

Desolate 1361

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Book 40: The Five Autarchs Chapter 12: Help

“The power of the Chaosverse is too overwhelmingly mighty. Although we were born from this Chaosverse and thus the prime essences do not reject us, we still cannot withstand their incredible might.” Autarch Titanos sighed. “Trying to accomplish this task through raw force simply results in us imploding under the weight of the Chaosverse’s power. It’s sheer suicide! Entropos and Awakener were both extremely powerful, but neither of them were able to endure the weight of that power. Before they died, they sent us messages to never try it again; the difference was simply too great.”

The other four Autarchs all fell silent, while Ning himself nodded slowly. It was like death through over-eating. Sometimes, accepting an excessively heavy burden would result in you being crushed to death by it! Even the most powerful figures in the Chaosverse, the Autarchs, were unable to withstand even the minimum pressure required to take control over the full power of the Chaosverse. This must have been why the estate-spirit of the Azureflower Estate had stated that Autarch Awakener had essentially committed suicide.

“But we had no other choices available to us,” Autarch Titanos said. “This is the only method we had available for ensuring the perpetual security of our Chaosverse. There really are no other options available to us. That’s why Skyfeeder was planning to make the attempt as well.”

“I’ve spent an incredibly long period of time training in the Quintessence,” Autarch Skyfeeder said. “I’ve tried a few low-level mock-bindings. I think I have a shot.”

“Awakener and Entropos both felt the same way.” Autarch Titanos shook his head.

“That’s the allure of it all.” Autarch Ekong chuckled. “Stop playing the fool. There’s ALWAYS a ‘shot’, but we’d probably all die chasing after that flitting chance. Now that we have Darknorth, our civilization has a real shot. There’s no need for us to foolishly go off and commit suicide.”

Puzzled, Ning asked, “Are there really no other options? Is becoming a Lord of Chaos truly the only path which is available to us? If we’ve already defeated the Sithe and sealed them away, why don’t we just kick them all out?”

“If we could kick them out, we would’ve done so long ago.” Autarch Bolin chuckled softly.

“We’re not able to do that,” Autarch Stonerule said.

Autarch Skyfeeder smiled and explained, “Daolord Darknorth, as you know the Sithe have incredibly powerful weapons at their disposal. The deeper you go into their ‘homeland’, the stronger their defenses become and the more powerful their weapons are! Their homeland is the most dangerous place in all the Chaosverse. During the Dawn War, what we did was to attack their bases throughout the Chaosverse. We didn’t fight them in their lair!”

“We had a geographical advantage when fighting in the other parts of the Chaosverse. The Sithe were confident in their chances at first, and if they wished to bind the Quintessence they would have to kill us all,” Autarch Skyfeeder explained. “That is why they came out of their main base and fought against us throughout the Chaosverse. In the end, we won an extremely narrow victory.”

“If they wish to bind the Quintessence, they must kill you all first?” Ning didn’t fully understand.

Autarch Titanos nodded. “Correct.”

“Early on, during the first days of the Chaosverse, there were actually extremely few living beings. Later on, life began to flourish. More and more living beings came into existence... but there’s a limit to how much energy the Chaosverse has! Cultivators learned to take in the power of the Chaosverse for themselves, becoming more powerful. By now, I estimate that the majority of the power of the Chaosverse has actually been concentrated within the bodies of the countless cultivators currently alive.”

“Thus, when cultivators die and their truesouls collapse, all that energy shall return to the Quintessence or the local everworlds and otherverses. However... the Sithe knew a way to kill us and then take away our truesoul energy!” Autarch Titanos continued, “The more of us they killed, the weaker our entire Chaosverse became. If it loses enough power, the Quintessence itself will become so weak that even foreign outsiders like the Sithe will be capable of binding it.”

Ning finally understood. As in all other areas, the Sithe undoubtedly had binding techniques that far surpassed what the local cultivator civilizations possessed! However, they were still outsiders; they would be suppressed and rejected by this Chaosverse. They had to first weaken it and bleed it before they would stand a chance at success.

“The most powerful creatures in our entire Chaosverse are the Autarchs. Us. If they can kill even a single Autarch, it would be considered a great success.” Autarch Titanos chuckled. “A pity for them that killing us is extremely difficult. Below us are the Hegemons, and the Sithe are quite happy to kill them as well. What they needed was slaughter on a vast scale, and in order to achieve that they had to come out from their main lair and attack us throughout the Chaosverse. Otherwise, they wouldn’t have been able to achieve their aims.”

“In the end, we won. However, during our final assault against the Sithelands, we were only able to take control over their outer perimeter. We could sense that tremendous danger lay hidden at the center of their lair, and we could subconsciously sense that if we dared to attack, we could very well perish. Thus, we decided to instead seal them away and ensure that they cannot come out,” Autarch Titanos said.

“Since their goal was to weaken our Chaosverse, we naturally had to come up with a way to replenish it and strengthen the Quintessence. We chose to use the imprisoned Sithe Exalts for that task. The ‘torture’ those Sithe Exalts are enduring is actually serving to slowly assimilate them in order to replenish the energies of the Chaosverse. The goal is to cause them to break down, at which point we would assimilate every scrap of their power. Since their power originally came from outside our Chaosverse, this will allow the total amount of energy belonging to our Chaosverse to grow,” Autarch Titanos explained. “This was a clumsy method, but the only one we had.”

Autarch Ekong smirked. “Unfortunately, it hasn’t really worked at all. Those six imprisoned Sithe Exalts have been resisting our efforts. They’ve been tormented for ages, but their Dao-hearts have yet to crumble and they remain in control of their energies.”

“Sooner or later, they’ll give up. Once they do so, they’ll be assimilated and their energies shall be taken away,” Autarch Titanos said.

Puzzled, Ning said, "During the war, we killed many Sithe Exalts. Were we unable to draw from the truesoul energies of those slain Exalts?"

"Wouldn't work." Autarch Ekong laughed, "Things aren't going to be that easy! Long ago, the Sithe set wards over their truesouls. As soon as they die, their energies will depart from our Chaosverse and return to their own. That's why we had to imprison those six Sithe Exalts."

"Thus... our civilization is actually in dire straits," Autarch Titanos said. "All of us are doing our best to try and solve this problem, because we fear that one day an outside power will take control over our Chaosverse and terraform it to become more hospitable to them, resulting in our complete extermination."

Ning finally understood. In the past, Ning was without any real worries or concerns; he felt that if there were any existential problems, it would be up to the Autarchs to handle them. There was no need for him to concern himself. But now that he stood amongst the ranks of the Autarchs, he finally understood just how dangerous a situation the Chaosverse was in!

How much longer would the cultivator civilizations be able to last? A few million more chaos cycles? A few billion? Longer? But if they were unable to produce a true Lord of Chaos, then in the end they would still face extinction. Even if they weren't destroyed by the Sithe, they would be destroyed by other outside civilizations.

"Going against the laws of the Chaosverse is actually causing harm to the prime essences, which is why we rarely reverse spacetime to revive people." Autarch Titanos sighed. "Your deceased Dao-companion is a good example. Her truesoul contained just the tiniest of smidgeons of Autarch Awakener's power; reverse spacetime to revive her really wouldn't cause my harm to the prime essences at all. And yet, the prime essences would fight back with all their might to resist it! This is because they innately wish to stay in peak condition, for fear that outside forces will take control over them."

Ning nodded slowly.

"Haha. Thankfully, the situation isn't critical just yet," Autarch Ekong said with a laugh. "Although there might be more enemies in the future, for now we only have to face the Sithe! We've sealed away their homeland, giving us the upper hand!"

"Don't celebrate just yet," Autarch Titanos said calmly. "The Sithe have been dormant for far too long. They might receive reinforcements from outside and become even more powerful."

"But we have Darknorth." Autarch Ekong continued to smile happily. He was the only Autarch who had risen to power after the Dawn War had concluded. As a result, he was the most confident of the five.

"Darknorth." Autarch Titanos laughed in a relaxed manner. "Five of the six Autarchs have all gathered here today. Mogg is the only one absent, and that is because he permanently stationed to stand guard over the Sithelands and keep an eye on it. This is because there is something we need from you, something that involves the survival of our entire civilization."

"Yes." The other four Autarchs all looked at Ning.

"Pray tell." Ning nodded. Now that he knew what a dangerous situation his civilization was in, he naturally wouldn't shirk his duty. As someone who now stood at the very apex of power, he had to help

the Autarchs as best he could. As the saying goes, ‘when the skies collapse, let the big guys handle it’; Ning was now one of the ‘big guys’!

“Only when our civilization gives rise to a Lord of Chaos shall we be truly and perpetually safe.” Autarch Titanos looked at Ning. “But taking control over the full power of the Chaosverse is very, very difficult. We stand no chance at all. There is, however, one path that is certain to succeed. That path is... using an Omega Dao to become an Autarch!”

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Book 40: The Five Autarchs Chapter 13: What Do You Desire?

“You are on par with us in power. If you became an Autarch through an Omega Dao, you would probably become far, far more powerful than the rest of us, and far more powerful than Entropos and Awakener were. Awakener, Entropos, Skyfeeder... all of them sensed that they had a chance. An Omega Autarch would probably be able to easily annihilate the entire Sithelands with ease! If you also had control over the full power of the Chaosverse, you would become completely invincible.” Autarch Titanos looked at Ning. “And that is what we need your help for.”

“Me? But... I’ve already failed my Daomerge,” Ning said.

“Ah, but you’ve mastered an Eternal Omega Dao,” Autarch Skyfeeder said.

“With your Eternal Omega Dao, I feel confident that our civilization will soon give birth to a true Omega Emperor! There are no lethal pitfalls between the ‘Emperor’ stage and the ‘Autarch’ stage, which means that given enough time that person would have a chance. Even if he remained at the ‘Emperor’ stage, he would still be on par with the five of us in power.” Autarch Titanos said eagerly, “In the past, we’ve actually worked to hide the existence of the Omega Daos, preventing word of them from spreading. This was because this path was so difficult, we were afraid that many of our most talented geniuses would die when attempting to trod it.”

“Consider many of the current Hegemons. Imagine if they had known of the existence of Omega Daos when they were at the World level, and even had techniques to guide them! Given their talent and given enough time, many of them would stand a good chance in embarking upon the path of the Omega Dao... but what would the end result be? They would fail the Daomerge, then die!”

“Your chances at the Daomerge are much better if you train by yourself, rather than receive fragmented guidance from others. Those who are good enough to blaze a trail for themselves stand the best chances of all,” Autarch Titanos said.

Ning agreed with this assessment. When you had no guidance, cultivation would be extremely difficult... but as a result, those who nonetheless succeeded were generally possessed of incredible comprehension abilities! The Three Realms was a good example of this. They originally had no legacies or techniques to guide them, making it hard for them to even reach the World level... but those who succeeded were all truly incredible figures!

This was doubly true for the Omega Daos. If you were given guidance, you might be able to embark upon a path you would never have been able to discover on your own... but in the end you would still fail before the Daomerge.

Those who were able to embark upon this path on their own would naturally be blessed with tremendous talent and insight! In all the Chaosverse, only a pitiful handful of people were able to even reach the Fourth Step of an Omega Dao. Every single such person was an incredible genius, and they had a good chance at the Daomerge. Even though they all failed, it merely represented a fairly small loss of life; it wouldn't have much of an impact on the Chaosverse as a whole. But if cultivators began to train in the Omega Dao on a wide scale? Many geniuses would perish on this path, resulting in the Chaosverse having fewer experts and becoming weaker as a whole.

"But now, things are different!" Autarch Titanos said. "Now that we have an Eternal Omega Dao, we have a complete path which future cultivators can follow."

