of this, Ning could truly be described as a dazzling figure. He was far more dazzling than Emperor Heartsword or even Hegemon Brightshore had ever been!

But his wife? Her destiny had been far more calamitous and pitiful. During her previous life, she had been born into a minor grasslands tribe. Calamity had descended upon that tribe, resulting in her suffering endless torments which had transformed her into a female asura-demon. She had lived a hellish existence, with the Godking secretly manipulating her from afar. Although she was reborn as an Immortal in her next life, her soul had remained under the Godking’s control. She had been his pain, and as a result her heart had been filled with such worry and fear that she initially had been afraid to even confess her love to Ning.

In the end, Ning had come to her. Yu Wei had decided that she would rather accept her soul being shattered than bring harm to him, and so the two had ended up together.

Alas, the Godking had continued to threaten and coerce her. Yu Wei knew that she would eventually be exposed, and so she had a child with Ning. Soon after that child had been born, Yu Wei had been consigned to the hells and eventually had her truesoul extinguished.

Her life had been a calamitous, miserable one. The only bright spot in her life had been the time she had spent with Ning and her giving birth to a daughter for him. Unfortunately, that moment of happiness had been a brief one.

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Ning spent that night seated by himself within the emptiness of space, quietly thinking back to days past. His thoughts were chiefly of the time he had spent with his wife, Yu Wei.

As a powerful cultivator, he was able to remember every single one of his previous memories with perfect clarity. Not even the passage of time could dim them in the slightest.

He didn't feel too many complicated or mixed emotions. All he felt was a tinge of heartache for his wife.

Whoosh. Ning rose to his feet, then turned to stare at the enormous flaming ball off in the distance. This was the Solar Star, and its light illuminated Ning's face.

"Senior apprentice-sister... I have already come this far on my path of cultivation. Today, I shall begin my Daomerge. This shall be my last gambit. Wait for me. One way or another, we will be together again," Ning murmured softly.

His Dao-heart, the entirety of his soul and truesoul... all of it was waiting in peak condition. The night he had just spent in solitary, silent reflection had caused them all to reach the greatest apex possible.

Riiiiip. Ning tore through spacetime and took a single step forwards, disappearing from the Three Realms.

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Dawn. Vastheaven Palace. The Darknorth Estate.

Emperor Solesky, Hegemon Azurefiend, the Flamewing God, Su Youji, Pillsaint, and Whitethaw were all up. None of them had rested the previous night. All of them were waiting, and the more they waited the more nervous and impatient they became. All sorts of mixed emotions filled their hearts, as all of them knew what the Daomerge represented for any Daolord.

Whoosh. Ning appeared out of thin air, manifesting within the Darknorth Estate.

"Ji Ning."

"Master."

"Darknorth." All of them rose to greet him.

Ning swept them with his gaze, then revealed a smile: "All of you came? What's with all the long faces? It's like I already failed the Daomerge!"

"Master, you'll definitely succeed in the Daomerge!" Flamewing was rather teary-eyed. Of the people present, it had the least amount of control over its emotions. It emotionally relied on Ning much like how a child would rely upon a parent. It hurriedly said, "Master, you are much more powerful than any and every Daolord I've ever encountered, and more of a genius than any of those Hegemons. An Omega Sword Dao is nothing to you. You'll definitely succeed!"

"Flamewing." Ning walked over, patting Flamewing on the head. When he had first tamed Flamewing, his only thought had been to acquire a powerful servant. However, as time had passed and as the two got to know each other over the course of many chaos cycles, Ning had realized how implicitly the beast trusted him. Flamewing truly was like a child and was incapable of complex schemes. After so much time, Ning felt a deep sense of affection for Flamewing... and as a result, he felt a degree of revulsion towards Realmslord Windgrace and the Lonely King for harboring designs on Flamewing.

"Darknorth, you must succeed in the Daomerge! I swore an oath to follow you for a thousand chaos cycles. It has only been a hundred! We're not even close to being done with each other." Hegemon Azurefiend's wizened old face smiled, causing even more wrinkles to appear.

"Don't worry. Once the thousand chaos cycles are over, you'll probably be begging and crying for the chance to continue following me," Ning said with a laugh. "When the time comes, I'll have to think long and hard on whether or not I want you."

Ning turned to look at Emperor Solesky, Su Youji, Pillsaint, and Whitethaw. He smiled once more. "Alright, no need to waste time on words. I'm going to go into seclusion and initiate the Daomerge," Ning said.

"You are much more formidable than me. You'll definitely succeed," Emperor Solesky said immediately.

"Master..." Su Youji said hurriedly, "I want you to be by my side when I attempt my own Daomerge in the future."

Ning nodded. He then patted Pillsaint and Protector Whitethaw on their shoulders, then turned and entered his estate. Pillsaint didn't know what to say, while Whitethaw just watched silently. Although he was just a golem, he was sentient and extremely intelligent.

All of them watched as Ning's figure disappeared past the great gates of the estate. Rumble! The gates to the estate swung shut, sealing it completely.

Flamewing transformed back into its true form, that of an enormous, flaming, winged ursine: the 'Flamewing God'. It lay down in front of the estate, continuously sweeping the area with an icy cold look in its eyes. Clearly, it had chosen to immediately carry out Ning's order to protect the estate! Starting from this moment, it wouldn't permit anyone to disturb Ning's Daomerge.

"Youji, relax a little. Being nervous isn't going to help Master at all," Pillsaint said consolingly. "It'll all be up to him now. Supposedly, a Daomerge can last for a total of nine years."

"Yes. It'll all be up to Master now." Su Youji sat down in the lotus position, closing her eyes and taking up a silent vigil.

Solesky, Whitethaw, and Azurefiend all began to wait as well. To them, waiting for nine years was an extremely short period of time.

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Within the estate.

The white-robed Ning was seated in the lotus position atop a golden altar. This magic altar was something which Ning had poured all of his efforts into after researching the Autarch's stone dais to the best of his ability. It was all thanks to Ning's mastery of the Dao of Formations that he was able to emulate the stone dais as much as he had, and he had paid a fortune in treasures as well. Despite his efforts, success in the Daomerge would still primarily be up to his Primaltwin.

His Primaltwin had the original stone dais, the Stonefire Pearl, and even the Daomerge Firecloud Flower. It was far better resourced than Ning's true body, but of course Ning did his best to outfit his true body as well. That way, his chances at the Daomerge might be slightly improved. He had given his true body some valuable spirit-pills, as well as the Stone Censer of Reunion. Perhaps his true body was only going to be 0.1% as effective as his Primaltwin, but every little bit helped.

But of course, once the Daomerge actually began the insights and experiences shared by the two sides would be identical. The two were two parts of a whole, and their souls, truesouls, and memories were all as one. As far as the Daomerge was concerned, there was no difference between a true body and a Primaltwin.

If he succeeded in the Daomerge, his true body and his Primaltwin would both gain eternity at the same time. If he failed, his truesoul would begin to crumble.

The white-robed Ning sat there atop his altar, while the black-robed Primaltwin Ning sat upon the Autarch's stone dais in the distant Azureflower Estate. As for Ning's two avatars, they went into silent seclusion as well. An avatar contained part of the truesoul and godsense as well; if the Daomerge failed, the godsense within the avatars would quickly begin to crumble, causing the avatars to perish. However, since the true body and the Primaltwin both had complete souls and truesouls, they were able to ensure that the process of decay was dramatically lessened.

"Let it begin," the white-robed Ning and the black-robed Ning both said at the same time.

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Book 38: Daomerge Chapter 40: The Daomerge Begins

Within the Azureflower Estate.

The elderly white-haired spirit of the estate watched silently, feeling both worried but hopeful: "I hope this kid can succeed. If he can succeed in the Daomerge with the Omega Sword Dao, he will have achieved something which no one has ever done before. Perhaps Master's final wishes will then be completed."

The Autarch's wishes were simply too hard to achieve. After becoming an Autarch, Awakener had reached a level of tremendous insight and understanding, and he had many treasures aiding him. He had been alive for unfathomably more times longer than Ji Ning had, and he had reached incredible heights in his mastery of the Nine Chaos Seals.

There were a total of ninety-nine layers to the Heart of Eternity!

Even after having returned from the Icewind Sea, Ning had only been able to solve the first twenty-two layers of the Heart. He was far, far away from being able to completely solve it! In truth, the spirit of the estate also knew how unlikely it was that Ning would succeed, because even the other dazzling geniuses who had come before Ning had fallen far short of the mark of completing Autarch Awakener's wishes.

"The Daomerge Firecloud Flower." The black-robed Ning waved his hand, causing a jade box to appear before the stone dais. The jade box opened on its own, followed by a perfect Daomerge Firecloud Flower that was still attached to its roots and leaves to fly out.

"Let the Daomerge begin!" The black-robed Ning closed his eyes. Over in Vastheaven Palace, the white-robed Ning in Vastheaven Palace swallowed his own spirit-pills, activated the incense from the Stone Censer of Reunion, and then closed his eyes.

He began to visualize the inside of his divine body, formed from a total of 108,000 godgems. Each godgem contained his divine power, his soul, his truesoul, and more. They also contained Ning's insights into his Omega Sword Dao.

Ning visualized the Dao-tree within his Jindan chaos region. The towering Dao-tree's branches and leaves were the material representations of Ning's insights. Countless insights began to resonate through his mind and soul.

What he needed to do was to gather together all of these insights, then transform them all and cause his Dao-tree to give birth to a beautiful Flower of Eternity! His divine body would then transform to become a truly eternal body. If he became an Eternal Emperor, every single one of his godgems would transform into a Worldheart, even if his truesoul was somehow extinguished. The godgems would forever give birth to new chaosworlds.

"The Flower of Eternity... an eternal body..." Ning exerted his will. Boom! Every single godgem in his body began to tremble. The godgems, previously coalesced with his fourth-step Daolord energies, began to disassemble and then advance to a completely new level of existence! The towering Dao-tree within his body was shaking as well, as all of the insights represented by those branches and leaves began to gather together.

If someone was standing nearby, that person would quickly discover that the white-robed Ning and the black-robed Ning were both beginning to glow with blurry sword-light. Countless streaks of sword-light emanated from Ning with such power as to cause even Hegemons to shudder. This was the light of the Dao! Or to be precise, this was the light of the Omega Sword Dao, and its power was covering him and protecting him.

Every single Daolord would emanate the light of the Dao when they began the Daomerge. This would be the most dazzling moment of their life, and it was only in this state that the Daomerge would even be possible. This was also the state one needed to be in order for the Daomerge Firecloud Flower to unleash its true potential.

"Arise." The black-robed Ning opened his eyes, staring at the Daomerge Firecloud Flower within the jade box.

The blurry sword-light emanating from Ning's entire body illuminated the Daomerge Firecloud Flower, causing it to levitate into the air. Guided by Ning's will, the flower began to be surrounded by clouds of fire that gathered together into a half-translucent humanoid figure directly above the flower. This figure looked identical to Ning.

"My incarnation! The incarnation formed by the Daomerge Firecloud Flower." Ning immediately took control over the flow of time, having the incarnation complete a simulated Daomerge as quickly as possible.