"That means we can now truly publicize the existence of the Omega Daos, allowing many cultivators to embark upon this path at the World level. With your Daomerge experiences guiding the way, they won't make any unnecessary mistakes. Their chances at success will instantly increase a hundredfold or more!" Autarch Titanos explained.

Ning sighed. If a senior had blazed a path for him and let him know what was needed, he himself probably would've succeeded. Now that he had become the trailblazer, future cultivators would have a clear understanding of what they needed to do. With enough experience and enough preparation, they would stand a far better chance than cultivators did in the past.

"We need your help," Autarch Titanos said solemnly. "We would like to ask you to entrust your Eternal Omega Dao to us. We will then impart it to the juniors who have become Daolords of the Fourth Step in an Omega Dao... but of course, we'll also ask them to swear lifeblood oaths to enter your school and become known as the honorary disciples of Daolord Darknorth."

"Darknorth." Autarch Bolin, Autarch Skyfeeder, Autarch Stonerule, Autarch Ekong, and Autarch Titanos all looked at Ning, hoping to hear his answer. However... they also knew that cultivators guarded their supreme techniques with extreme jealousy, treating them as their babies.

Ning had experienced so many setbacks and sorrows. He had experienced countless dangers and seen many things before finally managing to devise his [Eternal Omega Sword Dao], his most supreme technique. Any major power would feel a tremendous sense of attachment to a supreme technique like this! They had sacrificed far, far too much for the sake of their Daos; it could be said that they had poured their entire lives into their Daos.

This is why there was a saying that 'the Dao is not to be transmitted lightly'. The five of them were asking for Ning to just give them his Dao to them in all of its entirety, allowing every single Fourth Step Omega Daolord to train in it!

"...Very well." Ning nodded, and looks of delight instantly appeared on the faces of the five Autarchs.

"Thank you, Darknorth."

"The cultivator civilizations will never forget you." All of them were tremendously excited. They were afraid that Ning would be stubborn and selfish. If he refused to transmit his Dao to them, there would be nothing they could do.

Ning smiled. "Autarch Awakener and the others have all sacrificed their lives for this, and Autarch Mogg has sworn to eternally stand guard over the Sithelands. I, Ji Ning, have nothing of value to offer; the only thing I have is my Eternal Omega Dao. How can I complain about offering it up? However, I do want to add in a rule; it is not to be transmitted to those who are wicked of heart."

"There's no need to worry about that," Autarch Titanos said hurriedly. "What we're trying to do is produce a Lord of Chaos who will be in charge of our Chaosverse. How could we possibly dare to let an evil person take that role? He could well become a calamity unto all of civilization!"

"The only reason we even allow those evil cultivators to exist is to ensure that the cultivator civilizations remain in a state of constant combat, which helps to temper cultivators and allow for more powerful cultivators to arise. If it wasn't for that, I personally would've wiped out many of the vilest cultivators long ago," Autarch Skyfeeder said coldly. By her very nature, she was someone who felt extreme hatred for evildoers.

Ning nodded.

"Haha... now that you've agreed, Darknorth, things will be simple." Autarch Titanos beamed merrily.

"We'll immediately send word throughout the Chaosverse of the existence of Omega Daos. We'll even give copies of the various Fourth Step Omega Dao techniques we already possess to the Hegemons of the various realmverses and let them impart them to those they favor." Autarch Ekong smiled. "We have quite a few Fourth Step Omega Dao techniques. Once one of them becomes a Daolord of the Fourth Step, we'll transmit your Eternal Omega Dao to them, Darknorth."

"Very well. I'll immediately record a copy and also include all the many experiences I had and insights I gained during the Daomerge process," Ning said.

"Darknorth." Autarch Bolin looked at Ning. "In doing this, you will have contributed far more to this Chaosverse than any of us ever have. Tell me, is there anything you need? We'll do whatever we can to help you."

"Yes, what do you desire?" Autarch Titanos and the others all looked at Ning. They knew that Ning had already failed his Daomerge and wouldn't have much time left to live. Most likely, he had certain things he wished to ensure were taken care of.

Ning was briefly startled by this. "My greatest desire..." Ning's mind instantly became filled with images of his homeland, of his wife Yu Wei.

His homeland was the place he cared the most about, a source of warmth... while his wife, Yu Wei, was the person he would never be able to forget about.

"Unfortunately, we aren't able to reverse spacetime to revive your Dao-companion." Autarch Titanos let out a sigh.

Ning chuckled. "There is one thing that worries me... the safety of my homeland! But I've already sent Nuwa to stand guard over it. If something truly dangerous happens, I'll have Nuwa ask you to help out, Autarchs."

"A minor matter."

“That’s a miniscule request.” The five Autarchs all felt that this was very simple.

“There IS one more thing, but it’ll be a bit trickier,” Ning said. “My homeland is located within the Flamedragon Realmverse! Thus, I don’t wish to see the Flamedragon Realmverse be destroyed. The Terror Starsea is close to the Flamedragon Realmverse, and it has a slowly-growing pair of Yin-Yang Samsara Wheels. I’m fairly strong, but I can’t last too long in combat; if I tried to destroy the Yin-Yang Samsara Wheels, I’d probably die in the attempt due to my truesoul collapsing. Thus, I would like to ask you to help destroy the Yin-Yang Samsara Wheels.”

“I’ll handle this one,” Autarch Titanos said immediately. Although destroying the Yin-Yang Samsara Wheels would be rather taxing even for the Autarchs, it still wasn’t an excessively major request.

Of course, they normally wouldn’t intervene in this manner as they would allow the Chaosverse to develop in its own natural manner! There was no point in them exerting so much effort for something of little benefit... but now that Ning had made the request, they immediately accepted.

“Anything else? These are all simple tasks.” Autarch Titanos smiled. “To be honest, the five of us feel like we have wronged you and owe you a tremendous debt. You have blazed a trail for us and brought hope to our Chaosverse, after all.”

“I really can’t think of anything else for now,” Ning said with a laugh.

His greatest desire was to revive his wife. If he could somehow manage to reach Autarchy with his Omega Dao before his truesoul disintegrated, he’d probably be able to avoid dying... but that was nothing but a foolish dream! The Autarchs weren’t capable of reviving his wife, while Ning himself didn’t have enough time. There was no way he could upgrade his Omega Dao to Autarchy.

“I heard that you were searching for Nuwa,” Autarch Skyfeeder said suddenly. “You’ve now arranged for her to safeguard your homeland. The more powerful she is, the more effective she will be in this task. Based on what I know, she hasn’t become an Otherverse Lord yet, right? There are some unbound otherverses within the Eight Domains. I’ll gift one to Nuwa and let her become an Otherverse Lord.”

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Book 40: The Five Autarchs Chapter 14: A Perfect Technique

“Thank you, Autarch Skyfeeder.” Ji Ning revealed a delighted look. Finding an ownerless otherverse was no easy task, but it was quite simple for Autarchs because they were the creators of the otherverses.

“Darknorth.” The calm and stoic Autarch Bolin said, “You failed the Daomerge, resulting in your truesoul crumbling away. I have a treasure that can help fortify and stabilize your truesoul, ensuring that the crumbling speed is somewhat slowed down!” Autarch bolin waved his hand, causing a palm-sized white disc to appear in front of him. This white disc was covered with two golden runes that emanated mysterious ripples of power which caused Ning’s truesoul to feel very comfortable. Just as Ning was sighing in amazement, it flew into his hands.

“With this treasure, I should be able to live 30% longer than I originally anticipated.” Ning didn’t decline, immediately accepting it into his body.

“I have one as well. It might not be as good as Bolin’s, but it should still be of help to you,” Autarch Skyfeeder said immediately.

“Me too,” Autarch Titanos said with a smile.

“I can give you one of these toys as well.” All five Autarchs took out a variety of items for Ning. Some were unique Sithe treasures, while others were naturally formed curios that were born from the primordial chaos. All of them were beneficial to the soul and the truesoul. In truth, the Autarchs really didn’t care about treasures like these, because they had truly infinite lifespans; why would they even need these things? They only thought of them after Autarch Bolin raised the subject.

Ning didn’t decline any of the offers. All of the treasures served to firm up the soul and truesoul, but of course using multiple treasures resulted in diminishing returns. All combined, these treasures would slow down his truesoul’s disintegration by nearly half. He would most likely be able to live roughly 60% longer than he had originally anticipated! But of course, if he had to engage in fierce combat then his truesoul’s disintegration would be hastened dramatically.

“Unfortunately, our civilization is far weaker than the Sithe civilization,” Autarch Titanos said with a sigh. “The Sithe have far more profound techniques, and they don’t even differentiate between ‘divine power’ or ‘Immortal energy’. They’ve perfectly merged everything into one type of energy, and their Daolords don’t even face any mortal danger during the Daomerge.”

“Their World-level cultivators become Daolords, their Daolords become Emperors, and their Emperors become Autarchs! None of them face any mortal danger during each step of the process. This is a truly perfect cultivation system they have,” Autarch Titanos said. “Our civilization, however, only has access to cruder techniques. Daolords tread the line between life and death with each step they take. The first four steps aren’t so bad, but the Daomerge is the greatest obstacle all of us face.”

“No danger at all?” Ning was shocked. He knew that the Sithe followed a completely different path of cultivation that was akin to the azureflower mist energy, which Autarch Awakener had created based on his research into the Sithe.

“Correct,” Autarch Skyfeeder agreed. “At the Daolord level, they can make repeated mistakes but still try again. Even if they fail the Daomerge, their truesoul will not disintegrate; they can try the Daomerge a thousand times if they so choose. Their only limitation is that there is a limit to their lifespan; if they cannot succeed before their lifespan comes to an end, they will die.”

“What?!” Ning immediately asked, “Have any of you received the Sithe training techniques?”

“We have. Many of them, in fact.” Autarch Titanos shook his head. “But it is useless. They are completely different types of lifeforms who were birthed from a completely different Chaosverse. There’s no way for us to use their cultivation techniques at all! We tried to make use of them long ago, and Awakener poured his heart into researching them, but to no avail. This was his greatest regret when he died.”

Ning couldn’t help but ask, “Can you give me those Sithe techniques and let me take a look?”

“Absolutely.”

“I have plenty as well.”

“Take a look, Darknorth.” The five Autarchs knew what Ning was thinking. The Sithe cultivation techniques were truly perfect, ensuring that there were no fatal obstacles at any stage of cultivation. In

truth, this wasn't all that surprising. There were no fatal obstacles for World level cultivators seeking to become Daolords, nor were there any obstacles for Emperors seeking to become Autarchs. Why, then, was it so difficult for Daolords to become Emperors? It was precisely because of existing flaws with their cultivation techniques!

The five Autarchs immediately handed over storage-type treasures to Ning, each of which was filled with many jade slips.

"None of these techniques are suitable for us cultivators to train in," Autarch Titanos said. "You would have to retrofit them in order to make use of them. Some technical techniques are usable, but the cultivation techniques are completely unusable."

"Let me take a look first." After acquiring all these jade slips, Ning waved his hand and caused one to appear at random, which he immediately began to read.

The jade slip was filled with the Sithe language. The Sithe script was actually quite similar to the script used to write the words 'Crimson' 'Wave' 'Temple', and they also seemed similar to the azureflower seal-script within the Azureflower Estate. This was an extremely profound and abstruse language. The language alone was a testament to how much more advanced the Sithe were compared to local cultivators. This was why a mere Sithe incursion force had such an enormous number of Exalts within it!

Thankfully, the Autarchs and the local cultivators had the advantage of geography. The invading Exalts were unable to manifest the power of the Dao and were constantly suppressed by the prime essences of this Chaosverse, ensuring that they were 'merely' at the power of the Blazesun Ruler. This invasion force had paid an enormous price! Invading another Chaosverse and taking control over its Quintessence was an extremely, extremely difficult task.

"This truly is a perfect cultivation technique." Ning couldn't help but sigh in awe when he read through the jade slip. There was literally nothing to change or improve on. Every single part of the process, from start to finish, was filled with boundless mysteries. It was profounder than profound and represented true and utter perfection.

This sort of cultivation ensured that the energies produced by cultivation were all one and the same, making it even more complete than the azureflower mist energy Ning used. In the end, the azureflower mist energy still had some flaws. Sithe cultivators, however, were able to use their energies to both control magic treasures and refine their bodies to make them comparable to the bodies of Ancient cultivators. At the Daolord stage, no truesoul crumbling would occur whatsoever.

"Such perfection." After reading through the technique, Ning couldn't help but feel a sense of despair. He was completely incapable of creating something like this; the difference between them was incredibly vast.

Autarch Titanos and the other Autarchs had been alive for countless years, but they couldn't create anything like this either. All of them had given up! Ning felt certain that this technique was probably created by the Chaoslord of the Sithe Chaosverse, as in order to create a technique like this you would first have to create an appropriate language for it! Every single character of this language was filled with the boundless mysteries of the Dao, and the language only completely surpassed Ning's abilities.

Only with that marvelous, arcane script could such an even more arcane technique be created.

“Once our civilization gives birth to an Omega Autarch, we’ll have our own Lord of Chaos and will also be able to produce such marvelous techniques,” Autarch Titanos said. “We’ll skyrocket in many different ways, and our weapons and treasures shall also rise to become comparable with those of the Sithe.”

Ning nodded. Right now, they were behind in every single area; techniques, weapons, warships, and more. Their only advantage lay in geography! This was their home, and so every single stance they used was filled with the tremendous power of the Dao. In contrast, their opponents were being constantly suppressed and stifled by the prime essences.

“Oh, right. Darknorth, every single Autarch has a message-talisman that allows us to communicate with each other across great distances. So long as we are within the Chaosverse, we’ll be able to speak to each other right away,” Autarch Titanos said as he produced a dark-red jade talisman in his hand. “These talismans aren’t easy to make. Previously, only Autarchs had access to them. You, however, are special. You get one as well. If there’s anything you need, just notify the six of us!”

Ning accepted the dark-red message-talisman. It was so red, it looked like it had been bathed in blood. After binding it, Ning was able to immediately sense the other six who were connected to it. He was able to tell who each of the six was due to their unique auras, with the most unfamiliar one most likely being the Autarch who was in charge of safeguarding the Sithe lair, Autarch Mogg.

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The Autarchs spent quite some time chatting with Ning. They stood at the very apex of the cultivator civilizations and thus concerned themselves with affairs that involved the entire Chaosverse. Now that Ning had reached the same level, he couldn’t help but sigh at how little he could do. There was a limit to how much longer he would be alive for, after all. In the end, it would be up to the Autarchs and the future Omega Emperors to defend their realm... and the Omega Autarch everyone was waiting for!

That Omega Autarch would catapult their civilization to brand new heights.

Ning used the jade slip to leave behind a full and complete record of his Eternal Omega Sword Dao, and also fully explained the experiences he had during his Daomerge. For example, he wrote that one had to have truly perfected one’s Dao-heart as a prerequisite. Even the Autarchs couldn’t help but shake their heads when they heard this requirement. This was incredibly difficult! Only when one’s Dao-heart was perfect could one perfectly fuse heartforce, divine power, and Immortal energy together. This truly was very, very difficult.

However, having Ning’s experiences to serve as a guidepost was far better than going in completely blind. If Ning had the benefit of something like this, he would’ve succeeded in the Daomerge long ago.

After spending half a day here, Ning prepared to bid them all farewell.

“Darknorth, let me send you off,” Autarch Ekong said with a smile. “Didn’t you say that once you left the Blazesun Domain, you would head back to the Flamedragon Realmverse? That’s quite a distance away! I’ll save you the trouble and send you myself; that will be much faster. Once I reach the Flamedragon Realmverse, I’ll go ahead and deal with that set of Yin-Yang Samsara Wheels.”

“Then I’ll have to trouble you to help out, Autarch Ekong,” Ning said appreciatively.

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Book 40: The Five Autarchs Chapter 15: Autarch Ekong

Creeeeak. The wooden door swung open, with Ji Ning and Autarch Ekong walking out side-by-side. Autarch Titanos, Autarch Skyfeeder, Autarch Bolin, and Autarch Stonerule remained inside the cottage, but they rose to their feet to send the two off. As for the eight Domain Rulers, they hurriedly and respectfully parted before the two.

“Master.” The Flamewing God was being exceptionally obedient today. The five Autarchs had given it a rare sense of enormous pressure.

“Let’s go,” Ning said with a smile.

“Done already?” Flamewing blurted out. It was common for major powers to spend a million years gathered together and chatting about the Dao.

“How long did you think it would take?” Ning smiled as he glanced at the eight Domain Rulers. “Shall you come with us?”

“We’re in no rush to leave.”

“Please go right on ahead, Daolord.” It was quite rare that the eight Domain Rulers had a good excuse to come visit one of the Autarchs; how could they simply return like this? They naturally wanted to get some tips or pointers out of Autarch Skyfeeder first.

“Darknorth, just notify us if there is anything you need at all,” Autarch Titanos said.

“If there’s anything we can do, we’ll put all our effort into carrying it out,” Autarch Stonerule agreed.

And so, watched by four Autarchs and eight Domain Rulers, the two departed. Autarch Ekong released a field of power which covered both Ning and Flamewing, then began to advance through the sea of prime essences at high speed. Whoosh! They almost instantly vanished off into the horizon.

“This has been my first meeting with Daolord Darknorth, but it is also most likely a final farewell,” Autarch Bolin sighed. Ning didn’t have much time left. Given how strong he was, he probably wouldn’t need to trouble them for anything he needed. It was naturally quite unlikely that they would ever meet again.

“Although we’ve only met him this once, he’s done something truly incredible for all of civilization,” Autarch Stonerule said.

“Ensure that his homeland is protected. That’s all we can do for him now.”

The Autarchs felt many mixed emotions. In their eyes, Daolord Darknorth was like a dazzling meteor who shone as radiantly as any Autarch, but it was destined for him to fall. And yet... the light of this meteor would illuminate a brand new path for all cultivators to walk! All they could do was take care of Daolord Darknorth as best they could... but at his level, there really were very few things he needed help with.

For Ning, seizing an otherverse from someone else would be incredibly easy. At most it would cost him a bit of extra time.

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Autarch Ekong continued to flare his around around Ning and Flamewing, allowing them to travel through the sea of prime essences at incredible speeds. In truth, Ning would've been able to do the same, but his truesoul probably would've fully disintegrated from the exertion before they had even made it out of the Quintessence. Autarch Ekong didn't have this concern and so was able to move at maximum speed.

Soon, they left the Quintessence. After travelling a great distance, they reappeared within the Blazesun Domain. Here, within an empty region of space, there was a realmship with Nuwa, Su Youji, Patriarch Treewind, Azurefiend, Hegemon Goodsong, Emperor Jade Rainbow, and a number of others inside it. They were all relaxing and discussing the Dao while waiting for Ning to return.

"Master's back!" Azurefiend, who was in control of the realmship, was the first to notice the three figures who had appeared outside.

Whoosh! Those three figures instantly appeared inside of the realmship. When Nuwa and the others saw the muscular, horned man dressed in green robes who was by Ning's side, they immediately fell silent.

Ning smiled: "This is Autarch Ekong."

"The Autarch of Annihilation?" Patriarch Treewind turned slightly pale.

"Respectful greetings, Autarch Annihilation." Patriarch Treewind and Emperor Jade Rainbow were the first to speak out, quickly followed by the others. Ning was able to refer to the man by his name, 'Ekong', but most cultivators would respectfully address and refer to him as 'Autarch Annihilation'. The Autarch of Annihilation was extremely famous, especially since he had arisen after the Dawn War. All learned figures like Patriarch Treewind knew of his name and title.

Autarch Ekong said calmly, "No need to stand on ceremony. I'll be coming with you for a time, so you can all relax." But of course, no one present could possibly relax save for Ning himself. Even Flamewing was shifting from side to side.

"Autarch Ekong, let's go find that otherverse first," Ning said.

"Very well, let's go." Autarch Ekong sent out his will, generating a massive wave of power that scooped up the realmship and then sent it tearing through spacetime. Just a heartbeat later, they were out of the Blazesun Domain and within a region of darkness. A second spacetime warp, and they had arrived in an empty region within another one of the Eight Domains, the Roaring Elephant Domain.

They moved so fast that Patriarch Treewind, Nuwa, and the others were all speechless. The many complicated spacetime obstacles within the Eight Domains were nothing to the Autarchs!

"Is that an otherverse? An ownerless otherverse?" Patriarch Treewind, Hegemon Azurefiend, and the others all called out in surprise. They were able to clearly see an enormous globe off in the distance that looked as though it was merely a hundred billion kilometers in diameter. This globe was covered with a layer of light that distorted time, and it emanated ripples of unfathomable profundity.

Otherverses were incredibly vast inside and were comparable to a realmverse... but from the outside, they weren't necessarily all that large! When the Autarchs first created them, they were merely palm-sized. If no one was in control of them, they would grow to become a hundred billion kilometers in diameter, and their aura would be clearly visible for any to see. But once someone bound an otherverse, things would be completely different.

BOOM!

"We should be celebrating the fact that we discovered this otherverse. Why do we have to fight to the death? If this battle continues, both of you would probably die before winning this thing. How about this? Why don't you let me take control over this otherverse. I promise I'll give you the next one! I'm also willing to give you almost all of my treasures. Why must you be so stubborn?" Five figures were engaged in a furious battle off in the distance.

"You are completely shameless! Give me the next one? Who knows when that will be! We've all been cultivating for countless ages before encountering something like this! How can I possibly just let you take it? Either give me the otherverse or give me a comparable amount of treasures. Compared to the otherverse, the treasures you offered are a joke!"

It was quite a furious battle, but the two sides were fairly evenly matched. In a situation like this, it would be difficult for either side to truly defeat or kill the other. This was why neither side was willing to give up. Generally speaking, the battle would only come to an end once one side had completely depleted their reserves of divine power and Immortal energy. In fact, for Hegemons to end up perishing was quite ordinary as well.

"Flamewing, make them stop," Ning said with a laugh. It would be rather excessive to ask Autarch Ekong to handle this, while the other experts probably wouldn't be frightening enough to bring an immediate halt.

"Yes, Master." Flamewing immediately assented to the order, then turned towards the battling experts. "HEY! YOU FIVE! STOP THAT RIGHT NOW!" A thunderous roar swept through spacetime as a giant winged bear who was bathed in flames suddenly appeared. Flamewing glowered down towards the five with unbridled arrogance, causing all of them to instantly turn pale with terror. "A Chaos Primordial?!"

If a Chaos Primordial wanted to kill a Hegemon, it would be simplicity itself.

Whoosh! Moments later, an entire host of cultivators came flying out of the realmship, with Ning and Autarch Ekong in the lead. Behind them were Nuwa, Patriarch Treewind, Emperor Jade Rainbow, Hegemon Goodsong, and the others.

"W-what..."

"Isn't that Patriarch Treewind?"

The Eight Domains were all located quite close to the Quintessence of the Chaosverse, and so these five Hegemons instantly recognized the incredibly famous Patriarch Treewind and equally famous Emperor Jade Rainbow. Both of them were Otherverse Lords! As for Hegemon Goodsong, they were able to immediately see that he was a Golden Emperor, which meant he also had the combat power of an Otherverse Lord. Any of the three would be able to slay them with ease, as could Flamewing.