If a Daolord like Ninedust used the Daomerge Firecloud Flower, a total of nine incarnations would be formed. In other words, one would have nine chances to simulate a Daomerge! If one took control over the flow of time and accelerated time for the incarnations, these nine simulated Daomerges would at most take perhaps two or so hours, at which point the Daolord could begin the true Daomerge.

"I hope this incarnation can last long enough to attempt a complete Daomerge." Ning felt hopeful. "Let's begin." The incarnation immediately initiated a simulated Daomerge, with a towering Dao-tree appearing within its body. The reason why it didn't form a complete divine body was because Ning wanted to conserve power; there was a limit to how much energy the Daomerge Firecloud Flower held within it.

Time passed, one day after another. The incarnation continued to carefully carry out the Daomerge, with the Omega Sword Dao insights embodied by the Dao-tree all slowly gathering together. Finally, a series of thick trunks began to emerge from the very center of the Dao-tree. These trunks began to manifest a total of two new leaves. One of the two leaves emanated an incredibly profound and abstruse aura, while the other emanated an aura that was incredibly titanic and vast.

Between these two leaves, an unremarkable little flower bud began to emerge as well. The flower bud began to slowly grow larger and larger...

"So far, so good. My path is the correct one. This is just how it should be." Ning felt a tremendous sense of confidence in himself and how things were progressing. The Autarch's stone dais and the Stonefire Pearl helped ensure that he was in absolute peak condition for this Daomerge, and he was in a prajna-like state of epiphany. All sorts of scattered insights were rapidly coming together to form a perfect whole, with no flaws that could be discerned whatsoever.

One year. Two years. Three years. By now, the flower was so large that it could no longer grow any further. All of Ning's insights into the Omega Sword Dao, as well as the other scattered insights he had gained, had been infused into the flower bud.

"Time to let it bloom." Ning knew that the blooming process was the most dangerous part of the Daomerge. Many, many Daolords had attempted to make the Flower of Eternity bloom, only to see it wither halfway through.

Suddenly, his incarnation began to tremble.

"Eh?" Ning's face tightened slightly. Only now did he turn his attention to the Daomerge Firecloud Flower. He realized that the flaming clouds around it had almost all vanished. As the final cloud was depleted, the materialized incarnation suddenly vanished as well. As a result, the simulated Daomerge came to an end as well.

“Its over? The energies were all used up?” Although Ning was briefly startled, he quickly regained his equanimity. “Omega Daos truly are the hardest of Daos. I wasn’t even given a chance to attempt to cause the Flower of Eternity to bloom via a simulated Daomerge,” Ning mused. The Daomerge Firecloud Flower had enough power to allow a Daolord who had fused multiple Supreme Daos to simulate the Daomerge nine times, but he hadn’t even been able to do it a single time! This had at most been half of a simulated Daomerge... and strictly speaking, it was the simpler first half. Even if Ning hadn’t had a Daomerge Firecloud Flower, Ning wouldn’t have made any mistakes during the first part.

“However... it still helped me save three years of time.” Ning didn’t let himself feel dispirited. Saving three years of time meant that his chances at succeeding in the Daomerge had increased considerably.

“And so... let the true Daomerge begin!” Thanks to the wonders of temporal acceleration, the three years of time which the simulated Daomerge had taken had, in reality, been nothing more than a few minutes for Ning’s true body and Primaltwin.

The white-robed Ning and the black-robed Ning simultaneously began to speed up the Daomerge process. Whoosh! The transformation process of the godgems began to speed up rapidly, advancing in the blink of an eye.

As for the Dao-tree in his body, it began to give birth to a new trunk upon which two leaves grew. A flower bud quickly appeared and began to grow larger, and it quickly reached its maximum size in just a few seconds. Now, it was ready to bloom whenever Ning chose.

“Let it bloom...” Ning knew just how the Daomerge worked. The Flower of Eternity was safe when it was merely a bud. Once the initial blooming process began, it was extremely easy for cultivators to make mistakes... and a single mistake would result in a failure in the blooming process, causing the flower to wither away! That would represent the Daomerge having failed. The truesoul would immediately begin to crumble.

If the initial blooming process was successful, the flower would slowly bloom more and more. This middle part would be comparatively safer, and the Flower of Eternity would grow more and more beautiful. When it reached its most dazzlingly beautiful form, it would gain true eternity for itself! This final part of the blooming process was the most difficult part of the Daomerge.

Ning had met Daolord Laya in the Starflow River. When Daolord Laya had failed the Daomerge, he had failed during the initial blooming process; in other words, the Flower of Eternity hadn’t been able to bloom at all.

In truth, the blooming represented the process by which Daolords crossed beyond that final threshold to become Eternal Emperors! That moment when the Flower of Eternity reached maximum beauty was the moment in which both it and the Dao stabilized. This represented success, with the Daolord having become an Eternal Emperor.

Whoooosh. The petals slowly began to extend up the stem of the Flower of Eternity, laboriously seeking to reach out and bloom. As for Ning himself, he began the process of leaping into a new level of existence.

BOOM!!! The Dao-light surrounding both the white-robed Ning in Vastheaven Palace and the black-robed Azureflower Estate began to dramatically increase in intensity. The countless streaks of sword-

light began to skyrocket in power, instantly ascending beyond Hegemony. In just the blink of an eye, it actually surpassed even the Otherverse Lord level of power!

Rumble...

This terrifying aura of power instantly swept through all that sought to contain it. The formations around Vastheaven Palace were completely incapable of containing this terrifying aura, a supreme aura of power that vastly surpassed that of Hegemons and even Otherverse Lords. This was the most terrifying aura generated by the Dao of the Sword which had ever appeared in the Chaosverse... the aura of an Eternal Omega Sword Dao!

Emperor Solesky, Su Youji, Pillsaint, Azurefiend, Whitethaw, and everyone else all felt so terrified by this aura that their hearts trembled. It was as though every single cell in their bodies were screaming in fear.

Even the Flamewing God felt a sense of fear when this mighty aura swept past it!

[The Desolate Era](#)

Book 38: Daomerge Chapter 41: The Critical Moment

Within the Azureflower Estate.

Boom! The black-robed Ji Ning was seated in the lotus position. Suddenly, the sword-light coming from his body dramatically increased in luminosity and power! The might of his aura spread out in every direction, causing even the elderly white-haired spirit of the estate who was watching nearby to feel a tinge of fear. The spirit couldn't help but lower his head and hunch over. This was an intrinsic fear that came from the very core of his being. In truth, estate-spirits could be considered a special type of lifeform.

"Such power..." the white-haired elder tamped down his fear and struggled to raise his head to look at Ning.

The black-robed Ning was emanating countless streams of sword-light that were filled with an aura of utter dominance and exaltedness. The only time the long-lived white-haired elder had ever seen anyone like this had been when he had served his almighty master, Autarch Awakener.

"The Omega Daos live up to their reputation. If he succeeds in the Daomerge, perhaps the only people who will be a match for him in the entire Chaosverse shall be the Autarchs," the white-haired elder mused silently.

Once an Omega Dao became eternal, how powerful would it become? No one knew. This was because no one thus far had ever been able to accomplish such a thing. The vast Chaosverse had given birth to numerous Autarchs, but it had never given birth to an Emperor of an Omega Dao!

The Hegemons and Otherverse Lords, no matter how talented, were at most only at the Hegemonic level of insight. Beyond that was the level of Autarchy! However, one who made an Omega Dao eternal would surpass all Hegemons in terms of profundity of insight into the Dao!

"Only two beings can surpass Hegemony. The first are the Autarchs; the second would be an Omega Eternal Emperor." The white-haired elder stared rather eagerly at the black-robed Ning, who continued

to glow with that aura of infinitely awesome light. “Darknorth, there has never been an Eternal Omega Dao before! If you succeed, all of Master’s efforts would’ve been worth it.”

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The Azureflower Estate had been the Autarch’s personal, private training grounds. It was filled with barriers and restrictions of such might that it naturally was able to block out all auras, including that of Ning’s Daomerge.

Vastheaven Palace, however, was completely incapable of the same. The white-robed Ning within the Darknorth Estate of the Vastheaven Palace was also emanating blinding amounts of sword-light, and the power from his aura surged straight out of Vastheaven Palace and reached out to spread across the entire Vastheaven Everworld. In fact, the ripples spread out into the vast void outside as well. However, the farther the ripples spread, the fainter and harder-to-detect the ripples became. They quickly spread out to cover the entire Flamedragon Realmverse and then spread out into the endless Great Dark as well.

“What’s going on?”

“What is this sense of awe and pressure?”

The countless living beings within Vastheaven Palace, from the mortals and animals to the Eternal Emperors, all felt a sense of terror stemming from the very fiber of their being.

None of these living beings were injured, but in this instant the entire everworld fell completely silent. All of them instinctively knelt down towards the direction from whence this aura came, almost as if they were prostrating themselves and displaying submission towards an emperor.

This aura was the aura of an Eternal Omega Sword Dao! No one would dare to stand against this terrifying aura.

“Such power! Such might! This aura is far more powerful than mine. Not even the Sithe Exalts were this powerful!” Flamewing was able to instinctively judge the power of this aura. There had never been an Emperor who reached that level via an Eternal Omega Dao. Someone who did would be more powerful than Otherverse Lords, Sourcewalkers, and even Sithe Exalts! Only the unfathomably powerful Autarchs would be on this level of power.

“So this is the power of the Eternal Omega Sword Dao?” Emperor Solesky, Azurefiend, and the others all felt completely stunned. This level of power was far beyond the Hegemonic level of power.

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Whoosh! A dimensional tear appeared at the very margins of the Vastheaven Everworld, followed by a snowy-robed, white-bearded old man appearing. This was Hegemon Brightshore. A heartbeat later two more tears appeared. A man with long green hair and a green beard emerged from the first, while a dazzlingly beautiful scepter-wielding woman appeared from the second. They were Hegemon Windrain and Hegemon Netherlily.

Riiiiip. Another dimensional tear appeared off in the distance, followed by five figures emerging. The first was a golden humanoid figure, while the other four were all onyx humanoid figures. This was Lord Wulf of the Icepeak Army and four of his Black Emperors.

“Such power.” Everyone’s gazes were focused towards the distant Vastheaven Palace. Vastheaven Palace was the source of this incredible, exalted aura. Simply looking at Vastheaven Palace caused them to all feel a sense of tremendous pressure! If Ning himself appeared, staring at him would cause them all to feel a sense of terror. This was something you would innately feel when you encountered someone who was at a higher level of existence than you.

“So this is the power which comes from an Omega Dao which has gained eternity?” Hegemon Brightshore murmured softly, “This aura is utterly terrifying. I’ve never sensed anything as terrifying as this.”

“Daolord Darknorth’s ‘Flower of Eternity’ has probably already begun to bloom,” Hegemon Windrain said. “If he can succeed in making it fully bloom, he’ll gain true eternity.”

“Will he be dazzling for an instant, or dazzling for all eternity? The answer will come soon,” Hegemon Netherlily said.