The scary thing was, none of these four were the leaders of this group. The two leaders... one was a white-robed youth with a black sheath on his back whose truesoul was disintegrating. A Daolord who had failed the Daomerge, then? The other was a horned, muscular, green-robed man whose aura, even when restrained, was enough to cause them to quiver in their boots. They had never felt terror like this before.

“An Autarch!” Although they had never met an Autarch before, they instantly understood that it had to be an Autarch. Only an Autarch could bring them such a sense of utter terror.

“A Daolord who failed the Daomerge but can stand alongside an Autarch... that has to be the legendary Daolord Darknorth.”

The five Hegemons stood there, shaking with terror. They no longer even thought about fighting over the otherverse! They were stunned by this utterly terrifying squad that had appeared before them.

Ning couldn't help but secretly sigh. Each Autarch had a different way of dealing with things. Autarch Titanos would generally completely hide his aura, while Autarch Ekong clearly was more dominating and imperious in his actions.

“Bah, Skyfeeder... the ownerless otherverse she picked out for us had actually been discovered by other cultivators already.” Autarch Ekong frowned and shook his head. Given his pride, he really didn't want to earn a reputation for taking otherverses away from Hegemons. He immediately said, “Darknorth, have your friend go and bind that otherverse, I suppose.”

“Go ahead, Nuwa,” Ning said.

“Alright.” Nuwa didn't hesitate, immediately flying towards that otherverse.

“As for the five of you.” Autarch Ekong frowned. “This otherverse was never meant for you, so you can forget about it. However... since you managed to discover it, we are bound together by karma. I'll give each of you some good fortune. You can go now.” He waved his hand, causing a surge of power to grab all five Hegemons and send them through a spacetime tunnel that led to a treasure cache which Autarch Ekong knew of.

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The light shimmering over the surface of the otherverse rippled with unfathomable, secretive mysteries.

Nuwa entered it all by herself. Just a heartbeat later, the otherverse began to change and transform. The aura emanating from it began to retract, while the ripples were completely restrained as well... and at the same time, a flicker of green vitality appeared on its surface.

“This otherverse seems to have life in it,” Su Youji said with surprise as she stared at the otherverse.

“It is indeed filled with life,” Autarch Ekong said calmly. “Ownerless otherverses will operate in accordance with their intrinsic nature, but they won't have a will of their own! Now that Nuwa has bound this one, Nuwa's will shall become the will of this entire otherverse, and her life force shall become one with the otherverse. This otherverse shall become one of her incarnations.”

Moments later, the otherverse began to shrink in size before vanishing almost completely. Nuwa reappeared once more as the tiny little dot flew straight into her body.

“Disciple, where do you plan to station your otherverse?” Patriarch Treewind asked.

“Close to home,” Nuwa said. “That way, the people of my homeland will also be able to enter the otherverse and live there.”

Ning approved of this plan. Once an otherverse was affixed somewhere, it would become a foundation of power. Otherverses also had many uses; for example, one could use the power of an otherverse to warp through spacetime at the speed of a realmship. It could even be linked to the outside world via a stable spacetime tunnel! However, the longer the tunnel was the more difficult its creation would be. Nuwa was definitely going to establish a stable, permanent spacetime tunnel between her otherverse and the Three Realms, and so she had to keep it fairly close to the Flamedragon Realmverse.

Based on what Ning now knew, it seemed obvious that the Otherverse Lord of the ‘alternate universe’ which Ning had once visited, ‘the lord of the Church of Annihilation’, had to have a connection to Hegemon Brightshore! Otherverse Lords were in absolute control over their otherverses, as the otherverses served like their incarnations. There was no way that Hegemon Brightshore would’ve been able to ‘secretly’ establish a spacetime tunnel to it.

The reason why Hegemon Brightshore had claimed otherwise was because he wanted Ning, Skyfire, and the others to feel as though they were in a dangerous place. He wanted to ensure that they would be on their guard at all times; only then would this adventure serve its true purpose. Ning suspected that if the ‘protectors’ had died, nothing would happen... but if Skyfire Brightshore had been at the verge of dying, Hegemon Brightshore or the lord of the Church of Annihilation would’ve intervened to save him!

In other words, that seemingly dangerous adventure had actually been just a tempering experience for Skyfire Brightshore. There had been no real danger at all, and Ning’s group had merely served as his companions.

There had been no real danger... but of course, Hegemon Brightshore couldn’t let Skyfire know that! This was yet another testament to how much effort Hegemon Brightshore put into his race. He truly did pour his blood, sweat, and tears into making it prosper.

“Let’s go. We’re heading back to the Flamedragon Realmverse,” Ning said.

Autarch Ekong, Ning, and the others all boarded the realmship and tore through spacetime, once more warping towards the Flamedragon Realmverse.

Halfway there, Hegemon Goodsong, Patriarch Treewind, Emperor Jade Rainbow, and most of the others all departed. There was no way Ning would keep them around at all times, after all. Nuwa bade her own master farewell for now. She was going to go back home.

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They continued to advance through spacetime, moving far more quickly than when they had left the Flamedragon Realmverse. The realmship tore through spacetime at frightening speeds, causing spacetime to twist into a dazzling rainbow tunnel around them.

“Darknorth.” Autarch Ekong and Ning were seated facing each other, sipping some wine and chatting casually. Su Youji, Azurefiend, and the others naturally didn’t dare to disturb them.

“What are your plans for after I deal with the Yin-Yang Samsara Wheels?” Autarch Ekong asked.

“What CAN I plan? Haha. While I’m still alive, I’m going to wander around the Chaosverse for a while,” Ning said. “But of course, I’ll also analyze those Sithe techniques. Who knows, maybe I’ll be able to create a complete technique that will allow me to somehow survive. If that happens, I’ll stand a good chance of becoming an Omega Autarch. Wouldn’t that be just perfect? Haha. I’m afraid to even imagine how wonderful that would be.”

“Who knows? It might just work.” Autarch Ekong laughed as well.

In truth, both of them knew that this was far too difficult. Even Autarchs would feel despair when they saw the marvelous, perfect techniques the Sithe used. Ning felt the same. He himself had the feeling that if he truly did devote all of his attention to analyzing those techniques, he might have a chance at surviving... but the amount of time needed would be measured in the hundreds of millions of chaos cycles, if not longer.

The short amount of time left to him wasn’t even close to being enough for him to accomplish this. Not even Autarchs could accomplish this! Autarch Awakener had been the most stubborn and had poured the most effort into it, but in the end he had still failed.

“I was joking just now. However... even though I’m going to die, I’m still going to advance along the path of the Dao,” Ning said. “Ekong, the five of you have already given me your techniques, along with the techniques of Autarch Entropos and Autarch Mogg. I’m going to wander the universe and learn as much as I can. I’ll make as many breakthroughs as I can. Even if I am to die, I shall die on the path I have chosen.”

When Ning had recorded his Eternal Omega Dao technique, the various Autarchs had handed over all of their own Daos to Ning as well, hoping that they might inspire him somehow. But of course, Ning wasn’t to transmit them to any others; he was the only one permitted to examine them.

In the Blazesun Domain, Ning had mastered the mysteries of water and then created the Water Sword Dao, which had benefited him quite a bit. Ning was planning to continue along this path and upgrade his other Daos to the Hegemon level, then slowly infuse them all into his Eternal Omega Sword Dao. This was a path towards Autarchy that would require an extremely long period of time. Ning didn’t have enough time, but he would still continue along this path.

“Haha... to be honest, I’m just bored. If I don’t cultivate, what WOULD I do?” Ning smirked.

“Now that’s more like it! When you have as much time to burn as we do, meditating on the Dao is a great idea. Come, let’s drink!” Autarch Ekong lifted his wine cup in a toast.

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The Flamedragon Realmverse. The Terror Starsea.

A group of cultivators were gathered here. Hegemon Brightshore, Hegemon Windrain, Hegemon Netherlily, Daoist Bluestone, Emperor Goldisle, Emperor Anchen, Emperor Islehide, Emperor Severfive...

all of them were present. Ning's Primaltwin was located in the Flamedragon Realmverse, and so he had notified the Emperors and Hegemons early on.

Once they heard that an Autarch was going to intervene and destroy the Yin-Yang Samsara Wheels, they became incredibly excited. They quickly spread the word far and wide, allowing all of the six major powers within the Flamedragon Realmverse to know what was about to happen!

Everyone was incredibly excited by this news, because the destruction of the Flamedragon Realmverse would result in them being forced to wander the Chaosverse as refugees. Almost all creatures within the realmverse would perish, with only a tiny fraction of creatures who were protected by the major powers and drawn into their estate-treasures being able to survive. Even if they made it to other realmverses, they would be viewed with disdain by the original inhabitants of those realmverses. This was exactly how the Dark Kingdom had been treated by the rest of the Flamedragon Realmverse!

There were also some races who actually lived in the Terror Starsea itself! Thus, everyone hoped for the Yin-Yang Samsara Wheels to be destroyed. They all hoped that their homeland would be preserved. To wander as refugees and then be rejected as outsiders was not a good life to live!

Whoosh. A spacetime tunnel appeared out of nowhere, followed by a realmship flying out of it.

"That's Daolord Darknorth's realmship." Hegemon Brightshore and the leaders of the six powers all stared over excitedly.

A group of people flew out of the realmship, led by Ning and a muscular, horned man. Behind them were Su Youji, Protector Whitethaw, Flamewing, and Azurefiend.

"This is Autarch Ekong," Ning introduced.

"Respectful greetings, Autarch Annihilation." Hegemon Brightshore led the various cultivators in a deep, respectful bow.

Autarch Ekong nodded. "I've been asked to come here by Daolord Darknorth. No need to stand on ceremony. I'll go and destroy the Yin-Yang Samsara Wheels right now." As he spoke, he glanced at Ning and nodded.

"Sorry for the trouble," Ning said with a smile.

"Haha, a minor matter... but the Yin-Yang Samsara Wheels are rather troublesome to deal with. It'll take me a bit of time." Autarch Ekong flew off into the distance, moving through the void towards the distant Yin-Yang Samsara Wheels.

"That really was an Autarch!"

"An Autarch really has come to destroy the Yin-Yang Samsara Wheels."

"The Flamedragon Realmverse has been saved!"

"We won't have to evacuate after all." Everyone present felt tremendously excited. Even Hegemon Brightshore, Hegemon Netherlily, and Hegemon Windrain were besides themselves with joy. As for the Aeonians... Emperor Islehide and Emperor Anchen felt rather awkward when facing Ning. Although there were a few grudges between them, the difference in power was now so vast that they had long

ago admitted defeat. As for Ning, given that Autarch Bolin had been the creator of the Aeonians, he wasn't going to quibble over ancient matters.

"Once this matter is resolved, we can all relax." Ning smiled as well. After this was finished, he would be at ease as well.

"Youji, watch closely. Events like this are quite rare," Ning said with a sigh.

The distant Yin-Yang Samsara Wheels consisted of two enormous symbiotic vortexes that were so vast, each of them was comparable to a hundred Badlands Territories in size!

The enormous green vortex was like a vast and verdant world, bathing the area around it with green light that looked like the surface of the sea. As for the black vortex, it formed a world of light around it as well. As the two vortexes slowly drew closer to each other, all the laws of spacetime began to twist and break apart. It had already reached an inconceivable level of power, allowing it to shatter apart the natural laws governing the universe.

In fact... it was extremely close to Autarchs in power! However, it was just a celestial body. It wasn't alive, and so it could only passively 'stand' there and be beaten down. This was why Autarchs could destroy them, if the Autarch was willing to pay the necessary price.

Rumble...

Autarch Ekong transformed into a giant, but compared to the Yin-Yang Samsara Wheels he was still a tiny little figure. He devoured an enormous amount of energy from the surrounding area, then produced a greataxe in his hands.