They had witnessed many Daolords undergone the Daomerge and thus they understood the process. The aura of the Eternal Omega Sword Dao which they could all sense wasn’t being consciously produced by Ning; rather, it was something which naturally manifested as the Daomerge began. Only if he succeeded in the Daomerge and truly gained a complete Eternal Omega Sword Dao would he gain control over that terrifying level of power! If he failed? Everything would disappear like mist, and his brief moment of brilliance would amount to nothing more than a testament to how powerful an Eternal Omega Sword Dao truly was.

“He has begun the Daomerge.” Lord Wulf stared from afar, a look of dread in his eyes. “How terrifying. If he succeeds in the Daomerge, not even the Lonely King would stand any chance against him.”

“There’s no way something as unearthly powerful as this can exist,” one of his Black Emperor subordinates said.

“Agreed. If he succeeds in the Daomerge, he’ll probably be invincible unless an Autarch intervenes,” Lord Wulf murmured softly. “But if he fails... that’ll be when he becomes truly troublesome. No one can guess what a Daolord who has failed the Daomerge would do. More importantly, the Lonely King also will be competing against Realmslord Windgrace. The struggle over the Flamewing God will probably be the greatest battle which our Icepeak Army has ever engaged in...”

Although the Icepeak Army had taken part in numerous great wars, it had never faced off against an opponent of Realmslord Windgrace’s caliber. In addition, there was a third party to this conflict... Ji Ning and the Flamewing God who served him. Lord Wulf spoke the truth when he described this conflict as the ‘greatest battle’ the Icepeak Army would have ever engaged in.

“Daolord Darknorth won’t go crazy, right?” The four Black Emperors were rather nervous. They had all witnessed the Flamewing God’s power.

“Who knows what a Daolord who has failed the Daomerge might do?” Lord Wulf stared at the distant Vastheaven Palace. “However... we must give it our best shot, no matter how dangerous it is! There’s no way Realmslord Windgrace or our Lonely King would give up a chance to control the Flamewing God. They’ll throw every resource they have into it.”

The Flamewing God was more valuable than all the combined value of all the treasures Realmslord Windgrace and the Lonely King possessed. There was a limit to how powerful a Sithe war machine could be, after all... and the greater the power, the greater the cost of activating it. Each time Realmslord Windgrace wished to use the Blacksun to fire off an attack, he had to pay an enormous price. But Flamewing? It had a virtually indestructible body and could fight without rest. The Flamewing God was more valuable than the entire Icepeak Army.

However, only the likes of the Lonely King and Realmslord Windgrace were actually interested in trying to take control over Flamewing. The ordinary soldiers and generals of the Icepeak Army, along with the likes of Hegemon Brightshore, simply felt fear! This was because no one could predict how wide-ranging and destructive such a war would become. A war on this level could easily result in the deaths of Hegemons and Black Emperors. Even the likes of Lord Wulf would perish under the might of a fully-powered Blacksun!

The only ones who stood a good chance at surviving were the Lonely King, who had numerous Sithe war machines at his disposal, and Realmslord Windgrace, who had his Blacksun. Everyone else could very well perish!

Oh, right. Daolord Darknorth would be safe, as he could hide behind the Flamewing god. However... if Daolord Darknorth had failed the Daomerge, he might go crazy and become an even greater threat than Windgrace or the Lonely King.

“Ugh.”

“Let’s pray that he succeeds in the Daomerge.” In truth, some of the Black Emperors were silently hoping for Ning’s success. They would be nothing more than cannon fodder in a battle at this level, after all. Still... all of them knew in their hearts how unlikely it was that Ning would succeed.

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The white-robed Ning in Vastheaven Palace and the black-robed Ning in the Azureflower Estate meditated silently as the Flower of Eternity began to bloom with excruciating slowness.

“This is correct. No errors thus far.” Ning was being incredibly careful. As soon as the flower had started to bloom, his Eternal Omega Sword Dao had begun to take form. Everything seemed so perfect and flawless... but if he made so much as a single mistake, the Flower of Eternity would instantly begin to wither and his truesoul would begin to crumble away.

He couldn’t afford a single mistake! Thus, Ning proceeded very slowly with the Daomerge.

Time passed on, one day after the other, and more Eternal Emperors appeared around the Vastheaven Everworld. Ning’s exalted aura had covered all of the Flamedragon Realmverse and had even stretched out into the Great Dark. Although the aura grew increasingly weak with distance, the majority of Eternal Emperors in the Flamedragon Realmverse were able to sense it. However, realmverses were so far from

each other that the aura spread just a comparatively short distance into the Great Dark before becoming completely undetectable.

“Eh?” Roughly half a year after the Flower of Eternity began to bloom, the faces of the white-robed Ning and the black-robed Ning simultaneously turned pale.

The Desolate Era

Book 38: Daomerge Chapter 42: Sword-Heart

“Now this is a deadly problem.” Ji Ning had just encountered the greatest obstacle within the Daomerge thus far.

Why was it that Daolords all wished for the chance to completely simulate the Daomerge? It was so that they would have sufficient experience for the real thing. A mistake in the simulated Daomerge could be fixed in the real one.

Alas, even the Daomerge Firecloud Flower could only simulate a partial Daomerge for an Omega Dao. It could only simulate the Daomerge up to the point where the bud first formed! In other words, the only real benefit it brought to Ning was that it had saved him three years worth of time; it hadn't given him a chance to actually compensate for any mistakes or errors! And now, as a result, the completely unprepared Ning now encountered an enormous problem which he had to resolve.

“If I wish to succeed in the Daomerge for the Omega Sword Dao, I must also master the fifteenth stance of the [Heartsword] art!” After spending half a year slowly blooming his Flower of Eternity, he immediately realized this problem.

Ning had originally thought that the [Heartsword] art was just a type of special technique that combined heartforce, divine power, and Immortal energy. He didn't believe that it had anything to do with his Omega Sword Dao... but now that he had actually initiated the Daomerge, he realized that he was wrong!

It was connected! In fact, it was connected in a very important way!

Ordinary Emperors and even Hegemons didn't need to worry about techniques like the [Heartsword] art during their Daomerges, but Ning was different; his path was that of the Omega Sword Dao!

“The [Heartsword] art focuses on training the heart, the heart of the sword. The more sincere one's heart is towards the sword, the more perfectly one can merge heartforce, divine power, and Immortal energy. I was only able to master the fourteenth stance of the [Heartforce] art because I realized that Yu Wei would not come back to life, and thus I came to understand the essence of 'Remorseless Unto Death'. I poured everything into the sword without any remorse... but that isn't enough. Although a sword-heart like this is enough to merge divine power, heartforce, and Immortal energy to a very high degree... it still isn't enough.”

“I need a truly perfect and complete sword-heart! Only then can I also have a perfect, Eternal Omega Sword Dao.”

He only came to understand this during the Daomerge itself. The many insights he had gained into the Dao of the Sword would form the 'body' of his Eternal Omega Sword Dao, while his perfect sword-heart

would form its 'soul'. Only then would it be fully formed! Only then would it become a true and truly terrifying Eternal Omega Sword Dao.

This was why the [Heartsword] art was so marvelous, and why it allowed for one to merge all types of energy together, resulting in every single attack increasing explosively in might.

"There's a limit to how long the Daomerge can take. I have to comprehend the fifteenth stance of the [Heartsword] art. If I cannot, I'll definitely fail the Daomerge." When Ning came to understand this, his face instantly turned pale. There wasn't enough time! The fifteenth stance of the [Heartsword] art was incredibly difficult.

In truth, the [Heartsword] art was just a sword-focused energy-combining technique which Emperor Heartsword had created. There had been other major powers in the vast Chaosverse who had done the same. Ning didn't really need the technique itself; what he needed to do was to truly perfect his sword-heart.

Whoosh. One technique after another flickered through Ning's mind. These were the various similar techniques which had been created by the cultivator civilizations as well as the Sithe.

"What should I do? How should I make the breakthrough to the next level?" Although the state he was in during the Daomerge allowed breakthroughs to come much more easily, he still wasn't able to find the key to the fifteenth stance.

"Wrong. Wrong. Wrong! The [Heartsword] art and the other techniques all came as a result of the unique hearts and minds produced by the experiences these various major powers had." Ning's eyes suddenly lit up. "In the end, they reached perfection... but they each walked their own paths! Every single cultivator will have different mental and spiritual experiences. If you try to force yourself to emulate their paths, you might be able to reach an extremely high level but you'll never reach perfection."

"This is why, despite the passage of so many chaos cycles, there has been no one save Emperor Heartsword who was able to master the fifteenth stance of the [Heartsword] art. That's because one has to find one's own sword-heart in order to reach this stance!"

The prajna-state Ning was currently in was an extraordinary one, and he was able to quickly identify where the problem lay.

In the early stages, the [Heartsword] art might've allowed him to walk faster along his path, but the farther along the path Ning went, the more of an obstacle the [Heartsword] art became. Thus, he had to discard it... because it represented Emperor Heartsword's sword-heart!

"Then what of my own sword-heart?" Ning began to reminisce about all the experiences he had undergone through countless years of cultivation, as well as the many times he had trained in the sword.

Slowly... Ning began to understand.

One day. Two days. Three days. One month. Two months. One year. Two years...

The Daomerge allowed for a Daolord to enter the most incredible and marvelous meditative state known to cultivators. This wasn't the first time Ning had thought back to his memories and his life, but now that he was in the middle of the Daomerge the insights he gained were naturally different.

"Yes... long, long ago, I once lived a life that was without worries and carefree. That was back when my mother and father were teaching me. In the West Prefecture City of the Ji clan, I trained with them in sword-arts. I was so happy back then. I simply loved sword-arts; that was all there was to it.

"When did it all change? All kinds of different competing desires arose in my heart and in my cultivation of the sword. I sought to train in the sword to take revenge for my parents, to become famous in the Grand Xia, to kill the Godking and take my revenge, to revive Yu Wei... I entrusted all of my hopes to the sword, wishing to use it to make all of my hopes real. In doing so, my sword-heart actually became impure."

"Even when I reached the stage of 'Remorseless Unto Death', my remorselessness stemmed from my emotions and my love of Yu Wei, not for the love of the sword itself. But...

"In truth, I really do love the sword as well."

If he didn't love the Dao of the Sword from the very depths of his being, there was no way he could've embarked upon the path of the Omega Sword Dao and reached his current heights. However, all of the many hopes and fears he had entrusted to the sword had resulted in his sword-heart becoming impure.

Ning suddenly thought of something which Autarch Titanos had told him: "Foolish child... sometimes, you have to learn when to let go. On the path of cultivation, excessive obsession can sometimes result in self-destruction."

Ning had suddenly awoken to the truth. It was a true moment of epiphany! After spending three years of the Daomerge going through his many memories, he felt as though he had revisited his entire life... and as a result, he had truly awoken.

"Even if I cast aside everything, including all of my hopes and fears, I would still love the sword. I love it simply because I love it; there's no need for any other reason. The Dao of the Sword is a vast and boundless one which allows me to experience many new things. Of course I love it. Why wouldn't I?"

Both the white-robed Ning and the black-robed Ning opened their eyes to stare forwards.