He first delivered a furious blow with the greataxe towards the green vortex. BOOM! The power of this blow was so tremendous that even the distant Ning sighed in amazement. This truly was an impressive display of power.

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Autarch Ekong furiously slammed his greataxe down again and again, each strike filled with dominating power. BOOM! The Yin-Yang Samsara Wheels seemed to sense that they were in danger, and they began to instinctively react and defend themselves. The green vortex and the black vortex simultaneously began to expand in size, almost instantly expanding to become many times greater than they were previously. A moment later, they instantly shrank to become less than half of their original size.

This sudden expansion and contraction resulted in the power of both vortexes skyrocketing. Ji Ning and the others were watching from very far away, but even so Hegemon Brightshore and the others felt their hearts tremble with fear.

A while later, Ning's eyes lit up: "It's almost done."

"Break!" Autarch Ekong roared furiously as he smote down his greataxe. The axe actually transformed into an enormous black shadow that was as large as the green vortex itself!

The green vortex let out a strange, almost 'groaning' sound as the greataxe caved its center in, but it quickly managed to repair itself.

"Break! Break! BREAK!" Autarch Ekong attacked with extraordinary ferocity, each strike filled with the power of annihilation. After the Autarch let out twelve furious shouts, the green vortex was beginning to tremble violently. The nearby black vortex was doing its best to devour and tear apart all of the energies around it, but it was unable to shake the Autarch at all. In the end, it could only 'watch' helplessly as its companion was annihilated!

BOOM! The green vortex finally disintegrated, resulting in an awesome wave of boundless life energy spreading out in every direction.

The black vortex could not survive on its own. It instantly began to collapse in on itself, with the process causing a tremendous amount of destruction to its surroundings. Even Autarch Ekong had to generate an aura of flowing black light to protect himself against the final, suicidal burst of the black vortex.

Finally, the Yin-Yang Samsara Wheels were destroyed. The only things left were a few ripples of power where they had existed.

"Hahaha!"

"The Yin-Yang Samsara Wheels have finally been destroyed. The Flamedragon Realmverse is saved!"

"This is absolutely wonderful!"

"The Flamedragon Realmverse shall be able to last for countless more aeons. We won't have to evacuate!" The Hegemons and Emperors of the six powers of the Flamedragon Realmverse had all been watching nervously. Now, they shook with excitement and their faces were covered with joy.

Hegemon Brightshore turned to look at Ning, who was standing next to him. He never would've imagined that the gravest peril the Flamedragon Realmverse faced, the unstoppable apocalypse of the Samsara Wheels, would eventually be resolved thanks to the then-World God he had abducted all those years ago. It all seemed like a marvel, a miracle. That World-level kid had skyrocketed in power at an inconceivable speed, reaching a level where everyone looked up to him.

"Thank you, Darknorth," Hegemon Brightshore said.

"If you want to thank anyone, go thank Autarch Ekong." Ning looked at Autarch Ekong, who was flying back with a rather tired look on his face.

"Don't downplay your role. The entire Flamedragon Realmverse owes you a debt of gratitude. If it wasn't for you, almost all of the weaker beings in the entire realmverse would've died once the apocalypse came! Very, very few would've been evacuated and given the dubious honor of wandering homeless through the cosmos. In fact, most of the evacuees probably would've died during the wandering... and the few who survived would be hated as outsiders once they reached their new home." Hegemon Brightshore sighed. "It's hard for me to even imagine it."

"My own homeland is located in the Flamedragon Realmverse. I was acting on my own behalf as well," Ning said. He could sense the tremendous gratitude the leaders of the six powers of the Flamedragon Realmverse felt towards him. Even the Aeonians who had once held a grudge against him such as

Emperor Anchen and Emperor Islehide were staring towards him with gratitude. Now that the realmverse was not going to be destroyed, the Aeonians would be able to continually benefit from the estate-world which Autarch Bolin had left behind for them.

Whoosh. Autarch Ekong came flying over, looking rather exhausted. "These Yin-Yang Samsara Wheels really were a pain to deal with. If they had been allowed to grow for another million chaos cycles, even I would've been gravely injured in the process of destroying them," Autarch Ekong said with a sigh.

Ning nodded. The Yin-Yang Samsara Wheels were similar to the Wellspring Sea of the enormous Blazesun Domain. They were all bodies of natural energy that actually surpassed the Autarchs in terms of raw power. However, because they lacked true sentience, it wasn't too hard to deal with them.

"Alright, now that I've dealt with the Yin-Yang Samsara Wheels, I'll be off," Autarch Ekong said. "If there's anything you need, just give me a call."

"Come to my estate and have some wine first?" Ning felt as though he was being a bad host to let the Autarch leave right away; the man had come all this way to help him out, after all.

"Haha, no need. Honestly, I have much more and much better wine than you." Autarch Ekong bade Ning farewell, then stepped through spacetime and departed from the Flamedragon Realmverse.

The only person he spoke to this entire time was Ning. He didn't say so much as a single word to the others. He was by nature a solitary and arrogant person. Those he respected, he'd view as friends and brothers; those he didn't, he wouldn't so much as glance at.

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Word of the Yin-Yang Samsara Wheels' destruction quickly spread across almost all of the supreme figures of the Flamedragon Realmverse. Everyone felt incredibly excited; finally, the looming, creeping apocalypse that had been a threat to all of them had been dealt with!

As for Ning, he led Su Youji, Azurefiend, and Nuwa back to the Three Realms.

"Mother Nuwa!"

"Nuwa!"

"Mother!" The entire Three Realms was thrown into a state of excitement. By now, the 'Three Realms' actually consisted of an enormous field of space that held a total of 8100 chaosworlds within it! Ning's Primaltwin was here, and so he had already spread the word that Mother Nuwa was coming back. Subhuti, Maitreya, Kuafu, and the other major powers who had arisen during the first age were all incomparably excited.

Finally, Mother Nuwa was coming home!

Subhuti, Windfiend, Kuafu, Jade Cauldron, Lu Dongbin, and tens of thousands of other cultivators were all waiting in the emptiness of space in front of the Three Realms Region, staring off into the distance.

Finally, a dimensional ripple appeared, followed by a realmship appearing within it. Several figures flew out of the realmship, led by a white-robed Ning and a silver-robed Mother Nuwa who bore a blood diamond in the center of her forehead. After binding the otherverse she had been given, Mother Nuwa's

aura had become even vaster than ever before, as it whispered of the limitless power of the otherverse itself.

“Nuwa.” Subhuti was so excited that his eyes were starting to fill up with unshed tears.

“Nuwa.” Windfiend revealed a smile. She had been an old enemy of his, but he had never been able to best her. She had been the undisputed leader of the Nuwa Alliance.

“Mother Nuwa.” Kuafu and the others were all incredibly excited.

“Subhuti, Kuafu, Jade Cauldron, Maitreya...” When Nuwa saw all of these old friends, she felt emotions surging through her breast. Many of her oldest friends were already gone, such as Daoist Three Purities, Lord Tathagata the Buddha, or the Three Sovereigns of Mankind. The dazzling Houyi had also perished, as had many of the younger cultivators she had held high hopes for.

However, a few of her old friends were still alive, as were some of the ‘children’.

“Nuwa.” Sun Wukong was incredibly excited.

“Silly monkey.” Nuwa smiled happily. When she saw some of these familiar young faces, she couldn’t help but feel overjoyed. This was her home! This was the place where she had been born from the primordial chaos, and these were the friends she had slowly grown to know. She had been born out of chaos, and so these friends were like her family members.

When she had left the Three Realms, she had wished to see the wider world outside before coming back and using what she had learned to strengthen the Three Realms, making it better than ever. Alas, destiny makes fools of mortals and Gods alike; she was actually teleported to the indescribably distant Blazefire Domain and had only survived thanks to Patriarch Treewind saving her. Now, thanks to Ning locating her, she had finally come back home.

Mother Nuwa’s return was an event of great joy. They naturally held an enormous celebratory banquet for her. The many Immortals and Fiendgods of the Three Realms all came to take part. Not only did even the World-level cultivators come, even many of their Elder God and Ancestral Immortal disciples were permitted to take part. Millions of Immortals and Fiendgods took part in this grand banquet.

Seated at the highest positions within this banquet were Mother Nuwa, Subhuti, Ji Ning, Windfiend, Kuafu, and the other ancient figures. By now, Ji Brightmoon, Ji Yichuan, and Yuchi Snow had all reached the World level, and they were all seated quite high up. They were very happy to be able to see the legendary Mother Nuwa herself.

This was a congregation of countless Immortals and Fiendgods, and Immortal wine flowed liberally. Ning was very happy, and he naturally wouldn’t be stingy with his resources. He naturally had far more treasures than anyone else by now.

“The Three Realms are truly flourishing.” Ning felt a sense of joy when he saw all the cultivators present, and he couldn’t help but sigh in praise.

The Three Realms were flourishing far more than in previous years. Now that an Otherverse Lord like Mother Nuwa was standing guard over it with the assistance of many powerful Sithe treasures, the

Three Realms truly had reached an incredibly high level of power. Given even the Autarchs had promised to help watch over it, Ning finally felt completely satisfied with its chances.

“It really is flourishing. Only... a few of our old friends are missing,” Subhuti said from next to Ning.

Ning nodded. “Yes, a few people are missing.” Many of the true, original leaders of the Three Realms were missing, as were some of his friends and his wife.

“If they could all come back and be reunited, how wonderful would that be?” Ning closed his eyes, just imagining the scene.

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Book 40: The Five Autarchs Chapter 18: A Wandering Life

After the banquet came to an end, Ji Ning led Nuwa and Subhuti out to begin assembling the formation! Ning’s Primaltwin had already assembled roughly 90% of the formation, and it only really needed the powerful castle to merge together with the formation and become its core and command center. This would allow the power of the formation to skyrocket.

No one save for the Autarchs would stand a chance at breaking apart a formation like this. Even the most powerful Sourcewalkers like the Blazesun Ruler would probably find it very difficult to breach this formation. It could be described as truly impregnable!

Clack clack clack... the castle slowly slid into position, moving to become the very center of the entire Three Realms Region. The leaves at its bottom layer began to manifest green ley-lines that looked like the veins of a tree leaf. These green ley-lines reached out of the leaves themselves, stretching out into empty space and then completely disappearing. They had completely linked up to the rest of the grand formation.

Nuwa maintained control over the fort while Ning made the necessary adjustments. After three days, they finally completed the great project.

Boom! The entire castle itself vanished into thin air, as did the formations surrounding the Three Realms. They had all turned invisible, but their power had just skyrocketed to a brand new level.

“I’ll arrange for a golem to stand here and keep watch, ensuring that nothing within the range of the formation’s scanners can avoid detection,” Nuwa said. “If it finds anything, I’ll instantly enter the castle and take control over it.”

Ning revealed a smile. The nearby Subhuti couldn’t help but turn to glance at Ning. He knew just how much this disciple of his had done for the Three Realms. Ning wanted to do everything he could before he passed away.

“Oh, right. Master,” Ning suddenly said, “I’m planning to spend some time with Brightmoon and my parents. I’m going to wander about the Chaosverse with them, seeing the many marvels of the cosmos and allowing them to better understand the Dao. Master, Windfiend, would you like to join me?”

“Wonderful!” Subhuti revealed a delighted look, then asked, “But wouldn’t we be disturbing your family trip?”

“Haha, it’s fine. My retainers will be taking part as well. It’ll make this trip more fun,” Ning said with a laugh. He was planning to spend his remaining years cultivating, but just staying in seclusion and training in isolation was pointless. He didn’t have much time left; he was going to spend at least some of it visiting the marvelous sights of the Chaosverse. Many of those places might be ‘dangerous’, but there were no dangers that concerned him in the slightest!