In front of each of them, a stream of sword-light manifested. The sword-light flew out in a beautiful, natural, and transcendent way. There were no strong emotions attached to it, no grief, no sorrow, no madness... it simply flew forward, illuminating everything around it with its brilliance.

"One Sword, One World." Ning smiled. He knew that his sword-heart had reached the level of true perfection. In fact, he now suspected that Emperor Heartsword himself must have mastered the 'One Sword, One World' stance during the Daomerge as well. For those who had chosen a weaker Sword Dao, simply possessing a perfect sword-heart would allow for one to succeed in the Daomerge, even if one's Dao of the Sword was flawed!

Emperor Heartsword's Sword Dao wasn't a particularly impressive one, but he had a perfect sword-heart and as a result had succeeded in the Daomerge.

Ning now had a perfect sword-heart as well... but he was attempting to master an Eternal Omega Sword Dao. A perfect sword-heart was just one component!

"My sword-heart has been perfected." Ning immediately continued to the next stage of his Daomerge, causing the Flower of Eternity to continue its blooming once more. Now that he had a perfect sword-heart, the Flower of Eternity seemed to have gained a spirit, and it rustled in his soul much like a true flower would in the outside world.

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"It's nearly been nine years."

"The Daomerge can at most last for nine years. Daolord Darknorth's Daomerge must be coming to an end soon."

"I wonder if he will succeed or fail." Within the Vastheaven Everworld, the Hegemons and the Icepeak Army were all waiting. The other Eternal Emperors, such as Daoist Bluestone, Emperor Goldisle, and Emperor Blackcloud were all waiting nervously as well.

It had indeed been nearly nine years since Ning had unleashed that wave of terrifying presence.

"Perhaps the Daomerge time limit for Omega Daos is longer than normal?" Hegemon Netherlily suggested curiously.

"Who knows?" Hegemon Brightshore shook his head.

"Let's just wait. We'll see a result soon," Hegemon Windrain said.

All of the Hegemons and Emperors were waiting, as were Hegemon Azurefiend, Flamewing, Emperor Solesky, Su Youji, Pillsaint, and Ning's disciples and fellow apprentices within Vastheaven Palace. All of them were extremely nervous.

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"I'm almost out of time." The white-robed Ning in Vastheaven Palace and the black-robed Ning in the Azureflower Estate both knew that they only had nine years for the Daomerge. The Daomerge Firecloud Flower had saved them three years of time, but they had wasted three more in perfecting the Dao-heart.

The Flower of Eternity slowly continued to bloom. There could be no mistakes at all right now.

"Time for the final push." Ning could sense the growth of the Flower of Eternity within the Dao-tree in his body, and could also sense how his godgems had reconfigured themselves. It was time to take the final step.

In his heart, he already had a complete structure for his Eternal Omega Sword Dao. Whether or not it was the correct one could only be ascertained through actually using it in the Daomerge.

"There are no mistakes. Such a perfect Dao has to be worthy of eternity." Ning was filled with confidence, but since he hadn't had the chance to simulate a Daomerge he had to be absolutely correct in order to succeed. The slightest of errors would result in failure.

“I’m out of time. There’s no way to stop the Daomerge. Time for the final step!”

Ning willed it, and with a rumble his Flower of Eternity went into full bloom, revealing dazzling amounts of radiance. The godgems in his body instantly went into a brand new configuration as well.

Would the result be eternity? Or a withering?

The Desolate Era

Book 38: Daomerge Chapter 43: The Curtain Falls

The Flower of Eternity bloomed with incandescent light, striving to achieve eternity... but then, its light began to slowly shudder. The transformed and reconfigured godgems also sought to stabilize, but they slowly began to tremble as well.

The awesome aura of the Eternal Omega Sword Dao emanating from Ji Ning’s body suddenly began to decay, with Ning’s own life aura weakening as well.

“No! I was too hasty!” In the final instant that his Flower of Eternity fully bloomed, Ning immediately understood where the error lay in his Eternal Omega Sword Dao

If he had been given a chance to simulate the Daomerge, he would’ve been able to actually test out some of the assumptions regarding his Dao and discover its flaws. But he hadn’t had that chance, and so he had to forge ahead without it!

Samsara Daolords took a total of four steps, and each step represented them treading the line between life and death! However, these four steps were all fairly short steps. They only led the Daolord to rise to a slightly higher level each time, which was why almost all of the truly talented Daolords were able to reach the fourth step. However, the Daomerge represented an enormous chasm!

Even when ordinary Daolords succeeded in the Daomerge, their power would rise by two full levels. As for supreme Daolords like Ninedust or Winesage, they’d immediately become Hegemons. Those slightly weaker would still reach the Archon level of power.

Ning’s Omega Sword Dao would have an even more incredible result. The mysteries of the Sword Dao alone would result in him improving by two full levels of power, but he also needed to infuse it with a perfect sword-heart. In other words, advancing from the fourth-step Daolord Omega Sword Dao to an Eternal Omega Sword Dao would result in an increase of more than three full levels of power!

This was an enormous step he had to take, and there was no chance at all to test it out in advance! Even though Ning’s preparations had been quite plentiful, in the end he had still made a tiny mistake.

“This must be the true Eternal Omega Sword Dao.” Ning opened his eyes. In front of him was a faint sheen of sword-light. It looked very ordinary, with nothing special about it at all. It seemed to have no aura, no presence... nothing.

Rumble...

Unfathomably far away from the Flamedragon Realmverse, there existed a place. This place was where the prime essences of the entire Chaosverse were located, including the prime essence of the Dao of the Sword.

“So this is the prime essence of the Dao of the Sword?” Ning’s mind could clearly and distinctly sense it from afar... and it was identical in nature to the Eternal Omega Sword Dao he had just understood.

Suddenly, a surge of invisible power swept out and surrounded Ning’s consciousness. This power was vast and overwhelming but also as gentle as a mother’s embrace.

Ning instantly understood. This surge of power was the power of the prime essences of the Chaosverse. The power was embracing his mind and... comforting him. It was as though the Chaosverse itself felt a sense of regret and sympathy towards this cultivator.

“So I am the only one who has ever comprehended an Eternal Omega Dao?” Ning understood what the Chaosverse was whispering to him.

There had been others who had embarked upon the path of the Omega Dao, but all of them had failed during the Daomerge! The vast majority of the failures didn’t even have a technique like the [Heartsword] art available to them. Much like Ning, they had only realized how stringent the requirements for their Dao-hearts were during the actual Daomerge itself. Most of them had failed due to this. Occasionally, there were a few incredibly talented Daolords who did in fact have perfect Dao-hearts, but in the end there were quite a few errors in the Eternal Omega Dao they devised. Even though they eventually realized what their mistakes were, there was no way for them to discover what the right answer was.

Ning had the Autarch’s stone dais, the Stonefire Pearl, the Daomerge Firecloud Flower, and other external sources of support. He also had a perfect sword-heart and was at a level of talent that was every bit the equal of anyone who had come before him.

In the end, he had still failed the Daomerge... but immediately afterwards, he had instantly realized what the true Eternal Omega Sword Dao was. Alas, it was too late! He was now in control of and the master of the Eternal Omega Sword Dao, but he had already failed his Daomerge. Each person would only have one chance at the Daomerge. If you failed it, you failed it. Even the prime essences of the Chaosverse couldn’t help but sigh on his behalf. Alas, there was nothing they could do; all they could do was function in the way their nature intrinsically demanded. Everything they did was simply an expression of their intrinsic nature, and in truth they weren’t fully ‘sentient’ by the normal definition of the word.

All they could do was feel and express an innate sense of sorrow and sympathy for this poor soul.

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The Flower of Eternity withered away, its petals crumbling apart and falling.

It had been just a single tiny mistake, but that mistake was still enough to cause everything to crumble. There was no way for it to gain eternity.

Divine power and Immortal energy could be instantly recovered; they didn’t count for much. The truly lethal aspect of failing the Daomerge was the dissipation of the soul and truesoul. There was no way at all to halt or reverse the crumbling of a truesoul. No one was capable of it whatsoever. Not even Autarchs were able to do this!

The white-robed Ning within Vastheaven Palace and the black-robed Primaltwin in the Azureflower Estate were both filled with Ning’s truesoul. Their failure in the Daomerge caused the truesoul to begin

to crumble. Ning's soul and truesoul had become incredibly powerful over his countless years of cultivation, and the Nine Chaos Seals technique had further strengthened it to the Archon level... but it was of no use.

Hairline fractures had already appeared throughout every part of Ning's truesoul.

Crack! A tiny, crystalline piece of truesoul broke free. This fragment was translucent and dazzlingly beautiful, but as it floated away it gradually disappeared into nothingness, returning to the prime essences of the Chaosverse. Those who had their truesouls destroyed in a chaosworld would see their soul fragments be reclaimed by the prime essences of the Chaosverse. Those who failed the Daomerge would see their truesouls slowly and naturally fragment apart, also to be reclaimed by the Chaosverse. When the final pieces of truesoul were gone, they would die.

They could do nothing but watch as they slowly died. This was a very cruel end, and there were some Daolords who would be driven mad as a result.

The aura of life disappeared from both of Ning's avatars, and the truesoul within Ning's main body and Primaltwin both began to crumble...

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Ning arose from the altar. Even before the Daomerge had began, he had already prepared himself for the possibility of failure.

"For one who has found the Dao in the morning, death in the evening is nothing. I may have failed, but my failure has allowed me to find the true Eternal Omega Sword Dao. Compared to many other cultivators, I'm quite lucky. Nothing in the universe will go exactly as one hopes." Ning's gaze was distant. He murmured, "Yu Wei... sorry. I still failed in the end..."

Ning didn't care too much that he had failed the Daomerge and would perish. Given how long he had cultivated for, why would he fear death? As for his family, he had already spent an extremely long period of time by the side of his parents and his daughter. The only one he felt a debt towards was his wife, Yu Wei.

"I thought that I was invincible, that I could do anything and everything. But in the end, there was a limit to what I could accomplish. My road has come to an end." Ning waved his hand, causing a black jade stone to appear before him. This jade stone had already been cut to be roughly as tall as Ning himself.

Ning stretched out his right hand, gently stroking the surface of the jade. Sword-light appeared from the tips of his fingers, and as it swept past the jade, tiny bits of jade dust flew everywhere.

Slowly, the figure of a black-robed maiden became formed from the jade stone. Her features truly were dazzlingly beautiful, and her aura was quite extraordinary.

A hint of a smile appeared around Ning's lips. His wife, Yu Wei, truly had been a dazzling and beautiful person. She had been the most beautiful member of the Black-White College.

Whoosh. Whoosh. Whoosh. Ning's fingers continued to flicker across the jade stone, causing the sculpture to become more and more distinct. The jade Yu Wei's hair seemed to flutter, and her eyes stared lovingly at Ning.

Suddenly, Ning came to a halt and stepped back.

The white-robed Ning and the black-robed Yu Wei stared at each other, their gazes meeting in the air. It was almost as though she was still alive.