In the Chaosverse, any naturally-occurring dangers were no longer any threat to him at all; he was on the same level of power as the Autarchs, after all! Even the Eight Domains and the prime essence sea were nothing to him. The only place that Ning felt any true dread of was the Sithelands. There were numerous locations even in the outer perimeter of the Sithelands, which had already been breached by the Autarchs, which were capable of posing a threat to him.

This was because even the Autarchs had to put tremendous effort into breaching the outer perimeter. There were a number of places the Autarchs didn’t actually go inside and had instead simply sealed off. Thus, there were many cultivators who would go exploring the outer reaches of the Sithelands! That was a truly dangerous place, and it was filled with all sorts of Sithelands relics, treasures, and traps. Ning didn’t feel that it was a suitable choice for his parents and his daughter to visit.

He’d go take a look when his life was nearing its end. For now, he was going to engage in cultivation instead. He had to infuse all the other Daos into his Eternal Omega Sword Dao, and he was also going to view many of the natural wonders of the Chaosverse! This would actually be helpful for him in comprehending the Dao. Besides, this was a good chance for him to show his daughter and his parents some truly dangerous places. There were some places where not even Otherverse Lords would dare tread, but for him it wouldn’t be a problem.

“Perhaps Brightmoon will be able to make a breakthrough as a result,” Ning mused. There was no chance his parents would improve any further on the path of cultivation, as they had to rely on pills just to reach the World level. Brightmoon had spent 5 years and 2 months in Yu Wei’s belly before being born, and she was born with such incredible talent that she reached the Celestial Immortal level with ease. Although her path to the World level had been rather bumpy, Ning had patiently and attentively instructed her, ensuring that she was able to succeed without needing to use any pills. Ning had certain expectations of his daughter; he wasn’t going to just let her take the easy way.

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Ning’s final decision was to bring his family members, his retainers, and the duo of Subhuti and Windfiend! Windfiend was rather hesitant about this, as his relationship with Ning couldn’t quite compare to that of Subhuti’s. However, he was now a member of the Three Realms. The future of the Three Realms would be up to Nuwa, Subhuti, and Windfiend. Ning wanted to help his master and Windfiend as best he could.

“Haha, we’ve finally left the Flamedragon Realmverse!” Brightmoon was quite excited as she stared from within the realmship. Everyone in this realmship was like an elder family member, and so she was able to act in a much more relaxed manner. “I’ve never left the Flamedragon Realmverse before. I hear that realmverses are all extremely far from each other.”

“Calm down. We’re going to visit some of the nearby realmverses first, then we’ll head off to an extremely distant and dangerous place known as the ‘Flamesea Thunderfalls’. That place is highly

suitable for training in the Dao of Lightning and the Dao of Fire.” Ning looked at his daughter. “Brightmoon, your greatest affinity is with the Dao of Fire. You’ll be able to meditate and gain keen insights there.”

“Father, didn’t you say that the Flamesea Thunderfalls is a place that can easily kill Emperors, and where even Hegemons would suffer heavy injuries?” Brightmoon asked.

“Yes. It is considered one of the thirty most dangerous locations of the entire Chaosverse,” Ning said.

The nearby Hegemon Azurefiend chuckled, “Little lady, with Master present you have nothing to fear. The Flamesea Thunderfalls is nothing to Master.”

“I’ll protect you too, Brightmoon!” the pudgy Flamewing said, pounding his chest.

Windfiend, Subhuti, Yichuan, and Snow all stared curiously towards the sights outside. None of them had left the Flamedragon Realmverse before.

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Time continued to flow on. Ning’s group spent quite a bit of time wandering all of the realmverses in the Sixteen Realmverses Alliance; in total, they spent over thirty million years here. Ning happily accompanied his family in their wanderings, not worried in the slightest.

Finally, they left the Sixteen Realmverses Alliance and began to wander through the cosmos. They visited many unique locales where the local cultivators were often brutish, powerful, and eccentric. Generally speaking, they weren’t very welcoming of outsiders! But when they saw Ning, they all went on their absolute best behavior.

This was because Ning, to avoid unnecessary trouble, sent Flamewing ahead of them and ensured that the locals would all be sufficiently cowed by the time the realmship arrived. As soon as the locals saw Flamewing, they quickly understood that their visitor was Daolord Darknorth. Who would dare to be disrespectful to him?

“This planet is so beautiful. I’ve never seen a world as beautiful as this one.” Brightmoon loved this place. This was a unique world known as the Immortal Ravine, and Ning’s group ended up spending a million years living here because it truly was quite beautiful. Its lovely but alien environment was completely a product of nature.

“Father, buy this! And that! I want this one also!” Each time Ning reached a new place, he would ask the local powers to bring over some unique treasures which might be of use to his daughter or his parents. Once they found something of interest, Ning would pay a very high price to acquire the items. Thus, the major powers were quite eager to bring out all of the strange and odd treasures they had stored away. They all hoped for Daolord Darknorth to take a fancy to their treasures, as they knew that Daolord Darknorth wouldn’t be stingy in payment.

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Brightmoon, Snow, Yichuan, Subhuti, and Windfiend all had their horizons expanded considerably. Even Su Youji saw much more than she had in the past. Although she had accompanied Ning to the Blazesun

Domain, they hadn't made any detours and so she hadn't really seen much. This time, they were on what amounted to a leisurely excursion!

They toured through one place after another, and when they found some unique treasures or saw some unique sights, Ning would seize the opportunity to guide his daughter and help her in her cultivation.

But of course, Ning devoted the majority of his time to his own cultivation. His Primaltwin remained within the Azureflower Estate. Not only had he acquired a large number of Sith cultivation techniques from the Autarchs, he had even acquired the Daos they used to reach Autarchy! Ning naturally wanted to spend his time analyzing them and perhaps find a way for himself to survive. Although the chances were quite low, he still had to give it a shot. Ning wasn't the type to just sit there and wait for death.

"The Heart of Eternity." Within the Azureflower Estate. The black-robed Ning waved his hand, causing the Heart of Eternity to appear and float in the air before him. It remained covered by layers of inscrutable runes.

"It's been quite some time since I've tried to solve it. I should give it another shot." Ning had reached a much higher level of comprehension, now that he had mastered the Eternal Omega Sword Dao. "I'm far more powerful than I was before I attempted the Daomerge. I should be able to solve more levels of it this time."

Right now, Ning was mainly focusing on two goals in his training. The first was to infuse the other Daos into his Eternal Omega Dao, while the second was to create a perfect cultivation technique. In both cases, his chances for success were extremely slim! As for the Heart of Eternity, Autarch Awakener had poured his heart and soul into its creation. Ning felt certain that spending some more time analyzing it might be of benefit to him.

Crack! Crack! Crack! Ning began to attempt to break through the various layers, and the outermost layers quickly crumbled away before him. Now that Ning had reached a much higher level of insight, he was able to solve the seals much more quickly than before. He blew through the lower levels like rotting deadwood, reaching the fiftieth level almost instantly.

Level fifty. Level sixty. Level seventy...

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Book 40: The Five Autarchs Chapter 19: Three Thousand Chaos Cycles

Next to Ning was the elderly white-haired spirit of the Azureflower Estate. The old man watched rather eagerly. "Daolord Darknorth may have failed the Daomerge, but he gained control over the Eternal Omega Sword Dao and reached a higher level of insight. There is some time left before he dies and his Dao vanishes. Perhaps this time will be enough for him to accomplish Master's final wishes?"

The black-robed Ji Ning stared at the Heart of Eternity floating in front of him and the seals covering them. Each time he broke through one level of seals, he was able to see the next level and get to work on it, and each time Ning gained a few new insights.

This was because each layer of seals represented much of the wisdom Autarch Awakener had gained over the process of devising the Nine Chaos Seals. Ning's insights were not on Autarch Awakener's levels, but he had such a high level of comprehension that when he put some effort into it, his talent

combined with the Autarch's stone dais and the Stonefire Pearl ensured that he could resolve the simpler seals with ease.

Seventy-five. Eighty. Eighty-five. Ninety...

Ning was taking more and more time to solve each layer of seals. Each layer of seals now gave him many new insights, making it increasingly difficult for him to solve them.

"There's nothing else I can do." Ning finally came to a halt. He had merely spent a bit over five thousand years in solving the first ninety-two seals, but he had then spent over a hundred thousand years without improving even slightly. The boost given to him by his Eternal Omega Sword Dao had done everything it could; he had blown through the earlier levels with ease, but now he would need to slowly accumulate new insights once more.

"Ninety-two levels... a total of ninety-nine." Ning revealed a smile. "It seems I have a chance at solving it before I die after all. I really do want to see what Autarch Awakener hid in the Heart of Eternity, for him to have put so much effort into setting up these levels of seals. According to what the spirit of the estate said, the treasure inside is just as valuable... as the Stonefire Pearl!"

Ning had analyzed many Sithe techniques and also mastered the Eternal Omega Sword Dao. These two different paths had allowed him to reach a very high level of insight, and they would be of use to him in breaking through the Heart of Eternity. He had only reached the ninety-second level, but he had more than ten thousand chaos cycles left to him. He still stood a chance.

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After leaving the Flamedragon Realmverse, Ning and his family spent a total of over 1.2 billion years touring through the Chaosverse before finally reaching their first 'target', the Flamesea Thunderfalls.

Rumble...

Countless bolts of lightning came crashing down from the skies, so dense that it looked like a vast waterfall of electricity. Below the lightning was a layer of twisted spacetime, and when the waterfall of lightning came crashing down upon the twisted spacetime, the resulting collisions resulted in an enormous sea of fire having formed below. This 'sea' just lay there in the void, utterly dazzling to behold. As for the giant waterfall of lightning, it was over a hundred million kilometers thick and looked almost like a vertical pool of lightning.

This truly was a stunning and beautiful sight, but it was also a deadly one. The power of this place was so great that even the laws of the Chaosverse were bent and twisted. This place was perhaps a bit weaker than the Wellspring Sea of the Blazefire Domain, but it was mighty enough to heavily injure Hegemons and obliterate Archon-level Emperors.

Suddenly, a tiny little flying ship appeared in the void directly above the flaming sea of the Flamesea Thunderfalls.

"So this is the Flamesea Thunderfalls?" Brightmoon's eyes widened as she stared at the vast sea of fire in front of her and the endless 'waterfall' of lightning above her.

“The Chaosverse truly is filled with endless marvels,” Subhuti sighed in amazement. “The tiniest amount of power from that thing would obliterate me instantly.”

“Come, let’s go inside and take a look,” Ning said. Boom! For the first time in their journey, Ning unleashed his Sword Dao domain, causing it to surround the realmship as they continued to fly forwards. Brightmoon, Yuchi Snow, and Ji Yichuan were all stunned as they watched themselves charge deep into the lightning waterfall.

Ning’s Sword Dao domain stretched out to a distance of three thousand meters, creating a true void which neither the lightning nor the fire could penetrate.

Whoosh. Ning sent the realmship sinking downwards, plunging through the lightning until it reached the point where the lightning clashed against the sea of fire. This was the place where the waterfall of lightning collided against the distorted spacetime at such an incredibly frenetic rate that the flaming sea was formed, something which was just as powerful as the lightning!

The natural power of the ‘Thunderfalls’ came from the primordial chaos and was truly limitless, and the same was true for the Flamesea. However, there was a limit to how far the power of the Flamesea Thunderfalls could extend. At a certain point, the power would dissipate and turn back into primordial chaos.

“This is the place where the Thunderfalls and the Flamesea meet, where the lightning transforms and gives birth to flame. Brightmoon, focus on your meditations. This place will benefit you greatly,” Ning said. “While you are training here, you must remain within my domain. You are not permitted to go beyond it.”

“Understood,” Brightmoon said obediently. Ning nodded.