Moments later, Ning regained his composure. With but a thought, he caused the sculpture of the black-robed Yu Wei to fly towards him while shrinking to become palm-sized. As it flew towards Ning's chest, a string suddenly appeared out of nowhere and pierced through it. It hung inside Ning's clothes like a necklace, pressed against his bosom.

Ning gently stroked his chest. "Yu Wei... accompany me on the final steps of my journey." Ning then waved his hand, causing all six Northbow swords to appear before him.

"Quintessences, arise!" With but a thought, Ning transformed the quintessences within his six Lifeblood weapons, upgrading them from the fourth-step Daolord-level Omega Sword Dao to the Eternal Omega Sword Dao.

Boom! Boom! Boom! Boom! Boom! Boom! The six Northbow swords all emitted a keening sound as sword-light flared around them, revealing a terrifying sharpness. The light circulated across them, revealing that each and every one of them was changing and evolving from inside out. They immediately skyrocketed to the Universe treasure level! A good while later, the light completely vanished from them. Their power was now so reserved that they were like ordinary pieces of wood... but in truth, they had already become the deadliest weapons in all the Chaosverse.

This was because the quintessence cores within them had been created by the Eternal Omega Sword Dao, something which had never existed before. The Dao of the Sword was a Dao meant for battle and slaughter. In terms of killing power, these six swords had already vastly outstripped all other Universe treasures.

Whoosh! Whoosh! Whoosh! All six swords flew back into the sheath on Ning's back.

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Vastheaven Palace.

"That aura of might is weakening."

"How can this be?"

"But..." Emperor Solesky, Hegemon Azurefiend, the Flamewing God, Pillsaint, and the others were all shocked. Su Youji's face was completely ashen and devoid of all color.

"Master."

"Senior apprentice-brother." Ning's students and 'fellow disciples' were all frantic as well.

In the air outside Vastheaven Palace were Hegemon Brightshore, Hegemon Windrain, Hegemon Netherlily, Lord Wulf, the Black Emperors, Daoist Bluestone, Emperor Goldisle, and the other Eternal Emperors. Some sighed. Some shook their heads. Some smiled with delight. Some had ugly looks on their faces.

All of them had their own thoughts and considerations... but all of them knew that Daolord Darknorth had just failed the Daomerge.

They had seen far too many Daolords attempt the Daomerge. If a Daolord succeeded, there was no way his aura would plummet like that. In addition, they would also sense an aura of true eternity about that cultivator.

“Darknorth, a dazzling and peerless Daolord, has come to an end just like that.” Hegemon Brightshore shook his head and sighed.

“Daomerges for Omega Daos are simply too difficult,” Hegemon Windrain said.

“Go ahead and report it to Realmlord Windgrace,” Hegemon Netherlily said.

The three of them had long ago received orders from Realmlord Windgrace to monitor the situation, and so they all began to send word back.

“Hurry up and inform his Majesty that Daolord Darknorth has already failed the Daomerge.” The distant Lord Wulf could already foresee the grand war that was about to erupt, but he didn’t dare to delay in the slightest.

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The Hiddenfiend Realmverse. The Blacksun.

A bearded, disheveled-looking old man walked out of a courtyard. He raised his head to stare into the void, his eyes filled with light. “Daolord Darknorth... he was such an incredibly talented figure, but he still failed. The war against the Lonely King shall come next.”

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The endless Great Dark.

A large group of onyx humanoids were clustered together within a realmship. Alongside them were two golden humanoids who were standing to each side of a silver throne... and a third golden humanoid dressed in silver robes who was seated on that throne.

His gaze was as cold as ice, and the blood-red diamond in his forehead was beginning to change.

In truth, this man had long ago led the entire Icepeak Army to a place within the Great Dark that was extremely close to the Flamedragon Realmverse. He had been silently waiting for the signal, as he knew that if he was to fight against Realmlord Windgrace he couldn’t afford to get there late.

“Your Majesty, Lord Wulf sends word. Daolord Darknorth has failed the Daomerge!” a gray-robed Emperor said respectfully.

“As expected, he failed.” The Lonely King rested his arms on the armrests of his throne, then said softly, “Windgrace... let’s see if you win or if I win.”

“Head out!”

BOOM! The realmship tore through spacetime and immediately began to warp towards the Flamedragon Realmverse.

The Desolate Era

Book 39: Nuwa Chapter 1: A Daolord Who Failed the Daomerge

Vastheaven Palace. The Darknorth Estate.

Emperor Solesky, Su Youji, Hegemon Azurefiend, and the Flamewing God were all staring at the sealed gates to Ji Ning's estate.

Rumble... the gates to the estate swung open, followed by a white-robed youth with a black sheath on his back emerging from within.

Everything seemed so ordinary, as though nothing at all had happened... but Solesky, Azurefiend, and the others all sighed silently. All powerful experts were able to sense the tiny ripples generated by a decaying truesoul. Even though the ripples were incredibly minute, they were constant and continuous. Even though Ning's truesoul was unfathomably more powerful than an ordinary mortal's, given enough time it would still be extinguished.

"Master." Flamewing raised its giant head to stare at Ning rather desperately.

"Darknorth." Solesky and Azurefiend wanted to say something, but both hesitated. Su Youji's eyes were completely red, and she was using her Immortal energy to evaporate her tears as soon as they appeared.

"Look at all of you." Ning laughed. "Everyone who has chosen the path of cultivation knows how difficult a path this is. The Daomerge for an Omega Dao is the most difficult of all! I've failed my Daomerge, but I was mentally prepared for that long ago. It is no big deal."

"Good." Azurefiend's eyes lit up and he called out, "Darknorth, you have only trained for a fairly brief period of time, but I must confess that my Dao-heart is inferior to yours. If I had failed my Daomerge, I wouldn't have been able to endure it. Given my temperament, I probably would've gone crazy. Even if I managed to eventually calm down, it would've only happened after I vented for an extremely long period of time. I can't promise anything else, but I'll definitely continue to serve you. So long as you are alive, I will follow you and be by your side. I'll also carry out to the absolute best of my ability any tasks you wish me to do in the future."

"Thank you." Ning smiled. Some people who were forced to become retainers would feel resentment, but Ning and Azurefiend had known each other for so long that Azurefiend knew what type of person Ning was. Ning was an open, straightforward man who was benevolent to his friends and terrible to his foes. Azurefiend enjoyed his relationship with Ning, and he couldn't help but feel heartache upon seeing Ning fail the Daomerge. He couldn't help but sigh at how such a peerless Daolord was about to vanish from this universe.

"Darknorth, your students and fellow disciples are all waiting outside. Shall you...?" Solesky spoke out.

"Don't worry about them. This can be considered a lesson to them as to how cruel and brutal the Daomerge is," Ning said with a laugh. "Come, come! All of you, sit and drink with me. We'll have guests arriving soon."

“Guests?” Azurefiend and Solesky were briefly startled, but then they immediately understood. The Lonely King and Realmlord Windgrace had been biding their time. Now that Ning had failed the Daomerge, they would probably make their move.

“We’ll drink over here while awaiting our guests.” Ning turned to stare towards the outside, where a number of figures were flying over to Vastheaven Palace. He smiled. “Brother Brightshore, since you’ve arrived, share some wine with us.”

Whoosh. The protective barriers around Vastheaven Palace split apart, allowing Hegemon Brightshore, Hegemon Windrain, Hegemon Netherlily, Daoist Bluestone, Emperor Goldisle, Emperor Blackcloud, and some other Hegemons and Emperors who were on good terms with Ning to fly inside. Everyone knew each other and could be considered friends. Now that Ning had failed the Daomerge, all of them felt great regret and wished to meet with him.

When they saw how the white-robed youth greeted them all with a smile, the Hegemons and Emperors couldn’t help but secretly sigh once more. How many of them would be able to so quickly regain their calm after failing the Daomerge and suffering the most grievous blow a cultivator could possibly suffer? No wonder Daolord Darknorth had reached such impressive heights.

A pity. Such a pity.

His path was that of the Omega Dao. If he had chosen a simpler path, such as fusing multiple Supreme Daos, he probably would’ve already become a Hegemon.

“Let’s not chit-chat too much today. Drink up!” Ning said.

Hegemon Brightshore and the others all understood. An expert like Ning didn’t need the pity of others. “Alright, let’s just eat and drink!”

“Darknorth, don’t blame me if I end up cleaning your entire stock of wine!”

“Drink as much as you like. Our guests will probably interrupt us soon and prevent us from drinking,” Ning teased.

“Guests?” Hegemon Brightshore and the others all quivered. They knew that Ning was referring to Lonely King and Realmlord Windgrace. They couldn’t help but sigh. The only ones present who could truly maintain their uncaring calm were Flamewing and Ning himself.

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The Hegemons, Emperors, Su Youji, Pillsaint, and Flamewing all casually sat down alongside each other. Some sat down on the grass, some sat down on the stone bridge, some sat down within the pavilion. Everyone had a wine-laden table before them, and the estate was filled with the sound of jesting and laughing.

Just a short while later, a rumbling sound could be heard. Ning raised his head fractionally, glancing off into the distance. His gaze pierced through the void and allowed him to see a streak of azure light that had just reached the Vastheaven Everworld and making its way over here. This streak of azure light was the bearded, disheveled old ‘Realmlord Windgrace’.

No one aside from Ning noticed the Realmlord’s arrival.

“The Blacksun truly is remarkable. The Hiddenfiend Realmverse and the Flamedragon Realmverse are quite far away, but he was able to arrive in an instant.” Ning couldn’t help but sigh. “The Sithe truly are remarkable.”

Realmslord Windgrace walked through the air within the Vastheaven Everworld, quickly arriving outside Vastheaven Palace. “My young friend Darknorth.” His voice suddenly rang out from outside.

“Realmslord Windgrace has arrived. Come and share a few cups of wine with us,” Ning said. The barriers parted before the Realmslord, giving him a passageway inside. Realmslord Windgrace walked through the skies, following the passageway into Vastheaven Palace.

The Hegemons and Emperors within the Darknorth Estate all rose to their feet. Even the irascible Hegemon Azurefiend rose. The only ones to remain seated were Ning and Flamewing. “Greetings, Realmslord Windgrace,” everyone said respectfully.

When Realmslord Windgrace saw that Ning remained seated, he felt quite intrigued. His face, however, remained completely unruffled.

“Realmslord Windgrace. Please have a seat.” Ning pointed at a table located atop a patch of grass.

“This wine certainly smells nice.” Realmslord Windgrace walked over to the table, then sat down in the lotus position. He picked up the gourd of wine and began to guzzle it down. “Delicious, delicious! Darknorth, my young friend, I hurried here as soon as I heard that you failed the Daomerge. Alas... the Daomerge for an Omega Dao must have been incredibly difficult. The Autarchs once told me that no one has ever been able to succeed in the Daomerge with an Omega Dao.”

The entire area quickly fell silent. The many Hegemons and Emperors no longer dared to say a word. Su Youji and Pillsaint both sensed how oppressive and gloomy the atmosphere had become! For Realmslord Windgrace to immediately raise the topic of Ning failing the Daomerge meant that he had clearly come on business.