In truth, he had long ago ensured that this domain of three thousand meters was completely separated from the outside world. There was no way anything outside could come inside, but it was also impossible for anyone inside to exit! He had given his daughter this stern warning simply because he wanted to rein her in a bit.

His daughter’s path was that of the Dao of Fire, and so Ning was planning to stay here for an extended period of time. His daughter was merely at the World level; his concern was that she wouldn’t be patient enough to stay in any one place for an extended period of time.

Ning sat down by himself in the void, assuming the lotus position and beginning to meditate silently. Yichuan and Snow relaxed within the realmship too, sharing some fine food and wine while enjoying the beautiful view in front of them. When they felt bored, they would enter the estate-worlds they carried within them to have some fun.

Su Youji and Ji Brightmoon both trained in the Dao of Fire, and so both of them went into meditation. Subhuti did the same, as he couldn’t help but be filled with questions when he stared at the twisted region of spacetime which actually produced fire when the water of lightning slammed into it. He meditated attentively, and as he did he gained many new insights.

The more you saw and the more of the Chaosverse you experienced, the better you would understand how the Dao functioned in its many myriad ways.

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Ning trained the fastest of all. It took him just two years of carefully studying the Flamesea Thunderfalls for him to upgrade his Dao of Lightning to the Hegemonic level. The reason why it hadn't been quite as fast as the Dao of Water was because Ning hadn't previously accumulated quite as many insights in Lightning as he had in Water. However, his overwhelmingly high level of insight into his Eternal Omega Dao made it quite easy for him to reach Hegemony in any and all Daos.

After another twelve years, Ning upgraded his Dao of Fire to the Hegemonic level as well. Ning then turned his attention to the region of twisted spacetime and began to ruminate on the Dao of Space. However, the mysteries of space here were insufficiently incomplete, and so Ning didn't spend much time on it. There really wasn't a need; their next destination was the perfect place for them to meditate on the Dao of Space.

However, simply understanding these Daos was easy. To fully absorb them into his Eternal Omega Dao... now that would be the hard part.

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Time flowed on. Ning and his family spent a total of ninety-six chaos cycles in the Flamesea Thunderfalls. Only when everyone felt that there were no further insights they could gain did they depart from this place and head towards their next destination. During the past ninety-six chaos cycles, most of them had improved dramatically. Ning had managed to successfully infuse his Dao of Lightning and his Dao of Fire into his Eternal Omega Sword Dao.

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They continued their long excursion, going to many dangerous places where they would spend extended periods of time in meditation. They merely spent twenty or thirty chaos cycles in some places, while they spent over a hundred chaos cycles in others.

These places were all quite different. Some were truly dangerous, while others were simply rather unique. In the blink of an eye, more than three thousand chaos cycles had passed since they had departed from the Flamedragon Realmverse.

During this period of time, Daolords Su Youji, Subhuti, and Windfiend had all improved dramatically. Su Youji could sense that she could attempt the Daomerge whenever she wanted... but of course, she wasn't certain as to whether or not she would succeed.

Subhuti and Windfiend both were Daolords of the Fourth Step. Visiting all these places had been of tremendous benefit to them, as was the guidance on the Dao they had received from Ning and Hegemon Azurefiend.

And of course... there was Brightmoon! She had now visited many places which not even Otherverse Lords would have a chance to visit, places which fully displayed the mysteries of how the Dao worked in keeping the Chaosverse operating. Frankly speaking, Brightmoon had been given far more opportunities than Ning ever had... but alas, she simply hadn't suffered enough setbacks or danger, and her talent was inferior to Ning's as well. She was just barely able to master a single Supreme Dao, at which point Ning stopped trying to force things.

Next... Brightmoon used her Supreme Dao of Fire to become a Samsara Daolord, and became a Daolord of the Third Step after a fairly brief period of time! It was fairly easy for Daolords to break through in the early stages, after all.

“Y’know, if Master put this much effort into training any of the true geniuses of the Flamedragon Realmverse, I guarantee that they would probably all reach the level of fusing multiple Supreme Daos together,” Hegemon Azurefiend whispered to Su Youji. “Our little lady’s just not that talented. Even if she succeeds in the Daomerge, she won’t be able to become a Hegemon. Her father’s comparable to the Autarchs!”

“She’s his daughter. Of course he’s going to pour all of his effort into training her. Is he supposed to do the same for strangers?” Su Youji said.

Ning truly did put as much effort as he could into training his daughter. He was also extremely studious in guiding his master Subhuti, Windfiend, Su Youji, and his personal disciples. He also provided some tips to Hegemon Azurefiend from time to time.

As for others?

They might be incredibly talented and have had incredible experiences... but what the hell did any of that have to do with Ning? Ning couldn’t be bothered with them, much like how none of the Autarchs had popped up to guide Ning in the past, even though he was clearly an incredible talent. Cultivators were self-interested at times, after all.

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Book 40: The Five Autarchs Chapter 20: Greatland Planet

Ji Ning was definitely going to do absolutely everything within his power, acquiring treasures like the Daomerge Firecloud Flower, to give his daughter Brightmoon the best possible chance at the Daomerge. If she succeeded, before he died Ning would even ask an Autarch to help find an otherverse for his daughter, letting Brightmoon become an Otherverse Lord! This wasn’t completely unheard of; the lord of the Church of Annihilation, for example, wasn’t a Hegemon.

In this matter, Ning didn’t feel the slightest hint of shame at all. Of course he had to look after his daughter’s interests!

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In the indescribably distant Wildsky Realmverse, there was a marvelous place known as the Greatland Planet. Ning was training atop this planet, while Brightmoon, Ji Yichuan, Yuchi Snow, Su Youji, the Flamewing God, Subhuti, and Windfiend had all temporarily left to go exploring the area around it.

The reason why the others didn’t stay here was because this place, the Greatland Planet, was quite special. This was a vast planet that was over a hundred trillion kilometers in size. This was the largest planet in all the Chaosverse, and it was formed by an incredibly dense wave of Earth-element energy! The amount of power contained within this single planet was actually comparable to that of the entire Wildsky Realmverse! It was vast, dense, and teeming with life, all thanks to the almighty power of Earth which flowed through it...

Ordinary cultivators would find it impossible to train here, as they would find their mind and body disturbed by the overwhelming power of the place!

This planet was also surrounded by a layer of deep yellow clouds which were so thick and dense, one had to at least be a Hegemon in order to bypass! Thus, there were virtually no cultivators here at all. Although this vast world had given birth to countless living beings, including many humanoids. These humanoids were quite talented, strong, and attuned to the power of the earth, and many were even born with the ability to control the earth.

However... there was no way for them to actually cultivate! This was because all other Daos had to give this place a wide berth. Even the Dao of Earth itself was hidden deep within the recesses of the world. Even Hegemons would find it very hard to train in the Dao of Earth here. Only someone who was at as high a level of enlightenment as Ning would be able to scry the many secrets hidden deep underground. How could the ordinary mortals here possibly embark upon the path of cultivation?

"I've completed the Dao of Earth as well." A white-robed youth was seated on a patch of grass in front of a thatched cottage within a mountain gorge. A smile was on his face as he reached out with both hands. Whoosh! Whoosh! Whoosh! Whoosh! Whoosh! Swords began to appear out of nowhere, numbering five in total.

The first sword was covered with a layer of flowing, watery light. The second gleamed a faint metallic color, appearing to be indescribably sharp. The third emanated a green aura of life and vitality. The fourth was surrounded by tendrils of flame which gave it utterly explosive power. As for the fifth and final sword, it was covered with a layer of deep yellow light and it seemed weighty beyond measure.

"The Water Sword Dao, the Metal Sword Dao, the Wood Sword Dao, the Fire Sword Dao, the Earth Sword Dao." Ning nodded. "The Five Elements are now complete. As I thought, it has been somewhat beneficial to my truesoul." However, Ning also noticed that his improvements in the Dao were suffering from diminishing returns when it came to nourishing his truesoul. This was particularly true now that he had many truesoul treasures; to further slow down the rate of crumbling was becoming increasingly difficult.

"I've infused the Dao of Lightning and the Five Elements into my Eternal Omega Sword Dao, making for six in total. The Dao of Space should be finished soon as well." Ning felt a sense of pressure, because infusing the Dao of Space had been noticeably more difficult. He had long ago reached Hegemony in the Dao of Space, but infusing it was extremely difficult. As for the Dao of Time and the Dao of Karma, those would be even more difficult and would definitely require more time.

"Great Immortal, please save my grandson!"

"Great Immortal, I beg of you, save my grandson! So long as you save him, I'll do anything you want."

A faint sound could be heard coming from afar. Ning frowned, glancing past the material obstruction of the mountain to see an elderly white-haired man who was on his knees in front of a cliff.

There were no cultivators in the entire Greatland Planet, and so Ning didn't see the need to set up any complicated wards to surround his training canyon. He had merely set up something to prevent people from coming in.

“Is he that kid’s great-grandson?” When Ning saw the white-haired elder, he immediately remembered something from two hundred years ago. Back then, there had been a kid who had accidentally fallen down from the cliff and into the gorge where Ning had been training. Ning’s wards were quite benign, but for an ordinary child to fall from that height spelled almost certain doom. Ning had moved to save that little child, who had immediately kowtowed and offered thanks to the ‘Great Immortal’ who had rescued him.

Ever since the child had grown up, he had often come to the mountain to offer sacrifices and pay his respects to the ‘Great Immortal’. Ning really didn’t know whether to laugh or to cry, especially when the kid ended up bringing his own children and grandchildren to do the same!

Ning was able to immediately recognize this white-haired elder as the great-grandson of the original child.

“Ordinary mortals only live for a mere century. Multiple generations of your family have knelt down towards me... and today, I just so happened to finish some of my training. I suppose it can be said that there are karmic ties between us.” Ning took a single step forwards and appeared at the top of the cliff.

The white-haired elder was still on his knees, calling out for mercy. Suddenly, he froze and stare in amazement as a white-robed youth appeared in front of him. The youth was ephemerally graceful and was clearly no ordinary mortal.

“Great Immortal!” The white-haired elder was incredibly excited. “I beg of you, save my grandson!”

“Kid, your hair’s gone all white.” Ning chuckled. “Your grandson, eh? Is that him over there?” Ning was able to see the karmic ties swirling around the elder and was thus immediately able to locate his grandson.

Ning waved a single finger, causing the white mist surrounding the cliff to suddenly condense into an image of a swarthy, muscular youth dressed in tattered clothes within a mine. He was carrying a load of minerals on his back; clearly, he had been working as a miner. The area around him was surrounded with ore, and an overseer was next to him with a whip in hand.

“That’s Rocky! That’s my grandson Rocky!” the white-haired elder said excitedly. “That’s the Mine of Doom! No one who goes in there ever survives to come back. Great Immortal, please save my grandson!”

“No one who goes in can survive?” Ning stared at the images in the mist, then chuckled: “You underestimate your grandson.”

Ning was able to see the youth’s future. If Ning didn’t interfere, the youth would slowly rise to power within the mines and become a powerful expert. He would be extremely hard-working and devoted to his training, and would reach the apex of what little ‘cultivation’ was possible within this planet. In the end, he would die a lonely death.

Although it was impossible for the beings in this planet to engage in true cultivation, there were many who were born with natural power over the earth and who would thus be capable of some simple cultivation techniques... but even at the apex of power, they wouldn’t be even close to the Earth Immortal level of power.

"I daresay your grandson has the unyielding heart of a true cultivator," Ning chuckled. "A pity that it'll all go to waste in a place like the Greatland Planet."

As Ning continued to view the youth's past and future, he began to take a liking to the kid. In fact, Ning started to consider taking him on as an apprentice... and just a short while later, Ning settled on making the kid his eighth apprentice.