“I imagine you already know why I have come here, my young friend Darknorth.” Realmslord Windgrace looked at Ning. “It would be very difficult to convince the Flamewing God to willingly serve me... but if you, his master, agreed to help out then things would be much simpler. I won’t force you to agree; in the end, it will be your own choice. If there’s something you desire from me, you merely need to let me know what you want! I, Windgrace, will definitely do everything within my power to accomplish it. In fact, I can even swear a lifeblood oath on it.”

“Even if you do agree, I won’t take the Flamewing God away immediately. I’ll wait until you die and your Dao vanishes before doing so.” Realmslord Windgrace looked at Ning.

“GWAAAAAAR!” Ning was quite calm, but the happily-eating Flamewing was enraged upon hearing this. It let out a vicious roar as it transformed into its true form of a winged, flame-bathed bear, then moved to charge straight towards Realmslord Windgrace.

“Be good, Flamewing.” Ning’s voice caused Flamewing to come to a sudden halt. It turned to look rather unhappily at Ning. “Maaaaster!”

“Be good. Just keep eating. Don’t worry about this stuff,” Ning said.

“Oh.” Flamewing once more transformed into human form, then sat down and began to eat. Just two mouthfuls in, he once more turned his head to stare at Ning. “Master, the only one I’ll follow is you. I don’t like any of the others.”

“WINDGRACE!!!” A cold, clear voice filled with frigid might suddenly rang out, shaking the skies above Vastheaven Palace.

Ji Ning, Realmslord Windgrace, and the others all turned to look. They saw an enormous rift in spacetime appear in the skies above, with an entire host of figures flying out of it. There were more than fifty of the titanic onyx humanoids, and they were lined up in orderly rows. At their head was a pair of golden humanoids, who stood to each side of a giant, levitating silver throne.

A silver-robed golden humanoid was seated atop the silver throne. He stared downwards at the distant Vastheaven Palace with a cold look in his eyes, and the blood-colored diamond in the middle of his forehead glared like an icy third eye.

Lord Wulf led his four Black Emperors to immediately reunite with the others. Lord Wulf couldn’t help but let out a sigh of relief. Thankfully, his Majesty had arrived quite quickly. If he had been just a few minutes slower, things would’ve become troublesome.

“You came quite fast.” Realmslord Windgrace’s voice echoed within the skies above the palace. “And you brought the entire Icepeak Army! It seems you must’ve been waiting outside the Flamedragon Realmverse for quite some time now. But... ‘Lonely’, you should probably know that the soldiers of the Icepeak Army would be throwing their lives away if they got involved in this. You should have them hide and avoid getting involved in this.”

“And who would take their lives? You?” The Lonely King stared down at him from atop his throne.

The Hegemons and Emperors inside Vastheaven Palace, the disciples of Vastheaven Palace, the Eternal Emperors who were watching from within the Vastheaven Everworld... all of them were completely stunned. Nobody dared to make a move.

[The Desolate Era](#)

Book 39: Nuwa Chapter 2: Struggle

“T-that many legendary Black Emperors?!” The Eternal Emperors who had simply been drawn over by the aura Ji Ning had emanated during the Daomerge were utterly terrified out of their wits when they saw the Icepeak Army appear. Even the basic soldiers were all at the Hegemonic level of power, capable of wiping out the ordinary Emperors with ease... and the three generals had also come, alongside their leader the Lonely King himself!

“Is that the legendary leader of the Icepeak Army, the Lonely King?”

“I heard that Daolord Darknorth led the Flamewing God in attacking and killing quite a few Black Emperors of the Icepeak Army! However, the Icepeak Army hasn’t responded at all. Now, the Lonely King has finally appeared.”

“Both the Lonely King of the Icepeak Army and Realmslord Windgrace of our Sixteen Realmverses Alliance has appeared as well. Hmph... they must have all come for the Flamewing God.”

“It is a legendary Chaos Primordial. Who WOULDN'T want it? Daolord Darknorth is just a Daolord, but no one would dare to offend him with the Flamewing God by his side. Now that he has failed his Daomerge, the Lonely King and Realmslord Windgrace have come out to fight over the beast.” This was what the Eternal Emperors were whispering mentally to each other.

In truth, they all wanted to just flee, but they were simply too slow. As for tearing through spacetime? The Icepeak Army emanated invisible ripples of such incredible power that they simply didn't have the courage to do so, for fear that the Icepeak Army might kill them out of irritation.

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“Long ago, during the Dawn War, I encountered and fought far more Sithe than you have in your puny little Icepeak Army. If I activate the Blacksun, I'd massacre them all.” Realmslord Windgrace's voice was filled with danger: “Lonely, if you are also interested in the Flamewing God, let's sit down and have a peaceful little competition over it. But for you to bring the entire Icepeak Army... if we actually got into a fight, it'd probably impact the entire Vastheaven Everworld. If we aren't careful, the shockwaves might hit Vastheaven Palace.”

“Don't worry. If I wasn't able to control my power, there's no way I would've been able to live as long as I have.” The Lonely King continued to sit atop his throne as he said coldly, “As for massacring my Icepeak Army? The only reason you were able to render so many merits during the Dawn War was because you had many other major powers helping you out and fighting alongside you.”

“Gentlemen, let's sit down and talk this over,” Ning said, wine cup in hand. His voice echoed out and shook the air above the everworld, but did so via riding alongside the natural ripples of the Dao. He would no longer use divine power or Immortal energy unless truly necessary.

“Don't get involved. Windgrace and I will decide amongst ourselves who is superior,” the Lonely King replied coldly. “Come on out, Realmsgrace. If you don't come out, I'm going to batter my way inside.”

“Hmph.” Realmslord Windgrace let out an angry snort, then rose to his feet. “Darknorth, my young friend, let me shoo the Lonely King away.”

“Go ahead.” Ning didn't stand on ceremony. Wine cup in hand, he simply watched as Realmslord Windgrace flew away.

Boom! Boom! Boom! The Lonely King's silver throne suddenly glowed with dazzling light which flew out towards the right and left sides of his throne. There, a second and third Lonely King appeared, all seated on silver thrones of their own. There were now three Lonely Kings seated on three silver thrones, and they all looked identical and had identical auras.

“Assemble the formation!” the Lonely King ordered. Whoosh! The silver diagrams covering his three Gold Emperor generals all lit up, as did the silver diagrams covering the many Black Emperors. They had always emanated dense, frigid auras, but now the aura swept out to form an entire silver-white wave of ice which roared out in every direction. The three generals and the many soldiers came together to form a strange silver formation-diagram, with their bodies being covered by a layer of silver armor.

“Come. Let’s see if my Icepeak Army is stronger or if you are, Windgrace,” the Lonely King said coldly.

Realmslord Windgrace strode out of Vastheaven Palace, his eyes narrowing slightly. In truth, he was quite wary of the Icepeak Army. It wouldn’t be too hard for him to deal with the Lonely King, but the Icepeak Army represented an enormous number of opponents. If he wanted to deal with them, he’d have to activate the Blacksun multiple times! In addition, to actually kill a Black Emperor would require the Blacksun to unleash a high level of power each time... and this would cost him greatly.

He felt a 50% degree of confidence in dealing with the Lonely King and was 100% certain in being able to stay alive... but now that the entire Icepeak Army was here as well, his chances of victory were 10% at best, while his chances of staying alive dropped down to 80%-90%. Fortunately for him, the Lonely King felt rather nervous when faced with the Blacksun as well. This was why the Lonely King had immediately used a protective ability to divide himself into three.

“You split yourself into three bodies? So long as I wipe out all three of you, you’ll probably die,” Realmslord Windgrace said.

“Kill me? Go ahead and try.” The Lonely King’s voice remained as arrogant and domineering as ever. As soon as he spoke, the blood-red diamonds in his three foreheads simultaneously shot out rays of light.

Swish! Swish! Swish! The three blood-red rays of light flew even faster than Flamewing as they struck out towards Realmslord Windgrace.

Realmslord Windgrace remained quite calm. In front of him, a small fist-sized planet suddenly appeared out of nowhere. This planet was covered with countless runes, and it rapidly expanded to become thirty meters in diameter. Boom! Boom! Boom! It effortlessly deflected the attacks of the three blood-red rays of light. Realmslord Windgrace then walked straight inside the small planet.

“The Blacksun.” The Lonely King couldn’t help but feel frustrated. He had more treasures, but Realmslord Windgrace’s Blacksun was a terrifying war machine which had allowed the Sithe to influence and control an entire sector of the battlefield. The controller of the Blacksun could remain hidden within it in perfect security.

“He might have the Blacksun, but he isn’t an actual Sithe; he doesn’t have their limitless reservoirs of energy. I, on the other hand, have many tricks up my sleeve. I can have the entire Icepeak Army attack him. So long as they can surround and entrap the Blacksun, even if he remains hidden inside it’ll be like he’s in a prison. The only result will be death,” the Lonely King mused. However, he also knew that his chances of actually killing Realmslord Windgrace were quite low, while the cost would be quite high.

“So long as I can force Realmslord Windgrace to flee with the Blacksun, I’ll have won.” The Lonely King knew exactly what he needed to do. If the Realmslord fled, he felt certain that Daolord Darknorth would know what decision to make.

“Attack!” the Lonely King commanded.

Boom! The three Lonely Kings on the three silver thrones began to build an aura of increasing and terrifying power. This aura was so strong that even Ning, who was calmly drinking wine below them, to grimace slightly. He raised his head to stare into the skies, then murmured softly, “The legends say that the Lonely King was once able to annihilate an entire otherverse. Was this the technique he used? I can’t

let them continue like this. If this fight progresses, they might accidentally destroy the Vastheaven Everworld.”

“Halt!” Ning shouted as he rose to his feet, his voice tinged with a hint of anger.

Up above him were Realmlord Windgrace, the Lonely King, and the Icepeak Army. They were just about to engage in combat, but all of them turned to stare blankly.

“Are you afraid?” The three Lonely Kings stared downwards and laughed coldly: “Realmlord cannot kill me, and he doesn’t even know all the tricks I have available. Faced with my Icepeak Army, he’ll probably have no choice but to flee. Thus, Daolord Darknorth... I recommend that you simply go ahead and hand the Flamewing God over to me and let it serve me. I am the most appropriate master for it.”

Although the Lonely King had heard of the Blacksun long ago, when he actually saw Realmlord Windgrace produce it he couldn’t help but feel uneasy.

The same was true for Realmlord Windgrace. When actually faced with the entire Icepeak Army, he could sense that this would be a truly vicious battle. It would be best for them to end this without a fight. Once Daolord Darknorth came out to openly support one side, the battle would become meaningless, because the side who had the help of the Flamewing God would be the side to win. The Flamewing God was virtually indestructible, and nothing could withstand its charge. Even the Blacksun would be knocked aside, while the Icepeak Army would be torn asunder.

“Darknorth, you can choose for yourself.” Realmlord Windgrace looked at Ning.

“Hmph. Windgrace made you some promises, I expect?” The Lonely King said coldly, “But you should know what type of a person I am. No one can stop me from doing what I want to do. If anyone offends me, I’ll pay any price needed to exact my revenge.”