"But there's no rush. I should let him experience some more difficulties in life first. In the future, his Dao-heart only became decent after he became lonely in his invincibility," Ning mused.

"Go back and live your life. Don't worry, I promise your grandson will come back alive and perfectly well. You'll be able to see him one last time roughly ten years from now," Ning said. The beings in this world were at most able to live a bit over a hundred years. Ning wasn't going to make any alterations, but the old man was still going to live a long life.

"Y-y-yes, Great Immortal!" After witnessing the incredible abilities of the 'Great Immortal' and hearing his promise, the white-haired elder became hopeful and energetic. He returned to his own home and began to wait for his grandson to return.

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Ning to watch from afar as this 'disciple' continued to grow and develop. Finally, the day came.

"I've wandered the four corners of the earth and have visited many countries, defeating all who sought to challenge me. Is this truly it?" A swarthy man dressed in hemp clothes was standing at the peak of a mountain, staring at the vast world below him. He had a thick saber on his back, and a look of loneliness was in his eyes.

After becoming truly invincible, he felt a sense of extremely uncomfortable loneliness. He truly did wish to find a good opponent, but he had been unable to do so.

"Perhaps I should find a good place to bring my life to an end." The swarthy man shook his head.

"Haha..." A loud laugh rang out, followed by a white-robed youth appearing from nowhere.

The swarthy man stared in shock. Given his control over the earth and his current level of power, how was it that someone could appear next to him without him even noticing?

"You..." The swarthy man stared at the white-robed youth. He suddenly thought of a painting his grandfather had once owned and forced him to kowtow towards. Supposedly, the person in the painting was the legendary 'Great Immortal' their clan often spoke of.

"Great Immortal?" the swarthy man said hesitantly, not quite believing it. He then drew his saber with a clanging sound as he stared at Ning: "Senior, you might be more powerful than me... but I'd still like you to give me a few pointers in combat." After speaking, he delivered a furious saber-chop towards Ning, confident that his control over the saber was enough to ensure that he could bring it to an instant halt without harming the person in front of him.

Ning simply chuckled.

The swarthy man suddenly flew backwards, almost as though time had just gone backwards. Even his saber flew back into his sheath, and he even said in reverse: “Em naht lufrewop erom eb thgim uoy...”

This bizarre scene caused him to be truly stupefied and dazed.

“Are you willing to be my apprentice?” Ning asked.

The swarthy man was indescribably excited. He immediately fell to his knees: “Stonepool kowtows to you, Master.”

Ning nodded. “From this day forth, you shall be the eighth disciple under the tutelage of myself, ‘Darknorth’. If there are any affairs in the mortal world you wish to wrap up, hurry up and take care of it. After doing so, you shall accompany me in departing from this planet... and you shall have the chance to face the true world of cultivation.”

And so, Daolord Darknorth’s eighth disciple, ‘Stonepool’, formally entered his tutelage.

“It is time for me to leave.” Ning raised his head to stare into the skies. He had the vague feeling that something just happened, and that he would no longer be able to continue this relaxed life.

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Book 41: The Daoguard Tower Chapter 1: The Church of Annihilation

In the Brightshore Kingdom of the Flamedragon Realmverse.

Whoosh. The black-robed Primaltwin Ji Ning appeared out of nowhere in front of the imperial palace.

A snowy-robed old man had been waiting here for quite some time. It was Hegemon Brightshore.

“Darknorth,” Hegemon Brightshore said hurriedly.

“Hegemon Brightshore, what is this about? You summoned me quite hastily,” the black-robed Ning said with a smile.

“I was asked to do so by a friend.” Hegemon Brightshore smiled in a rather embarrassed manner. “I didn’t want to bother you with this request, but it involves a Hegemon who you are on very good terms with – the Paragon of Pills.”

The black-robed Ning’s pupils contracted: “The Paragon of Pills? What’s this about?”

“You have probably heard of my friend before; he’s the leader of the Church of Annihilation in that otherverse you visited,” Hegemon Brightshore said. “I can’t explain it as clearly as he can; I’ll take you over to see him.”

“I’ll go take a look then.” Ning had the vague feeling that the reason why wouldn’t be able to continue his relaxed, wandering life for much longer was because of the Paragon of Pills and the lord of the Church of Annihilation... and that this matter was of grave import!

The higher a level of insight one reached, the more clearly one would be able to divine the tides of the future. But of course, the future was always in a state of flux; no amount of scrying was guaranteed to be accurate!

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Hegemon Brightshore led Ning through a spacetime tunnel to quickly arrive at the alternate universe.

“This tunnel again, eh?” Ning glanced at the empty void around him, then at the enormous dimensional vortex. He let out a sigh. “It was me, Skyfire Brightshore, Greatjoy, Solewind, and Firesurge who went on that journey together all those years ago through this otherverse.”

“None of them have achieved as much as you,” Hegemon Brightshore said. “This is doubly true for Skyfire, who has progressed the least out of the five. We Chaos Godbeasts are, as a race, slow in cultivation.”

Ning replied, “You have your boons, and you have your banes. Some things you simply cannot force.”

Of those four friends, Skyfire, Greatjoy, and Solewind had been sincere in their friendships towards him. Ning was able to keenly sense this through the karma which tied them together. As for Firesurge... Ning was able to discover through karma that Firesurge wasn't all that sincere, and as a result the karmic ties binding them were quite weak. When Solewind, Greatjoy, and Skyfire were ready for the Daomerge, Ning would send over some presents and help them as best he could.

However, that was as much as he could do for them. He couldn't even guarantee that his own daughter Brightmoon would succeed in the Daomerge; all he could do was prepare the treasures which would be of use to her.

“I wonder if those three and Ninedust will succeed in the Daomerge or not,” Ning mused.

Suddenly, a figure manifested out of nowhere within the primordial chaos in front of Ning. This figure was extremely skinny and dressed in black armor, and he radiated an icy aura. This person immediately bowed respectfully towards Ning: “Annihilation pays his respects to you, Daolord Darknorth.”

The reason why this person had named his church the ‘Church of Annihilation’ was because his own Daoist title was ‘Annihilation’! This was a Daoist title he had chosen long ago, when he was young and had no idea that one of the exalted Autarchs was also known as ‘Autarch Annihilation’. In truth, this was actually a fairly common Daoist monicker. There were a number of commonly-used Daoist titles which were shared by many cultivators.

“The leader of the Church of Annihilation.” Ning nodded. “I heard of you back when I was a World-level cultivator.”

“Back then, Brightshore asked me to help out. I watched all five of you the entire time, Daolord.” Lord Annihilation immediately squeezed out a smile: “If I had known back then that you would reach such heights, I would've done everything in my power to befriend you back then.”

Ning laughed.

“My main goal back then was to temper Skyfire,” Hegemon Brightshore said hurriedly. “That's why I hid the truth.”

“Don't worry, I fully understand what you were intending and how much effort you put into it. Chaos Godbeasts are solitary by nature, but you've poured all of your energies into building up your clan.” Ning smiled and nodded, then glanced at Lord Annihilation. “Speak, Annihilation. Why have you sought me

out... and for that matter, why have you sent a mere incarnation? You didn't even send your avatar, much less your true body."

After one bound an otherverse, the otherverse would become akin to a clone. An Otherverse Lord would be able to easily materialize an incarnation anywhere within the otherverse. Even Otherverse Lords would feel slighted by Lord Annihilation sending a mere incarnation to greet them, to say nothing of someone of Ning's stature!

"Daolord, please forgive me. My true body and my avatar aren't able to make it back. There's nothing I can do," Lord Annihilation explained hurriedly.

"What's this all about, and why is it connected to the Paragon of Pills?" Ning asked. Ning felt a profound sense of fondness towards the Paragon of Pills, because she truly had treated him very well. Ning could sense that she loved him as she would a family member! Through karma, Ning had previously been able to sense that she was still alive, but was incredibly far away from him... but now, even after entering the otherverse, Ning still felt she was incredibly far away from him. This meant she clearly was no longer inside the otherverse!

For Lord Annihilation's true body and avatar to also be absent... Ning had a bad feeling about this.

"Let me explain the situation," Lord Annihilation said respectfully. "Daolord, I imagine you know that the Paragon of Pills has always wanted to revive her three elder 'brothers'."

Ning nodded.

"However... all three of them were powerful Eternal Emperors, and one of them was a Hegemon," Lord Annihilation explained. "If they had died in the outside world, not even Autarchs would be able to reverse spacetime to revive them. Thankfully, they only died within my otherverse, but the backlash that would be generated if I tried to bring them back would probably cause the prime essences of my otherverse to collapse. Only Autarchs are strong enough to prevent this from happening and maintaining my otherverse's stability while still reviving the three of them. My otherverse would still be badly wounded, but it would remain intact."

Ning understood this principle. When that Sword Hegemon had died, the prime essences of the otherverse had naturally swallowed his truesoul fragments right away. There was no way to force them to 'spit it back out', because those truesoul fragments had already been integrated into the deepest parts of the otherverse's core, becoming part of it. If Lord Annihilation tried to forcibly bring them back, the damage caused to the otherverse would be enough to cause its prime essences to break apart. The entire otherverse would be doomed!

Only Autarchs were capable of reviving Hegemons in an otherverse without destroying it, because they were the ones who had created the otherverses to begin with. They knew how to protect the otherverses and ensure that they were 'merely' injured, not destroyed.

Otherverses... in the end, they were only comparable in size and scope to a realmverse, and so the truesoul fragments of a Hegemon were incredibly important and greatly beneficial to them. The awesomely vast Chaosverse itself was naturally a different story; it was countless times larger than any realmverse, and it was so mighty that no Autarch could endure its power and bind it. Only a mythical

Omega Autarch would be capable of binding the Chaosverse, whereas even ordinary Eternal Emperors were capable of binding an otherverse. The difference was enormous!

“She wanted to find an Autarch to revive the three of them,” Lord Annihilation said, “Because this was her greatest goal, her reason for cultivation.”

Ning couldn't help but sigh. Although he had only spent a limited amount of time with her, he was able to sense how deep her feelings were towards those three men.

“Even Autarchs would have to carefully protect and safeguard my otherverse as they worked to revive the three of them. This is a very tiring and very troublesome task,” Lord Annihilation said. “And in general, Autarchs do not agree lightly to revive a Hegemon. The Paragon of Pills once did manage to contact an Autarch, but the demands the Autarch listed were so harsh that even I felt completely stupefied.”

“Harsh demands?” Ning asked, “What were the demands?”

“He asked for treasures equivalent to a thousand realmships in value,” Lord Annihilation said.

Even Ning turned speechless upon hearing this. However, he knew what the Autarchs were thinking. Cultivation was meant to be a dangerous path; if everyone who died on this path could be brought back to life, wouldn't it make cultivation nothing more than a game? In addition, reviving destroyed truesouls would have a negative impact on the very fabric of reality and the laws of the Chaosverse. Yes, each revival only had a small impact, but it could quickly add up. This was not a good thing, especially when invaders from a foreign Chaosverse were lying in wait.

On the other hand, if they completely refused to revive anyone, they would probably cause many cultivators to feel absolute despair... and so, they had chosen to instead exact stringent requirements for their aid. You want me to revive a Hegemon and two Emperors? Sure. Give me a thousand realmships worth of treasure.

“I'll wager not even the Sithe have that many realmships.” Ning shook his head.

“The Paragon of Pills asked the Autarch to guide her in finding enough treasure. The Autarch told her that the Sithelands is filled with treasure; the only problem was, was she woman enough to take them?” Lord Annihilation continued, “And so, ever since she became a Hegemon she began to make repeated trips to the Sithelands. To tell you the truth, I've met countless cultivators, but I can count on one hand how many people are as fearless and maniacal as she is in her pursuit of Sithe treasures.”