The entire area descended into a deep silence. All of the Hegemons and Emperors were quivering inside. They all knew of the Icepeak Army’s brutal reputation. The Lonely King truly was a terrifying figure when angered.

“I’ve been waiting a long, long time for that Flamewing God,” the Lonely King said coldly. “You have failed the Daomerge. Even if you live with the utmost of caution, you will still be nothing more than a puny Daolord with at most a thousand chaos cycles of longevity left. If you make an enemy out of me... I swear that I will annihilate any friends or family who have any connection to you whatsoever, and I’ll wipe out your homeland as well. Based on the reports I uncovered, you first appeared within the Badlands Territory, yes? Back then, you were just an Elder God! I imagine a puny Elder God couldn’t have travelled all that far, which means your homeland should be near the Badlands Territory. Given my power and the power of the Icepeak Army, we’ll definitely be able to locate it.”

The three Lonely Kings stared intently at Ning, the diamonds in their foreheads glowing with that eerie, evil blood-red light.

“I trust you know what the right choice is.” The Lonely King all but palpitated with malevolence.

Originally, Ning had been quite calm... but when he heard the Lonely King threaten to ‘annihilate any friends or family who have any connection to you whatsoever’ and say that Ning’s ‘homeland should be near the Badlands Territory’, a cold look flashed through Ning’s eyes.

Snick. Ning drew a sword from the black sheath on his back.

“What, are you about to go crazy? I hear that some Daolords who failed the Daomerge will cast caution to the wind and go berserk... but not even your Flamewing God is able to harm me in the slightest. No matter what, I’ll be able to annihilate everyone and everything you care about!” Murder all but radiated from the Lonely King’s eyes.

Whoosh. Ning took a single step forwards, his body flickering as he moved so fast he vastly surpassed both the Flamewing God and the light which had shot out of those blood-red diamonds. He appeared right next to the left-most Lonely King, and he delivered a casual chopping blow with his Northbow sword.

Swish. It was an ordinary strike which even the distant Hegemons and Eternal Emperors were able to see with clarity. It seemed so very slow, but it sliced through the Lonely King’s neck with ease, cutting through his silver robes and even his golden body as though they were made out of tofu. The cut was so clean that one couldn’t even see a wound actually appear on the Lonely King’s neck.

The attack looked slow, but that was just a deceptive illusion caused by the temporal disruption inherent to this strike. In truth, it was so fast that no one was able to react at all.

“Y-you...” the Lonely King’s eyes bulged out. An invisible power struck at him through karma, instantly wiping out his soul.

At his current level, Ning didn’t need to worry about which of the three was the ‘real’ one; Ning’s sword was connected to karma itself. Even if the ‘true’ Lonely King was hidden away in a completely different realmverse or otherverse, he still would have perished.

The Lonely King’s bulging eyes suddenly softened. A look of release appeared in his gaze, and his lips actually curved upwards in a smile. Moments later, his aura completely vanished.

All three Lonely Kings slumped downwards. Two of them completely vanished, while the other lay fallen atop his silver throne.

Ning glanced sideways at the already-perished Lonely King, then murmured softly, “You are right. As a Daolord who has failed the Daomerge, there’s a limit to how long I can live. I really didn’t want to use up any energy... but once you made those threats, I had no choice but to respond.”

Snick. Ning resheathed the Northbow sword back into the scabbard on his back.

[The Desolate Era](#)

Book 39: Nuwa Chapter 3: Accept Punishment

Ji Ning stared weighingly at the Lonely King’s silver robes, his blood-red diamond, and the silver throne he had been seated on. These were all extremely powerful Sithe weapons. They were of little use to him, but of incalculable value to others. He immediately waved his hand, collecting the Lonely King’s corpse, throne, and treasures.

The entire area was completely silent. The skies above Vastheaven Palace had previously been the arena for the face-off between Realmslord Windgrace and the Icepeak Army. Moments ago, their auras had been flaring... but now, all of them held their breaths.

The terrified Emperors who were watching from afar were all staring in disbelief. Even the people inside Vastheaven Palace such as Emperor Solesky, Hegemon Azurefiend, and the Flamewing God all stared with heads upraised.

In this moment, every single cultivator's attention was completely focused upon the white-robed youth with the black sheath on his back.

His aura was quite ordinary, the aura of a Daolord. One could even sense that his truesoul was continuously crumbling away in tiny amounts. He was nothing more than a pitiful Daolord who had failed the Daomerge, but...

They all watched blankly as the white-robed figure collected the Lonely King's Sithe weapons. No one dared to stop him, even though they were deeply interested in those treasures.

"Master... h-he..." Su Youji stared with her head raised. Her eyes were brimming with tears, and her face was red with excitement.

She felt excited for Ning! She could still remember the first time they had met. Back then, he had been an Elder God while she had been an Ancestral Immortal. She had already been incomparably beautiful, with many cultivators wooing her in the hopes of becoming her Dao-companion. When she had met Ning, she had watched as Ning battled above his class against World-level cultivators, and thus she had immediately chosen to voluntarily join him as his retainer.

She had followed him, watching him grow from up close. He had become increasingly dazzling, becoming the number one Daolord in all the history of the Flamedragon Realmverse. He had taken on a Hegemonic retainer and even tamed the Flamewing God... but in the end, he had still failed his Daomerge.

She felt a sense of great heartache and sorrow as she watched her master's truesoul slowly but surely crumble away... but then she saw that single, dazzling sword-strike. The Lonely King, someone who even Hegemons viewed with reverence, had collapsed supinely beneath that strike. First, Su Youji had felt stunned. Then, she had felt a true sense of excitement and delight for her master.

"Even though he has failed the Daomerge, he'll become the most dazzling star in all the night sky. Even though he will one day perish, his light shall illuminate countless realmverses and otherverses, and be forever whispered unto the end of time. He shall become one of the most unbelievable of legends." Su Youji stared upwards at him, her eyes blazing with eagerness.

"Such power! H-how could he have... how..." Emperor Solesky mumbled nonsensically to himself as he stared.

"The Lonely King? Finished with just one strike of the sword?" Hegemon Azurefiend's wizened old face was contorted with shock. "I've wandered the vast Chaosverse for many years, but I've never even heard of such a thing. Most likely, only the exalted Autarchs or perhaps the supreme members of the Sithe race, those Exalts, would be capable of such a thing."

In the cultivator civilizations, the only ones capable of such an act were the Autarchs. Although the Sithe Exalts were weaker than the Autarchs, they were still definitely above the Otherverse Lords in power. They were unfathomably powerful and even faster than the Flamewing God. In a direct clash, the

Flamewing God would be suppressed by a Sithe Exalt even though Flamewing had an indestructible body! Three Exalts working together had actually managed to capture it alive. In the cultivator civilizations, only Autarchs were capable of capturing Chaos Primordials.

Now... a Daolord who had failed the Daomerge had actually reached that same, terrifying level of power?

How powerful was he? Was he comparable to those Sithe Exalts, or was he even stronger than them and close to the Autarchs in might? The Hegemons and Emperors had no idea, and it didn't really matter. The only thing that mattered was this truth: Hegemons and Otherverse Lords would all perish with just one strike from Ning's sword.

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After Ning collected the Lonely King's treasures, he swept the area with his gaze, then smiled.

"Realmslord Windgrace and the Icepeak Army, please follow me. As for the other Emperors and Hegemons, you'll have to pardon me; I won't be able to accompany you for now."

"You are being far too courteous, Daolord Darknorth." The ordinary Eternal Emperors off in the distance all felt surprised and delighted by his courtesy. They all relaxed quite a bit. Normally, they had to behave with great reverence when they were in the presence of Hegemons. This truly peerless Daolord had just slain the Lonely King with ease and was so powerful that even Hegemons wouldn't dare to breathe too loudly in front of him, and yet he spoke with such courtesy!

"Daolord Darknorth, I truly have never even heard of sword-arts like yours."

"Impressive, truly impressive. I, Daoist Violetstar, have truly been enlightened today. I've wandered for over ten million chaos cycles and visited many realmverses, but I've never been as stunned as I am right now. Even if I died the very next instant, I would still feel that it would all have been worth it."

"Daolord Darknorth, we won't bother you any further."

"We'll leave now." The Emperors still felt a mixture of reverence and fear. Right now, they were even more nervous when facing Daolord Darknorth than they had been when facing Realmslord Windgrace or the Lonely King.

Ning simply smiled, watching as the Emperors all departed.

Hegemon Brightshore, Hegemon Windrain, Hegemon Netherlily, Daoist Bluestone, and a number of others all flew over. The others all felt rather nervous, but Hegemon Brightshore had always been on very good terms with Ning. As a result, he felt a bit more relaxed. His ancient eyes were filled with a look of amazement, and he let out a sigh: "Darknorth, after seeing your sword... I still feel panic in my heart."

"I didn't want to draw my sword," Ning said. "But the Lonely King was protected by Sithe artifacts. If I didn't draw my sword, I wouldn't be able to kill him. Using my weapons and exerting my energy will result in my truesoul crumbling even faster."

"Correct." Hegemon Brightshore nodded. "From now on, you should avoid fighting whenever possible. Your sword-arts truly are dazzling to behold! A pity that we won't be able to see it too many times in the future."

“You win some, you lose some. All you can do is meet it with a calm heart,” Ning said with a smile.

“Darknorth?” Daoist Bluestone smiled. “You said that you had to draw your sword if you wanted to kill the Lonely King. Are you saying that you wouldn’t even need to draw your sword to deal with us?”

Ning nodded. “Correct.”

“You might not need to draw your sword, but you’d still need to use up a bit of energy to deal with us,” Emperor Goldisle said with a chortle. “So it’s best if you don’t just go crazy and start killing everyone, Daolord Darknorth.”

“Goldisle, I won’t go crazy anytime soon, but... generally speaking, I should be able to kill my foes just by activating the might of my Dao. There’s no need for me to actually use up any of my divine power or Immortal energy,” Ning said. If one didn’t use one’s weapons, divine power, or Immortal energy, the amount of power that one could summon simply from the might of his Dao itself was quite low.

But... Ning’s Dao was the Eternal Omega Sword Dao, and it represented the true prime essence of the Dao of the Sword itself! The domain generated by his Dao might not be able to kill the likes of the Lonely King, nor would it be enough to kill Otherverse Lords who were protected by the prime essences of their own otherverses, but it was more than capable of killing ordinary Hegemons. Ning wouldn’t need to use up any of his own power at all.

“You...!” A sour look appeared on Goldisle’s face. “Can’t you let us save just a tiny bit of face?”

“Haha, enough chit-chat. I need to go speak with Windgrace and the Icepeak Army,” Ning said.

“Right. We’ll head off then.”

“If there’s anything you need, just send word. We’ll definitely help out.”

“We’re off.” The supreme powers of the Flamedragon Realmverse began to leave, their hearts filled with mixed emotions.

In truth, by now they were able to guess that the reason why Ning was so strong was most likely due to him being in control of the Eternal Omega Sword Dao. But... he had also failed the Daomerge. There was no doubt about that.

“What a true pity. A peerless major power is going to slowly fade away, and there’s nothing anyone can do.” Hegemon Windrain sighed.

“We won’t be able to see his dazzling sword-arts many more times in the future. It will eventually become nothing more than a myth,” Hegemon Netherlily said.

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Ning simply stood there. It was for Reamlord Windgrace and the Icepeak Army to come meet him.

“Daolord Darknorth.” A look of shock was in Reamlord Windgrace’s eyes, and he actually bowed slightly. “I truly am stunned by the sword-arts I just saw. The Autarchs might be powerful, but their power comes from their Daobirth, where ‘one Dao births many Daos’. As far as the pure Dao of the Sword goes... you, Daolord Darknorth, are number one in all the Chaosverse. I was a bit too arrogant

when I came and asked for the Flamewing God; I'd like to ask you to pardon me. If there's anything you need, just let me know. If you wish to punish me for my impertinence, I'm willing to accept it."

Ning nodded. No one had ever gained eternity for an Omega Dao in all of history; he was the first. That meant he was naturally the first to be the master of an Eternal Omega Sword Dao. He truly was the number one master of the sword in the entire history of the Chaosverse!

"Windgrace. Icepeak Army." Ning's gaze turned to the nearby members of the Icepeak Army. The three Gold Emperors and the many Black Emperors of the Icepeak Army all felt very nervous.

"Respectful greetings, Daolord Darknorth. We truly are ashamed to have offended you by our actions, and we too are willing to accept any punishment you may mete out. Now that you have slain the Lonely King, we actually feel a sense of gratitude in our hearts," Lord Wulf said respectfully. "Myself, brother Wei, and brother Solefinger, along with the many Black Emperors under our command... although we gained the power of Gold Emperors and Black Emperors and became much more powerful, we lost something as well. Our lives fell under the complete control of the Lonely King, and we have never dared to oppose his commands. Now that you have slain the Lonely King, we have finally been released."

Ning nodded. "I won't punish any of you... but there is something I need you all to do for me."

"Please tell us what you need, Daolord Darknorth." The three generals and the many Black Emperors all respectfully awaited Ning's orders.

[The Desolate Era](#)

Book 39: Nuwa Chapter 4: Searching For Nuwa

"I wish to find a female cultivator," Ji Ning said.

"Find a female cultivator?" The three generals and the Black Emperors were all rather puzzled, as was the nearby Realmlord Windgrace. They all knew that Ning had trained for a fairly brief period of time and hadn't travelled to many places; it should be easy for him to find a female cultivator. There was no need to send the entire Icepeak Army to carry out a task like this.

"Her name is Nuwa," Ning said. "She hasn't trained for very long either, and she should be incredibly talented. She might be a Daolord, but she might also have become an Eternal Emperor. She is most likely located in a place which is extremely far away from the Flamedragon Realmverse."

Ning hadn't visited too many places, but he had accumulated records on all the Daolords and Emperors of the Sixteen Realmverses Alliance. There had been no records of Nuwa at all!

Clearly, ever since Nuwa left the Three Realms she had never again appeared within the territory of the Sixteen Realmverses Alliance. After Ning had mastered the Eternal Omega Sword Dao, he had reached an inconceivably high level of insight. He was now in control of one of the prime essences of the Chaosverse, the prime essence of the Dao of the Sword. In other words, he now had a vague understanding of how the entire Chaosverse itself functioned, giving him a greater degree of insight into fate! Mother Nuwa and Ning were connected to each other by karma, because the very first step Ning had taken as a mortal... was to study the [Nuwa Painting]!

After Ning had completed and mastered the Eternal Omega Sword Dao, he was able to sense through the whispers of fate that Nuwa was still alive in an extremely remote part of the Chaosverse!

“Nuwa?” The three generals, Realmlord Windgrace, and the Black Emperors all revealed puzzled expressions.

“None of you have heard of her?” Ning couldn’t help but feel a bit disappointed when he saw the looks on their faces. Realmlord Windgrace had many friends but was permanently stationed in the Hiddenfiend Realmverse; it wasn’t surprising that he hadn’t heard of Nuwa. The Icepeak Army, however, roved the Chaosverse and visited many places. Ning had thought that they might have heard of her, especially since Ning felt certain that Nuwa’s level of talent must have led her to accomplish great things!

It must be remembered that when the Pangu Chaosworld and the Seamless Chaosworld collided, that represented the smashing together of two Autarch-level godgems. In the resulting battle, Nuwa had broken through to the World level! Karmic luck had descended upon her, resulting in a great deal of the essence fragments of the Autarch’s godgems to swirl around her as well.

It was incredibly rare and marvelous for a cultivator to break through to the World level without any guidance whatsoever. Even Ning had merely been at the Elder God/Ancestral Immortal level when he left the Three Realms. True, Ning had only trained for a fairly brief period of time... but Mother Nuwa was definitely in a class of her own during the ‘Primordial Era’ of the Pangu Chaosworld. She had definitely surpassed the Three Sovereigns, Tathagata, Three Purities, and Subhuti, and she was the unquestioned leader of the Nuwa Alliance. By now, even Subhuti and Windfiend had fused multiple Supreme Daos together. Ning felt certain that Nuwa wouldn’t be inferior to any of them.

That meant that Nuwa would probably be quite famous in the region she was currently in! If the Icepeak Army had visited her region, it was highly likely that they would’ve heard mention of the name ‘Nuwa’.

“Haven’t heard of her.” Lord Wulf shook his head, then turned and barked, “Have any of you heard of a ‘Nuwa’ before?”

“No.”

“We’ve roamed through many places, but we’ve never heard of a powerful female cultivator named Nuwa.”

“Haven’t heard of her.” They all shook their heads.

Ning turned to look at Realmlord Windgrace, who immediately shook his head. “I haven’t heard of her either. Daolord Darknorth, the Icepeak Army has visited many places. If even they haven’t heard of her, she’s not going to be easy to find.”

Ning frowned. “Nuwa has only trained for a short period of time; perhaps she isn’t well-known yet. Icepeak Army, the mission I have for you is for you to ride realmships to one realmverse after another. Spread the word on my behalf! Say that I, Daolord Darknorth, am searching for a female cultivator named ‘Nuwa’. She should have only been training for roughly a hundred chaos cycles of ‘normal’ time. You can also make it known that I, Daolord Darknorth, will owe a debt to the first person to find Nuwa for me. I can use treasures to pay off my debt, but I can also help deal with someone... such as the Lonely King, who I slew!”

“This...” Realmslord Windgrace and the Icepeak Army were shocked. This offer was a crazy one. The Lonely King had been an incredible figure in the Chaosverse, a mighty ruler in his sector. Daolord Darknorth’s promise was definitely enough to drive many major powers wild with excitement.

A favor from Daolord Darknorth was definitely something worth having!

“Hurry up and spread the word to as many realmverses as you can. This is the only task I have for you,” Ning said. “Once I find Nuwa, you’ll gain your freedom. If I cannot find her, then you’ll be released from this oath after I die and my Dao vanishes.”

“Very well.”

“Don’t worry, Daolord Darknorth.” The three generals and the Black Emperors all immediately agreed. This was an incredibly simple task; all they had to do was serve as a messenger! Daolord Darknorth wasn’t going to be around for much longer; at most, he’d survive for another thousand chaos cycles. This was quite easy. The Icepeak Army immediately swore the requisite lifeblood oaths.

“Go now. If anyone discovers Nuwa, they can immediately inform Windgrace. When he knows, I’ll know,” Ning said. In the end, he himself simply didn’t know enough people. Even if someone did locate Nuwa, it would be quite difficult for that person to find Ning. Windgrace, however, had a wide network of friends; it would be far easier for others to reach him.

“Understood.” The members of the Icepeak Army all assented to his order, then excitedly departed.

How could they not be excited? This wasn’t the calamitous punishment they had expected; in fact, it was a huge blessing in disguise! Now that the Lonely King was dead, their lives were their own again. They would truly be free once more. How many major powers were truly willing to serve as pawns and footsoldiers for another? Long ago, they had been weak and thus lusted after the power which becoming a Black Emperor or Gold Emperor would grant them, which was why they had gritted their teeth and accepted servitude.

Now? They didn’t lose any of the power they had gained, nor was their fate in the hands of another. They were all free. Wasn’t this a wonderful thing? And once they helped Daolord Darknorth locate ‘Nuwa’, they would become truly and perpetually free.

“Windgrace.” Ning looked at Windgrace. “You can probably guess what I need you to do.”

“A simple task. I’ll send the word out as widely as I can,” Realmslord Windgrace said.

“Good.” Ning nodded. “Sorry to trouble you, Realmslord.”

“Tis nothing at all.” Realmslord Windgrace secretly let out a sigh of relief as well. Daolord Darknorth truly was an easy-going person. Many cultivators in his position would behave much more ruthlessly! Given that Ning had already failed the Daomerge, no one would’ve been surprised if he had turned ruthless and chose to simply kill Windgrace. If that happened, Windgrace wouldn’t even have had a chance to feel regret! Thus, he had waited nervously for Ning’s judgment, not daring to argue in the slightest. But now, it seemed, Ning’s request was quite simple. All he had to do was to spread the word.

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The story of the legendary battle which occurred after Daolord Darknorth's attempted Daomerge was quickly spread by Realmslord Windgrace, the Hegemons and Emperors of the Sixteen Realmverses Alliance, and the Icepeak Army. The latter rode realmships in every direction, spreading the news far and wide. As a result, word spread like a tempest!

Although the Chaosverse was so vast that spreading information was usually quite difficult, this particular bit of news was utterly astonishing, especially given how famous the Lonely King was. As a result, news truly did spread quite fast.

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"Old man! Old man! A giant foot came crashing down through the clouds and slamming against the surface of an enormous planet, causing the earth to tremble. The towering figure to which the giant foot belonged continued to bellow, "Hurry up and wake up, you blind old man!"

"FUCK OFF!" a hoarse, ear-piercing voice rang out from deep underneath the earth.

"Hurry up and wake up! Something big just happened. Stop sleeping! This time, the towering figure stomped down on the ground using his two bare feet, causing the earth to shudder and shake.

"One day, I'm going to EAT you," the hoarse, unpleasant voice said. A boom rang out, followed by the entire planet exploding as an ugly black bird appeared in its center. This bird had just a single eye, but the eye was shut. It looked rather like an owl, but it had a pair of extremely large black wings.

"I've got some good news for you, you blind old man! A while ago, the Lonely King sent the Icepeak Army after you and forced you into fleeing, right?" The speaker was an alien Hegemon dressed in simple armor and who had two furry heads. "The Lonely King died!"

"Why are you mentioning this again? I TOLD you to never... huh? Did you just say the Lonely King died?" The black avian let out a startled, ear-piercing screech.

"It's true! Word has spread to our Fivebug Realmverses. You're probably the only one who doesn't know because you spend all your time sleeping!" the two-headed Hegemon said.

"How'd he die?" the black avian immediately asked. "Given how strong the Lonely King was, so long as he didn't do anything suicidal there shouldn't be anyone capable of killing him."

"Heh heh heh... I have to tell you a story about someone truly remarkable named Daolord Darknorth." The two-headed Hegemon immediately began to narrate the story.